

SUNCROFT NATIONAL SCHOOL

Policy Number: 25 - ASSESSMENT POLICY

REV: 2

This policy document was put in place to enable teachers to facilitate progress in each pupil's learning. It is also used to access the services which are now being provided by NEPS and to ensure that resources are being allocated equitably on a needs basis.

The Principals of Assessment, Recording and Reporting

1. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and as such is a valuable informative tool.
2. The teachers here in Suncroft National School adopt a wide range of methods of assessment to reflect the whole Curriculum.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organization which can help children to work independently while teacher can concentrate on an individual or small groups. (Stage 1)
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on work done and indicate each pupil's progress.
5. Ongoing/annual assessment gradually builds up into a file for each pupil over their years here at Suncroft National School.

While cognaisance is taken of all subjects on the curriculum, the centrality of English to all areas requires that we prioritise oral language, listening, reading, understanding, writing, spelling, handwriting, and overall presentation of work.

We also recognise the importance of numeracy.

Aims of Assessment

- To provide the greatest amount of educational opportunities possible through recognition of problem areas in each child's learning.
- To enable us to put proper supports in place at the earliest possible juncture.
- To allow each teacher, in co-operation with the Learning Support/Resource Teacher to monitor each child's progress.
- To identify children's strengths and weaknesses in relation to prioritising children for learning support.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

While the Principal oversees that this policy is implemented, it is the responsibility of each class teacher to ensure that any child with learning difficulties requiring support is catered for adequately at the earliest possible stage. The Learning Support teacher/Resource teacher then works with each prioritised child, but always in association and in continuous consultation with the class teacher.

Methodology

It is the aim of the school to identify potential learning difficulties as early as possible.

Teacher observation is central to all interventions at infant level.

If a child comes to us, either as a Junior Infant or into another class, having already been screened and possibly diagnosed by an Educational Psychologist, then obviously, all supports will apply from day 1.

The Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST) is used at Senior Infants level to enable effective continued monitoring. If at this stage a child is adjudged to have a perceived Behavioral/Speech/Language difficulty, the school will advise parents/guardians to consult their G.P. re the possibility/necessity of a Behavioural/Speech/language Assessment.

Children must ordinarily be 6 years of age before an application is made for a Psychological Assessment. If the staged approach has failed to show improvement, we will contact the parents to express our concerns. Children are assessed at Halloween, Christmas, Easter and Summer based on the Assessment in the Action Maths book.

From First class onwards, Standardized tests are administered to all pupils to assess ability. These tests are given and corrected by the class teacher. The results of the tests are retained securely in the L/S room for a period of 9 years and are available to the relevant teachers at the start of each school year.

Pupils scoring at or below the 10th/12th percentile will be assessed further, in consultation with both the class teacher and the parents of the child concerned, using a range of screening tests including the NARA (Neale Analysis Reading Ability). Quest and Aston Index.

Priority here will be given to the children in the lower classes (Senior Infants to 2nd class). Once the younger children have been prioritised, older children (3rd to 6th class) will be assessed, if the quota of 30 pupils has not been used and if the class and Learning Support teacher feels there is a need. The pupils attending for Learning Support will be reviewed at the end of each term.

Criteria for Assessment

The staff here recognise the importance and effectiveness of early intervention and consequently we base early identification of learning difficulties on (Stage 1)

Teacher observations of:

1. Inability to function during normal school routines
2. Language/speech disorders
3. Non age appropriate behaviour
4. Underperformance

If pupil's difficulties are markedly unresponsive to supplementary teaching, consideration will be given, in consultation with the parents, to having the child referred for a psychological assessment.

This assessment will provide additional information and advice to the school on drawing

up an IEP (Individual Educational Program) for the pupil. It will also allow for the possibility of providing Resource Teacher support or other special educational support for the pupil as recommended. (Stage 2)(*Learning Support Guidelines Chapter 4 par. 4.6.2*) The principal will retain a file/report on all children who have been assessed by NEPS team outlining the recommendations (if any) for Learning Support/Resource Hours and/or exemptions for Gaeilge (Stage 3) in the secretary's office. Please note that the Principal will also keep on file evidence of those who were offered assessment but refused to take up the offer through the school service. Likewise, any evidence of those who secured Private Assessment.

Procedure

5. Once prioritization is complete, the Principal contacts the Educational Psychologist for the NEPS list.
6. A Psychological Referral form is issued by the Principal to parents based on the school criteria for assessment.
7. A meeting of parents, class teacher, Learning Support Teacher, Principal and Psychologist is arranged.
8. Once all parties are agreed that the staged approach has not addressed perceived difficulties, (as per Circular 24/03 and 02/05), an assessment follows.
9. The Educational Psychologist arranges to carry out the assessment at a mutually convenient time and place.
10. The test results are presented to the Principal, parents, class teacher, and Learning Support/Resource teacher.
11. Appropriate/Recommended support services are put in place by the Principal.

Please note that all matters will be treated in as confidential a manner as required.

Does the Process work?

Ongoing evaluation of the process will involve the following:

- Regular testing
- Teacher observation
- Parent observation
- Continuous consultation with the L.S./R.T. and the Class teacher
- Regular consultation/contact between class teacher, L.S./R.T. and parents.
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- **In class assessment**
- Teachers constantly monitor, test and record all areas of curriculum but with a particular emphasis on literacy and Numeracy with the aim of:
 - Identifying class/individual progress.
 - Identifying class/individual strength /weaknesses with a view to structuring teaching in order to reinforce strengths, remediate weaknesses and focus in individual needs.
- Assessment results are communicated to children (where practicable) and parents and other teachers.
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REVISED AND UP-DATED: 7th March 2011