# Ardfinnan National School, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Scoil Náisiúnta Ard Fhionáin

Neart is Gaois

# Assessment Policy

# Assessment Policy

## Introduction:

Ardfinnan N.S. is committed to the ongoing development of pupils and to carrying out effective assessment of and for learning. This policy has been formulated to provide a transparent and uniform approach to assessment throughout the whole school.

## Policy Rationale:

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. Assessment activities used in this school will contribute to pupil learning and development by gathering relevant information to guide each pupil's further learning (assessment for learning) and by providing information on each pupil's achievement at a particular point in time (assessment of learning). We aim to enable all children to develop to their full potential physically, intellectually, linguistically, emotionally, and socially through a child-centred curriculum. This policy endeavours to identify children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a school response to their needs at the earliest possible opportunity. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

## Policy Content:

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils, including the exceptionally gifted so that adequate strategies are put in place early enough to facilitate remediation. These strategies may include pupil self-assessment, pupil profiling, two-way communication between parents and teachers, modification of teacher programs, and the use of a continuum of support leading to individual education/support plans.

## Overall Aims and Objectives:

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are:

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning through evaluation and monitoring of progress.
2. To create a procedure for monitoring achievement.
3. To track learning processes at each stage, which assists the long and short-term planning of current teachers and future teachers.
4. To coordinate assessment procedures on a school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths, styles and difficulties.

## Definition of Assessment:

In line with the NCCA, our staff believes that assessment is integral to teaching and learning and is concerned with children's progress and achievement. It involves gathering information to understand how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further a child's learning. We concur with their definition of classroom assessment as:

> Assessment is the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Assessment, therefore, involves much more than testing. It is an ongoing process that concerns the daily interactions between the teacher and the child, including moment-by-moment conversations, observations, and actions. (NCCA, *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools.* November 2007 p.7).

Legislative requirements that have guided the development of our assessment policy:

- Education Act (1998)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- Education Welfare Act (2000)
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004)
- Freedom of Information Act (2014)

Aims of our Teacher Assessment Strategies:

· To benefit pupil learning.

· To monitor learning processes.

· To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievement over time.

· To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties.

· To assist teachers' long and short-term planning.

· To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis.

Purposes of Assessment:

· To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum.

· To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms.

· To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able.

· To enable teachers to modify their programs and their teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed.

· To compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment.

· To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress, and learning needs.

· To facilitate the active involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work.

## Range of Assessment Methods used Throughout the School:

Both *assessment of learning* and *assessment for learning* are used by teachers to make professional judgements about pupil achievement/progress. Deciding what to assess will be based on the curriculum objectives in each curriculum area/subject and on what the teacher intends to help the children to learn. Pupil's progress is assessed on a continuous basis. The range of assessment methods that are used are outlined below *but are not limited to these.*

## Assessment *for* Learning Strategies:

Assessment for Learning is 'formative' assessment, aiming to support and advance students in their learning. At its heart, assessment for learning is a way of informing and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment.

In essence, AfL helps teachers and children to focus on three key questions:

1. Where are children now in their learning?
2. Where are children going in their learning?
3. How will children get to the next point in their learning?

The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AfL) (See Appendix 1):

### 1.Teacher-designed tasks and tests.

· Tasks and tests can take the form of written or oral assessments or practical assignments developed by the teacher to assess children's learning. They can be used throughout the school year as a basis for continuous assessment.

### 2.Class assessments

Class tests/scores/work samples are recorded and stored by the class teacher.

### 3.Pupil Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is the means by which pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Children are involved in self-assessment when they look at their own work in a reflective way, identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then set personal learning targets for themselves. However, we need to train pupils to self-assess. Teachers can select from the following strategies to aid self-assessment as appropriate for their own class;

- KWL
- Children can self-assess using- a traffic light system, thumbs up or down, smiley faces, talking partners, two stars, and a wish.
- Evaluation sheets
- Self-Editing, drafting, and re-drafting
- Pupil Questionnaires/Interviews
- Pupils Logs e.g. spelling log, reading log, etc

- Reflection; Representation; Reporting: Children think about what they have been learning. They then represent what they have learned (e.g. through a drawing, concept map, brainstorming, questions, think-pair-share, paragraph etc.) Children then report on their learning – to the teacher; class; group; parent; partner etc.

## 4.Teacher Questioning

Teachers use higher-order questioning to provoke fruitful discussion. Teachers use questions to assess knowledge and understanding and to guide children in their learning. Children also use questions to help them to learn, for example they ask their teacher and their peers questions. Part of the teacher's work in using questioning as an assessment method is to model good questioning. This in turn helps children to become more skilful at asking good questions to aid their own learning.

5. **Individual oral feedback** – enabling children identify the next steps in their learning.

6.**Quality marking by teacher** – occasional pieces of work marked focusing on pointing out *success* and *improvement* rather than marking every error in existence. On occasion 'test' marking will be undertaken whereby all aspects of the work will be marked e.g. a story where comments are made re. spelling, grammar, punctuation, handwriting, and the overall quality of the work.

7.**Quality marking by children**. Children are gradually trained to identify their own successes and improvement needs, with control gradually handed over from the teacher to the child.

8.**Teacher Observations** - Teacher observation, spontaneous or planned, can happen any time a teacher and child interact. Observations made by the teacher in the classroom provide some of the most immediate and accurate information about a child's learning. When teacher observation is compiled as a written record it allows the teacher to describe a child's learning in context. These records can make the planning of further work for an individual, group or whole class more focused and systematic.

9.**Conferencing where appropriate/necessary** - At designated times during the school year the child's work and progress can be the subject of meetings between the child and his/her teacher, or the teacher and parents, or teacher and teacher, or all parties together.

10.**Completed assignments by pupils** – projects, copybooks, work samples, homework.

11.**Standardised tests**

12.**Diagnostic tests** (where appropriate)

13. **Assessment by a psychologist** (where appropriate)

## Assessment *of* Learning:

Assessment *for* Learning is 'formative', while Assessment *of* Learning is 'summative', i.e. Its main purpose is to grade and certify students' achievement and inform future planning and learning.

- **Standardised Tests**

Some of the following tests are used:

- MIST (Middle Infants Screening Test)
- Drumcondra Reading (English) - 1st to 6th
- Drumcondra Maths 1st – 6th Class

The purpose of the standardised tests is to allow teachers to make placement and progress decisions based on assessment results and to develop appropriate interventions for certain children.

Standardised tests are administered on a class basis by the class teacher. In the event that a pupil is absent on the day of the test the SET teacher or class teacher if suitable will administer the test at a later date. Pupils may be excluded from the tests if in the view of the principal they have any learning or physical disability which would prevent them from taking the test or newcomer pupils, where their level of English is such that attempting the test would be inappropriate.

Each child's raw score, standard score, percentile rank, STEN and reading age is recorded. The percentile rank, reading age (where appropriate) and STEN score is recorded on the tracking system. (Aladdin)

The results are communicated to parents in their school report. The STEN score will be given to parents with the end-of-year report.

The results will determine the allocation of SET hours in the school and the nature of the support provided (in-class or withdrawal) under the Continuum of Support.

- If diagnostic testing is considered necessary, a meeting will be organised with the parents, class teacher, and/or SET teacher.

- Screening: *GL Assessment screener for Dyslexia and Dyscalculia can be administered with parental permission.*

- The first step in identifying children who may need SET in either numeracy or literacy is through teacher observation and teacher-designed tests. The particular measures that are administered will depend on the age and the stage of development of the child in question.

### Infant classes

### Literacy

- Jolly Phonics sound recognition, tricky word/high-frequency word recognition, blending, letter formation, writing CVC/CVCC words, simple dictation, oral language checklists. (Teacher designed tests)

- Infants self-assess their own work using a smiley face system or thumbs up or down.

- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)

### Numeracy

- Tests based on the Maths program (designed by class teacher)

- Smiley face system used on written exercises completed from the Maths program.

## Literacy

- Teacher designed spelling/dictation or comprehension tests.

- Standardised tests - Drumcondra Reading and Spelling Test.

- Children self-assess their own work using a variety of methods (depending on the class teacher or stage of development)

## Numeracy

- Teacher-designed tests e.g. mental maths or tables tests

- Topic-based or termly tests

- Standardised tests - Drumcondra Maths Test

- Children self-assess their own work using a variety of methods (depending on the class teacher or stage of development)

The SET team, in conjunction with the class teachers, analyses the results of these assessments to identify children who need to be timetabled for SET the following year. The results of some of these tests are provided to the parents in the end-of-year report

### Diagnostic Assessment:

Some diagnostic tests are used by the school to determine the needs of individuals. Such tests are administered by the SET Team following referral by the class teachers in consultation with parents/guardians. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the Special Education Needs, A Continuum of Support where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing /psychological assessment. Parents are provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed.

The following are some of the formal diagnostic tests used in school to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties:

- NNRIT

- PM READING Assessment Kit

- Renfrew Action Picture Test

- Renfrew Word Finding Vocabulary Test

- DASH Test – Detailed Assessment of Speed in Handwriting.

- WIAT-III

- Belfield Infant Assessment Profile

- Primary School Assessment Kit(DES 2007)

- Outside the Box Diagnostic Resources

- CAT4 – Cognitive Ability Test

SET Team regularly reviews diagnostic tests and selects tests most suitable for children's needs. Class teacher, SET Team, and parents are involved in selecting children for diagnostic assessment. Parental permission will be sought prior to carrying out the assessment. A member of the SET team administers the individual diagnostic tests. The SET team and class teacher interpret the diagnostic results. Appropriate different learning interventions are initiated to ensure that the results of the assessments inform subsequent learning plans. This is evident in SET teachers' plans and class teacher plans e.g. differentiation and on the continuum of support. SET team schedules a meeting with parents following testing to share information about diagnostic results. If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results the Principal/SET team will organise a consultation meeting.

- For children under the age of 6, a referral may be made through the **Assessment of Needs** process for further assessment, in conjunction with the parents.

## Psychological/ OT/ Speech & Language/Other Assessment

If it is felt that a psychological assessment may be the most appropriate action, having followed the staged approach, the class teacher/Principal will contact the parents for permission to secure or suggest a psychological assessment for their child. An assessment will determine the subsequent level of intervention, be it classroom support, School Support for Some, or School Support Plus.

The principal, SET coordinator, and class teacher liaise with parents if a psychological assessment is deemed necessary. Standard consent forms are used.

SET Team will use assessment results in drafting a support plan for the pupil, if appropriate. This determines the level of intervention needed.

The 6th class teacher/principal will ensure that the details of relevant reports/results of 6th class pupils will be transferred with them on their move to Second Level Education.

## Recording Results of Assessment:

Each class teacher has an assessment folder. This may include tests, assessments, results, work samples, and samples of pupils' self-assessments. The data is sensitive to each child and the class teacher is responsible for the safe storage of their assessment folder (Each class is equipped with a lockable filing cabinet for GDPR purposes)

In addition, results of standardised tests are logged and stored on the school Aladdin on a yearly basis.

Results of classroom tests may also be logged and stored on the school Aladdin on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

Hard copies of pupils' professional reports are stored in the Principal's Office in a locked filing cabinet, pupil support files are logged on Aladdin and hard copies kept in Principal Office.

Standardised test results may be transferred to the relevant secondary school on transfer from Primary to Second Level.

Results of end of year assessments will determine what pupils receive SET hours the following academic year.

Results of the standardised tests can be made available to the BOM to analyse the school's standards in Literacy and Numeracy.

It is each teacher's responsibility to record all parent/teacher conversations, meetings, assessments, actions etc. on Aladdin Pupil Log of Actions, this provides current teachers and subsequent teachers with a clear chronological bank of information.

## Success Criteria:

This policy is considered successful if;

- Early identification and intervention is achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The Special Education team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

## Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of staff, parents and BOM

## Timeframe for review:

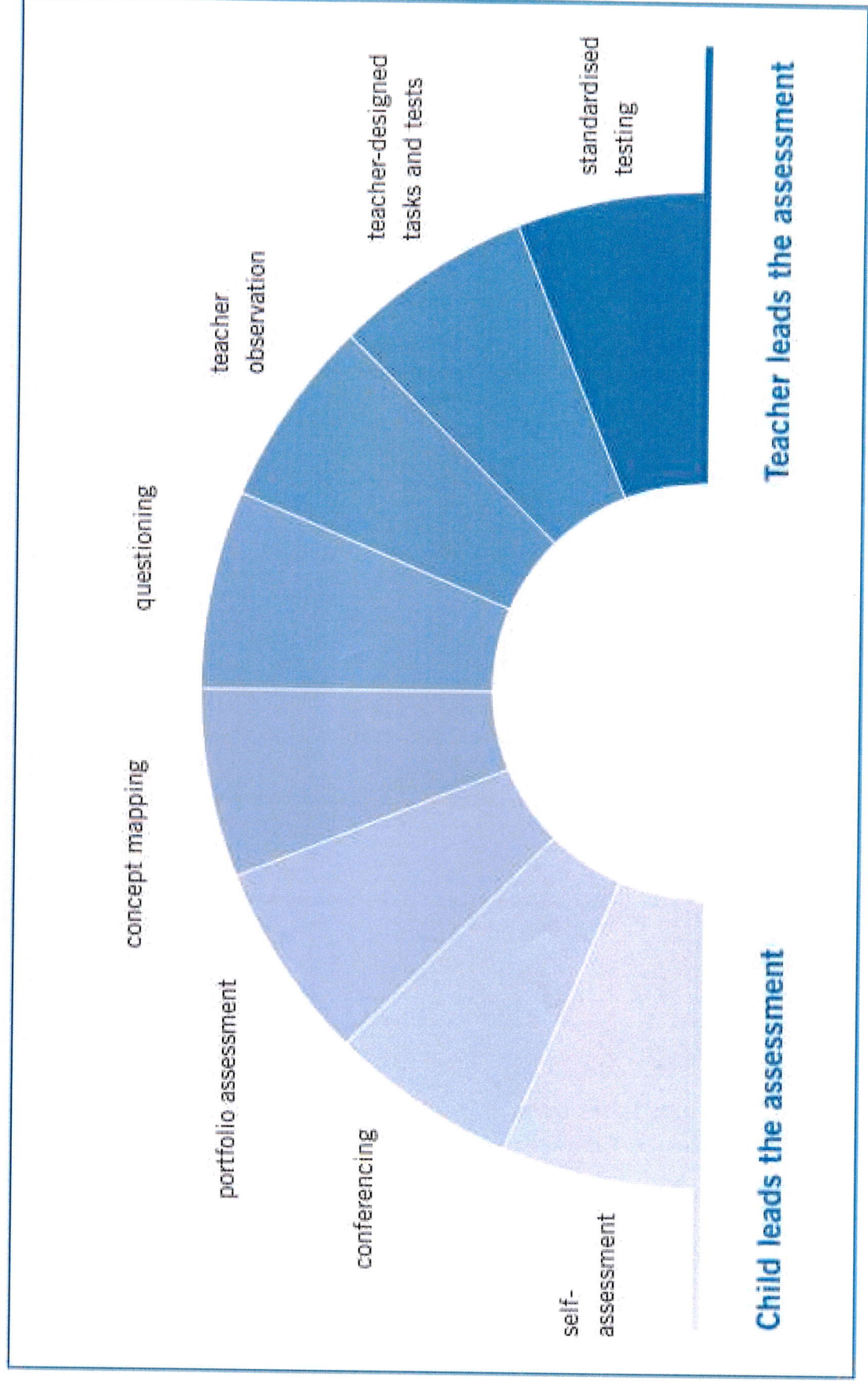This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to meet the changing needs of the school and earlier if required.

## Ratification and Review

Signed: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____5/4/22_____

Date of next review: ____2025_____

**Appendix 1: Method's of Assessment as per NCCA Assessment Guidelines Pg13**



Teacher leads the assessment

Child leads the assessment

standardised testing

teacher-designed tasks and tests

teacher observation

questioning

concept mapping

portfolio assessment

conferencing

self-assessment

# Appendix 2 as per NCCA Assessment Guidelines Pg66-67

| | Planning and organising | Resources | Strengths |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Self-assessment** | • Clarify the purpose; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Agree criteria for success.<br>• Develop children's self-reflection skills. | • prompt questions and tools for children<br>• time for children to reflect on their work | • Promotes the child's independence and motivation.<br>• Provides information from the child's perspective. |
| **Conferencing** | • Clarify the purpose; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Organise learning activities for the rest of the children.<br>• Develop children's self-reflection skills.<br>• Identify appropriate language. | • sample(s) of children's work<br>• time to talk to the child, parent or colleague(s) | • Provides information from the child's perspective.<br>• Builds home-school links.<br>• Fosters collegiality – learning and sharing with colleagues. |
| **Portfolio assessment** | • Clarify the purpose; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Develop children's self-assessment and conferencing skills. | • materials and/or software to create the portfolios<br>• storage space<br>• time to talk to each child about his/her portfolio | • Promotes the child's independence and motivation.<br>• Supports self-assessment.<br>• Provides samples of children's work as evidence of learning.<br>• Provides information from the child's perspective. |
| **Concept mapping** | • Clarify the purpose; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Develop children's concept mapping skills.<br>• Select appropriate maps. | • materials and/or software to create the concept maps<br>• time to interpret the maps | • Provides visual representations of how and what children think.<br>• Provides evidence of changes in children's thinking over time. |
| **Questioning** | • Clarify the purpose; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Formulate different types of questions.<br>• Decide the timing of questions. | • questions which support higher-order thinking<br>• time to use different types of questions with different children | • Provides immediate feedback on children's learning.<br>• Usually requires few tangible resources.<br>• Models good questioning for children. |
| **Teacher observation** | • Clarify the purpose; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Plan suitable tasks for the children being observed.<br>• Organise activities for the children not being observed, which minimise interruption to the teacher. | • observation templates or checklists<br>• time during class to observe | • Provides immediate feedback on children's learning.<br>• Can be planned or spontaneous. |
| **Teacher-designed tasks and tests** | • Clarify the purpose; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Prepare test questions and tasks which demonstrate particular understanding or skills. | • resources for teacher-designed tasks and tests<br>• time during class to observe tasks | • Provides evidence of learning in context (tasks).<br>• Provides samples of children's work as evidence of learning (tests). |
| **Standardised testing** | • Clarify the purpose; agree when during the year the tests will be taken; decide what information will be recorded and where.<br>• Read the test manual.<br>• Choose the appropriate day and time, and organise the class.<br>• Plan activities for children not | • test booklet per child<br>• test manual<br>• time to administer the test<br>• time to mark and interpret the results | • Indicates achievement compared to performance nationally.<br>• Helps to identify children's individual learning strengths and weaknesses. |