Bennekerry N.S.
Assessment Policy

1. Introductory Statement

This policy was fully redrafted in 2014 following the Numeracy and Literacy Strategy. It is being reviewed following an overall review of our Special Education Policy.

In formulating this policy, assessment is understood to be "...the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes". (Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools- NCCA)

2. Rationale

At Bennekerry N.S. we endeavour to maintain high standards of teaching and learning, thus enabling each child to reach the highest level of their own ability. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It is a fundamental tool in identifying a child's learning strengths and learning needs. 'Gathering evidence about how well students are learning and using this information to improve the learning opportunities provided for them are essential elements in ensuring that each student makes good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills.' (Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life; 2011) We endeavour to identify children who may have learning difficulties or those who are highly able at the earliest possible opportunity and put in place a programme to respond to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. This policy sets out to update existing assessment methods in the school to ensure best practice.

3. Policy's relationship to school's mission statement and ethos

At Bennekerry N.S. we promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child and endeavour to enable each child to reach their full potential. An effective assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

4. <u>Aims and objectives</u>

The aims of assessment are as follows:

i.   To monitor learning processes
ii.   To benefit pupil learning
iii.   To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time
iv.   To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths/needs
v.   To assist teachers long-term and short- term planning
vi.   To identify children who would benefit from additional support from a Special Education Teacher under the General Allocation Model. Standardised, Screening and Diagnostic tests may be used to help make decisions about where on the Continuum of Support a pupil will be placed.
vii.   To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis, including storage of tests and results and reporting of same.

5. <u>Purposes of Assessment</u>

Each form of assessment will enable teachers to:

i.   Inform planning for all areas of the curriculum
ii.   Gather and interpret data at individual, class and whole-school level, and in relation to class and national norms
iii.   Identify particular learning needs of pupils ranging across all levels of ability (including gifted and talented children)
iv.   Contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties
v.   Contribute to the school's strategy for maintaining high standards in and/or improving Literacy and Numeracy
vi.   Monitor pupil progress and attainment
vii.   Modify their programmes to help ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
viii.   Compile records of individual pupil's progress and attainment
ix.   Facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
x.   Enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies
xi.   Facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work

6. Forms of assessment

In Bennekerry N.S. we maintain a balanced combination of *Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning*

Assessment for learning takes place when the teacher shares information about the child's learning with the child and when the teacher uses this information to plan the next steps in their teaching and in the student's learning.

Assessment of Learning is used to provide a summary of what the student has achieved at fixed points, such as at the end of a period of study, or when a unit of work is completed, or at the end of an academic year. Information from assessment of learning can be used to report to others, such as parents and other teachers.

7. Methods of Assessment

At Bennekerry N.S. we use a wide range of formal and informal assessment methods:

7.1 Teacher Observation and Questioning

This involves assessing the child's progress by observing, questioning and monitoring the child's progress in all areas of the curriculum. This may include the children's responses, participation, interaction and reaction in class. Observation will be carried out by both class teachers and SET team when partaking in co-teaching, station teaching, guided reading, paired reading, peer tutoring, maths stations and Literacy Lift Off.

Questioning can be done by both teachers and pupils. A balanced approach to both closed and open analytical questions are used. Children will be encouraged to ask questions to promote discussion of a given topic within the classroom.

7.2 Teacher designed tasks and tests

Teachers use a range of activities to assess the progress of individuals or groups across the full range of curriculum subjects. These may be oral, pictorial, written or practical. They may be embedded in the everyday teaching and learning activities in the class or may be used by the teacher in key areas at the end of the topics/activities to provide a fuller picture of the child's performance and progress for example spelling tests, table tests, maths tests, SESE tests. In relation to spelling tests, dictated sentences can be used during the administration of weekly spelling tests from 1st-6th class. A Learning Questionnaire can also be given to parents at the start of every academic year to gain insight into the learning styles of each individual child.

7.3 Concept Mapping

These are used to gather information as a visual representation about the children's ideas and understanding in subject areas for example English, SESE. As an assessment tool it provides evidence of changes in children's thinking over time e.g., before and after assessment of a topic.

7.4 Self-Assessment

Children are encouraged to look at their own work in a reflective way and to set personal learning targets for themselves. It develops self-reflection skills in a safe environment and fosters co-operative learning with peers. This involves the use of thumbs up/thumbs down in infants' classes. The use of traffic lights can be used throughout the school and KWL charts can be focused on in 2nd class and above.

7.5 Work samples, Portfolios and Projects

Some examples of children's work are retained where possible to monitor the child's progress in knowledge and skills e.g., portfolio work, projects, samples of work done on computer, digital images of artwork. Each class teacher keeps an Individual Pupil File containing teacher observations, checklists and samples of the children's work.

8. Screening

The **Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)** is administered in the second term of

Senior Infants by the Class Teacher, sometimes with the assistance of a Special Education Teacher. There are four parts to this test:

i.   Alphabet letters and sounds: We expect a score of 23-26
ii. Listening skills: We expect a score of 7-9
iii. Words dictated in a sentence: We expect a score of 28-36
iv. Maximum words written in 10 minutes: We expect 20 words written correctly

Children are considered to be at risk if they score below the cut off points in three or more of the subtests. If children are identified as scoring below the cut off points, we then invite their parents/guardians to work with the SET and their child.

Test 2R may be used as a further screening on a whole class basis with follow up diagnostic testing on individuals where it is deemed appropriate and of value.

The **New Non-Reading Intelligence Test** is administered in the first term of 1st class.

The NRIT is a group test, presented orally by the class or learning support teacher as deemed appropriate. It assesses pupils' general ability, independently of their reading.

This test covers aspects of language and thinking that are not necessarily represented in measures of pupil attainments. It is therefore a valuable assessment tool as it provides a more comprehensive profile of a pupil's ability.

The **Quest Maths and Reading Screening Test** is administered in the first term of First Class.

9. <u>Standardised Tests</u>

Standardised testing is used as an assessment tool in Bennekerry N.S. These tests are instrumental in maintaining the high standards of Literacy and Numeracy in our school.

The following standardised tests are used in Bennekerry N.S.:

Literacy: New Drumcondra Primary Reading Test

Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test

Drumcondra Irish Test for English Medium Schools

Numeracy: SIGMA-T

i.   Standardised tests are administered annually during the month of May

ii.   In Bennekerry N.S. standardised tests are administered to classes 1st to 6th by the class teacher.

iii.   Children with learning or physical disabilities, children who have English as an additional language and children who are in receipt of hours may have their testing administered on an individual basis or in a small group

iv.   In accordance with DES guidelines, standard scores, STEN and percentile ranking are communicated to parents in the form of a written report in sufficient time before the school closure for the summer vacation to allow parents a reasonable opportunity to seek meetings with the principal and/or teacher(s) to discuss the written report if necessary. *A breakdown of strengths and weaknesses will be communicated according to these results during all Parent Teacher Meetings in the following academic year.*

v.   Results from standardised testing are also reported to the Board of Management on an annual basis.

vi.   Aggregated results of standardised testing in literacy and mathematics from classes 2nd, 4th and 6th are also reported to the DES annually.

vii.   Results are recorded digitally by class teachers and the learning support teacher using the online system Aladdin Aggregated data is then analysed by the principal, class teachers and SET team.

viii.   The results of standardised tests are used by teachers to inform future teaching and learning. For example, the SIGMA-T strand analysis programme is used to determine specific areas of strength and learning needs for individual children can be used to inform long/short term planning and IPLP/IEPs. Whole School Planning focusing on areas that need attention.

10.   Diagnostic Assessment

The staged model of intervention is used in Bennekerry N.S.

After consultation with the class teacher where an individual child/children's scores fall below the 10th percentile and with the consent of the parents the Special Education Teacher will administer diagnostic assessment. These results will be recorded in the child's School Support File as part of the Continuum of Support which is drawn up for the child and communicated to parents in the School Support Plan meeting. *Where a child has a Speech and Language report, Psychological report and/or Dyslexia; and where percentile rank may appear to be lower than their potential, the cut off point is flexible.*

The following diagnostic assessments are available for use in Bennekerry N.S. In general, the Special Education Teachers are responsible for choosing the most appropriate assessment for use with individuals or groups of children.

- Jackson Phonics Skills Test
- NRIT
- Maths Tracker
- Ballard and Westwood Tables Test
- British Ability Scale
- Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement (M. Clay)
- Two Peas Phonological Awareness Assessment
- Dolch List
- PM+ Benchmarking Kit
- Writing Samples
- Maths Textbook end of year assessments
- W.R.A.T IV
- Test 2R

After diagnostic assessment and a complete instructional term of Learning Support, each child's SSF will be reviewed. If there are any serious concerns expressed by the parents, SET and/or class teacher, further educational psychological assessment will be explored. The SET and class teacher will seek the advice of the NEPS psychologist and discuss test results and concerns about the pupil. Based on the advice received, the application for a full assessment, if required will be completed by the SET and class teacher and signed off on by the principal

11. Recording and Storage of Results of Assessment

The results of each individual child's standardised test are recorded yearly as part of the child's Individual Pupil Profile. Each class teacher stores the Individual Pupil Profiles on Teams and/or in the pupils file on Aladdin. Test results are also stored electronically, using the school data system Aladdin. This is password protected.

Test booklets are stored for 12months in a secure filing cabinet in the pupil's file in each classroom until replaced by the following year's test. The test booklets are then shredded.

In accordance with Data Protection Commission recommendations, results of standardised tests are held electronically in the school until the student reaches their 25th birthday.

12. Success Criteria

This policy will be considered successful if:

i.   Early identification and intervention are achieved
ii.   Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach to intervention
iii.   Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
iv.   Assessment is used as a tool within the school to maximise pupil potential and success.

13. References

i.   The Education Act (1998)

ii.   The Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)

iii.   The Equal Status Act (2000)

iv.   The Education (Welfare) Act (2000)

v.   The Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (2004)

vi.   The Freedom of Information Acts (1997, 2003)

vii. Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life (0056/2011)

viii. Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools (2007)

14.   Consultation

A draft of this policy, when approved by the Board of Management will be made available to parents and submissions may be made through the Principal.

15.   Ratification and Communication

This policy will be communicated to all teachers, parents and the Board of Management.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Bennekerry National School on

Date: _09.   03 · 2022_

Signed: _____ (Chairperson B.O.M.)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

16.   Review

This policy will be reviewed after 3 years or prior to that in conjunction with our School Improvement Plan if it is deemed necessary.

Appendix 1

Pupil Self-Assessment:	Teacher Observation:
Rubrics	Continuous assessment through textbooks, homework, monitoring of copies, parental feedback
KWL Charts	Mini whiteboards
Traffic Lights	Worksheets
Thumbs up/thumbs down	Reading aloud
Talk partners- Think, pair, share	True and false cards
Checklists	
Concept mapping	Teacher Designed Tasks and Tests:
Two Stars and a wish	End of topic, week/mid-term and end of term tests
	Phonological awareness tests
Conferencing	Miscue analysis/running reading records
With teacher	Kahoot quizzes
With peers	Research tasks/active learning activities
Pupil Portfolios including digital portfolios:	
Seesaw platform	
Art portfolio	
SPHE Folder	
SESE project book	
Questioning:	
Open and closed questions	
Lower/higher order questions	