

ASSESSMENT POLICY 2014



**Módh Scoil Láir Naíonán, Sráid Maoilbhríde,
Baile Átha Cliath 1.**

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OUR ETHOS

The Central Model Infants' School is a co-educational school, under the patronage of the Minister of Education. The Central Model Infants' School is an inclusive, child centred Learning Community. Respectful relationships are fundamental to us. We achieve excellence through high expectations, teamwork and shared leadership. We aim to nourish and develop each child's sense of their own self-worth as an individual and celebrate their unique gifts and talents.

Introductory Statement

The Education Act(1998) requires schools to regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of this evaluation to the students and their parents.

Our school policy on assessment reflects the values and ethos of our school. The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. Regular and effective assessment **of** learning and **for** learning and communication between parents and teachers is key to this goal.

This policy refers to and should be read alongside our Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy and Data Protection Policy.

Aims and Objectives of Assessment in our School

- ✚ To improve teaching and learning for all our children
- ✚ To inform teachers' planning and whole school planning
- ✚ To monitor and review pupil progress
- ✚ To provide information to parents on their child's learning
- ✚ To identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and respond effectively to their needs.
- ✚ To assist in the allocation of Support Teachers and provide a clear focus for their work
- ✚ To co-ordinate assessment procedures across the school

While our primary focus is on Literacy and Numeracy we assess all subjects across the curriculum using formal and informal approaches. As an Infant School and in keeping with our use of the AISTEAR framework for early learning, much assessment takes place through teacher observations, discussions, questioning and active listening to the child in a variety of learning situations.

Roles and Responsibilities

All teachers are involved in developing, implementing and reviewing this policy.

Class teachers have primary responsibility for the assessment of the children in their class. Support teachers work closely with class teachers and liaise regularly with each other.

The Deputy Principal, Catherine O'Connell, is responsible for coordinating assessment throughout the school.

Where children are identified as needing additional support we are implementing and developing our use of the NEPS continuum of support.

At stage 1 (Classroom Support) it is the responsibility of the class teacher to implement interventions at class level and to discuss concerns with parents.

At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Deputy Principal and Support Teacher Team (School Support).

The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 3 (School Support Plus) when a Psychological or other assessment may be required.

Concerns are shared and discussed with parents from Junior Infants and they have a key role at all stages.

Assessment Strategies

Our focus is on using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally gifted, so that all children experience success and reach their full potential.

Our Reporting and Assessment Calendar (attached) shows dates for standardized and formal assessment but ongoing assessment activities and strategies including those listed below are of equal value.

- ✚ Teacher observation and conversations with children across the curriculum
- ✚ Two way communication between parents and teachers
- ✚ Formal and informal meetings between classroom teachers and support staff
- ✚ Notes from observations and conversations e.g. Maths notebooks, Reading comment sheets
- ✚ Teacher designed tasks and tests
- ✚ Recorded and marked work in copies, workbooks, activity sheets, whiteboards etc
- ✚ Running Records (Reading) and Monthly Reading Level record
- ✚ Ongoing Free Writing assessments ('2 stars and a wish') and handwriting observation/tasks
- ✚ Reference to Developmental Continuum from First Steps resources to help monitor children's progress in Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing
- ✚ Reading Recovery Observation Survey (RR teachers)
- ✚ Initial English language assessment with Junior Infants (EAL)
- ✚ English language assessments using the English Language Assessment Toolkit (EAL teachers)
- ✚ Maths Recovery Assessments (MR teachers)
- ✚ Maths Assessments linked to Ready Set Go Programme (First, Second and Third Significant Goals)
- ✚ Informal oral and mental Maths assessments

Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing. The most common types of informal teacher designed testing in our school are Maths tests, spelling tests, free writing and quizzes.

Administration of Standardized/Screening Tests

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths and challenges in our school are –

- ✚ Bracken Receptive School Readiness Composite(SRC)
- ✚ MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test)
- ✚ Micra T
- ✚ Sigma T
- ✚ NRIT (non reading intelligence test)
- ✚ NVRT (non verbal reasoning test)
- ✚ Reading Recovery Observation Survey (OS)
- ✚ ELT (Early Literacy Test)

Whole class tests are usually administered by a member of the Support Team with the class teacher.

Junior Infants: The Bracken Receptive SRC is administered by class teachers on an individual basis to Junior Infants in October and takes about 10 minutes. As English is a second language for many of

our children we are cautious when interpreting results. However it is helpful as a baseline indicator of children's understanding of early learning concepts and language in English. Selected children are retested by the Learning Support teacher in May and this helps in identifying those in need of additional support in Senior Infants. All Junior Infants are tested in February and then June using the Ready Set Go Maths Assessment starting with the first significant goal. EAL teachers test a sample group of around 20 children using the English Language Assessment Toolkit in May (EAL teachers). In May/June 2014 Literacy Support Teachers will test all Junior Infants individually using the ELT and use it to identify areas of strength and difficulty in Literacy.

Senior infants: The Reading Recovery Observation Survey is administered individually by Reading Recovery teachers to pupils identified by class teachers as needing additional support in Literacy. The first screening takes place in September and at other times during the year when places become available. As per Reading Recovery guidelines children are selected from the age range 5:9 to 6:3 but exceptions may be made for older children.

The M.I.S.T is usually administered by the same member of the Support Team in all classes to help ensure standardization. All Senior Infants are tested in February and then June using the Ready Set Go Maths Assessment starting at the appropriate goal. English language test a sample group of approx 20 children using the English Language Assessment Toolkit in February (EAL teachers)

First Class: At present the Sigma T is administered at the beginning and end of First Class by our Maths Support teacher. The Micra T is administered in May by the Principal or Support Team Teacher. The NRIT is administered by the Principal or Support Team Teacher in October. Selected children with limited English language skills may be selected for the NVRT which is done individually with a Support Team Teacher.

All staff will identify and address aspects of assessment that are particularly relevant to children with special educational needs, or with children whose first language is not English, and provide appropriate alternatives as required.

Pupils may be excluded from the Standardized tests if in the view of the school Principal they have a Learning or Physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the test, or in the case of newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting such a test would be inappropriate. (Circular 0138/2006)

If deemed appropriate the test may be administered to these children outside of the classroom setting. Praise will be given for completion of tests to boost self esteem.

English language test a sample group of approx 20 children using the English Language Assessment Toolkit beginning in 2015 (EAL teachers)

Recording

1. Teachers' records

All teachers keep their own records where necessary or helpful, of observations, remarks, incidents, etc. as they occur in the classroom and playground. This may include photographs of the children and their work. This provides teachers with additional information about the child, which helps them to meet the needs of individual children more effectively. It also informs the teacher's classroom organization and planning.

2. Pupil information and assessment folders

Each pupil has a folder which is stored securely in a locked filing cabinet in the child's classroom. Assessment information in each folder includes Pupil Profile sheets, standardized tests, end of year report cards, parent- teacher meeting records, photographs and work samples. This folder is passed

from class teacher to class teacher as the child progresses through our school. Results of standardized tests are also stored on our 'Aladdin' system. Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data.

3. Report card:

The end of year Report Card is an important element where information about the child's educational progress and achievement is recorded. We have adopted one of the NCCA templates to suit our own needs. The key purpose of the Report Card is to share assessment information with parents in an accessible format so that they can use the information to help their children to learn, and thus strengthen the link between school and home. The cards are completed by each class teacher with input from support teachers. Each card is read by the principal Catherine Groves and she adds her own individual comments. The card is posted in June to each child's home address. Parents are invited to discuss reports with class teachers if they so wish. A copy is kept in school and at the end of First Class a copy is given to the Senior School. The results of Sigma T and Micra T tests are recorded on Report Cards at the end of First Class.

Sharing of Assessment Information

The Central Model Infants' School follows the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003) which establishes parents' rights to regular information on the progress and achievement of their children under the Education Act. The Act entitles the parents of students under the age of eighteen (and students themselves when aged eighteen or older) to access all personal data relating to these students, whether stored in any electronic form or in hard and/or manual copy in a structured filing system in the school.

Relevant and helpful assessment information regarding a child's progress, including some standardized test results, is shared with parents at parent-teacher meetings and in additional meetings with parents whose children may be experiencing difficulties in school.

Information regarding individual children is shared with teachers as necessary at Staff meetings, ISM team meetings and Support Team meetings. When information is requested by outside agencies (other than transfer schools) parental permission is first sought. The Principal will approve any access to assessment information by persons other than the child's parents. If necessary this access may be accompanied by interpretation from the class teacher or Principal. Information regarding the progress and achievement of students will only be provided between schools following admission of the student to the new setting.

Storage of Assessment information

Procedures are in place to manage sensitive data (see Data Protection Policy).

1. The school will store information safely to facilitate access to it by former pupils until their twenty-first birthday.
2. Information stored on computers is protected so that there is restricted access to it.
3. Copies of standardized tests results are collected by the Assessment co-ordinator and kept in a locked filing cabinet in Room 9.
4. Results of some standardized tests are entered and stored on the Aladdin programme.
5. Assessment reports on individual children from outside agencies and psychologists are also kept locked in Room 9.

Success Criteria

This policy is considered successful if –

- ✚ Assessment leads to improvements in teaching and learning
- ✚ Parents are aware of their child's strengths and needs

- ✚ Scores improve
- ✚ Early identification and intervention is achieved
- ✚ Procedures are clear and roles and responsibilities are defined
- ✚ The Support team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- ✚ There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Implementation

This policy is effective from May 2014

Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on -----.

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.