

Fossa National School

Assessment Policy

In formulating this policy, Fossa N.S. understands assessment 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)

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated by the staff using Croke Park hours during the academic year 2016/2017 in response to the directive to review assessment policies laid down in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

Policy Rationale

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. The policy endeavours to identify at the earliest possible opportunity, children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a whole school response to their needs. An effective assessment policy is central to this core objective.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching processes. We believe that an effective Assessment policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that relative success, increased confidence and raised self esteem is achieved.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are to:

- facilitate improved pupil learning
- develop positive self-esteem for all pupils
- create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- Identify areas of concern
- track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

Principles

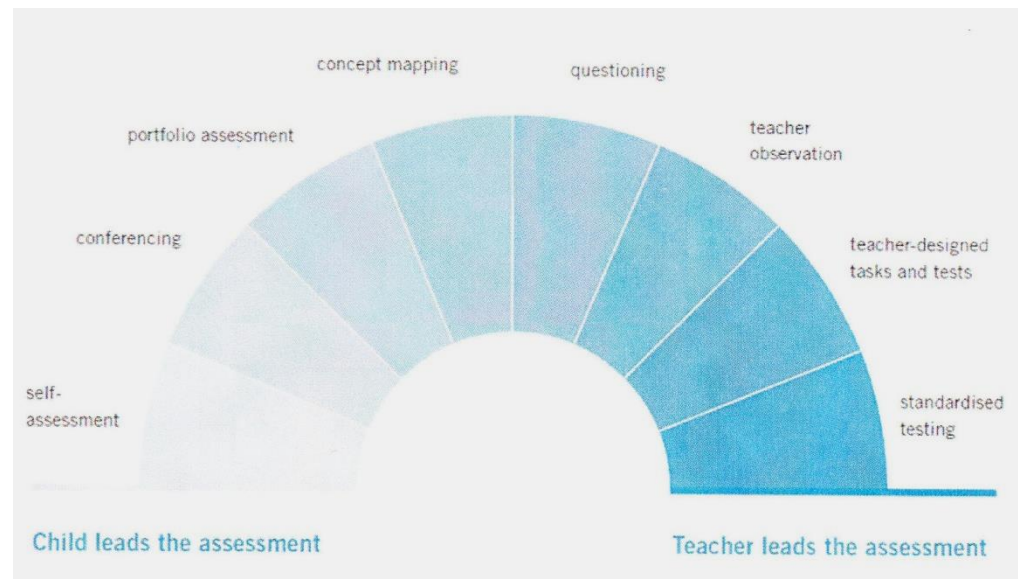
1. Careful thought is given to the purpose of assessment, adopting a wide range of methods to reflect the whole Curriculum and learning opportunities. The main purpose of assessment is to facilitate progress in a pupil's learning.
2. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, a valuable formative tool.
3. The range of opportunities for carrying out continuous assessment is increased by good classroom organisation, which encourages children to work independently while the teacher is concentrating on a small group.
4. The outcomes of assessment modify our teaching methods, provide feedback on the Curriculum as well as indicate pupil progress.
5. We recognise the potential for assessment in developing a positive self-image in the pupil from positive and constructive feedback and the feeling of success, which encourages further study.
6. Results of assessment are reported in a way useful for pupils, teachers, parents and other interested parties.
7. Assessment records must be easy to interpret, useful, manageable and should not be administratively burdensome.

Policy Content

This policy is geared towards using assessment to inform planning and identify the needs of all pupils so that adequate strategies are 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 programmes, and Individual Education Plans. See also SEN Policy

Assessment Methods

As part of the assessment process, a selection of assessment tools, *chosen at the discretion of the teacher*, including but not exclusively from, the table below, will be used to help gain a clearer picture of the success of the teaching and learning in our school. However, it is important to note at this point, that not everything a child learns can be assessed or needs to be assessed.



The following are the main areas to be addressed in this policy

Assessment for Learning

Assessment of Learning

Self-assessment by students and teachers

Report cards

Screening/Diagnostic assessment

Standardised assessment

Educational Psychological assessment

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING (AfL)

Assessment for Learning emphasises the child's active role in his/her own learning. This level of involvement, in shaping their own learning, can heighten children's awareness of themselves as learners and encourage them to take more personal responsibility for, and pride in, their learning. By interacting with the children in such a way, the teacher can gain invaluable information as to how best to deliver the curriculum in their classroom. Every interaction has the potential to provide the teacher and children with a better idea of what they do or don't understand or can and can't do. Many of these interactions are informal and are a continuous part of everyday classroom activities, in all classes, across the full curriculum. They are used to identify what pupils have achieved, what might be affecting their progress and what strategies will best support their future learning. The information that such assessment provides will also enable teachers to evaluate their own practice and make changes.

Assessment for Learning may consist of, among others, the following:

- a) Teachers observing the child in the classroom and whole school environment, through listening, observations, reflections, and reactions to classroom problems, so that a picture of the child can be built up. Various checklists can be compiled e.g. vocabulary, behaviour, skills, samples of pupils' work (e.g. writing, art) etc. An important part of recording the progress of the child is the periodic recording of strengths and weaknesses of the child.
- b) Classwork
- c) Homework

- d) Pupil – teacher discussion
- e) Projects in the Senior classes
- f) Teacher designed assessments

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Assessment of Learning generally involves assessing a child's learning at the end of a given period, such as the end of a unit of work, a week, a term, or a year. Assessment of Learning is more about measuring a child's cumulative progress towards objectives, often in the form of a grade or score. Assessment of Learning also helps the teacher to plan future work, to set new targets, and to provide feedback and information for end-of-year assessment.

Self-Assessment by students and teachers

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. Self-assessment skills include effective questioning, reflection, problem solving, comparative analysis, and the ability to share thoughts in a variety of ways. Self-assessment can be used by children of all ability levels and in all areas of learning. In age-appropriate ways, it can be used throughout the primary school and across all subjects. Whole class discussions, group situations or one-to-one conferencing are all platforms for self-assessment. These everyday activities place assessments at the very heart of teaching and learning. It enables the child to take greater responsibility for his/her own learning. A learning log can be used to document the child's self assessment and reflection on his/her work samples or collections.

Teachers in turn, can also use self-assessment to evaluate how they deliver the curriculum content to the children and by reflecting on how a unit of work was delivered. This reflective practise, coupled with the AfL and AoL mentioned earlier, will help to inform them as to what was successful and if any adjustments may improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

We will use a variety of ways of involving pupils in assessing their own learning, these may include:

- Questioning
- Feedback-individual and/or group feedback
- Dialogue and Discussion
- Focused Correction of Work
- Visual Aids in Junior Infants, Senior Infants and First Classes
- Traffic Light System
- Reflective report cards

Report Cards

In accordance with circular 56/2011, a report card is sent home to parents at the end of each school year. This report card is chosen from the templates provided by the N.C.C.A and will help communicate pupil progress to parents. As part of our policy of keeping parents informed, these reports will contain the current year's standardised test results of 2nd, 4th, and 6th classes.

Early intervention and Supplementary Teaching

There is an emphasis in our school on early intervention in Literacy and Numeracy from the Infant classes upwards. If a child begins to show signs of difficulty or a discrepancy becomes apparent between the chronological age of the child and their level of attainment, the SEN teacher and the Class Teacher will meet to discuss with the parents/guardians, the possibility of further testing in order to establish the nature of any difficulty. At this point the parents/guardians will be asked to sign a consent form allowing their child to receive additional support. In the case where a child is selected for supplementary teaching but the parents do not wish for the child to receive such support, a written letter from the parents will be sought outlining that while the school made them aware of the difficulty their child was experiencing and while supplementary teaching was made available, they have decided that they do not wish the child to avail of this support. After this consultation with parents/guardians, the SEN teacher, in co-operation with the Classroom Teacher and Principal, will administer screening/diagnostic checklists and/or tests in order to identify any underlying causes of learning difficulties which are acting as obstacles to learning. By eliciting more precise information, it is possible to analyse the relative strengths and weaknesses of the child. Programmes can then be devised, based on the needs of the child, in order to give him/her specific help. If there is still cause for concern the child, after Class Support and School Support, is referred to the Principal and possibly placed on a priority list for educational psychological assessment. Children will only be put forward for an educational psychological assessment on receipt of written approval from parents.

The results of diagnostic tests will be used in conjunction with teacher observation and standardised test results to help identify pupils who may be underachieving. This information could prove invaluable in discovering and diagnosing a learning difficulty.

Screening/Diagnostic Assessment

Junior Infants

All children in Junior Infants are screened in order to identify children experiencing difficulties in learning. Some or all of the following screening measures may be used

- Input from parents
- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests
- Checklists
- Busy at Maths whole class assessments.
- Early Intervention

Senior Infants

The same assessment methods as in Junior Infants, and the Drumcondra early Literacy and Numeracy tests. These tests are used to screen for difficulties. The aim is to identify pupils who have not the skills in place or who are showing confusion, and to allow intervention before failures are observed.

First to sixth Class

Assessment will continue as in the Infant classes, except that Standardised Testing begins in First Class in English, Spellings and Maths. This will take the form of Drumcondra tests. From second class the Drumcondra tests in English, Spelling, Maths and Irish will be used.

List of Screening/Diagnostic methods which may be used by our school

(This list may be added to or subtracted from and is not meant to be exhaustive)

Lucid Cops	Progress in Maths
MIST	Maths skills Diagnostic Test (Norman France)
Dolch List	NRIT
MICRA T	BIAP
Drumcondra English	SIGMA T
SPAR	Drumcondra Maths
Teacher Designed Test	Teacher Observation
Quest Diagnostic Profile	
Ted Ames Literacy Diagnostic Test	
Neale Analysis	

Standardised Assessment

Standardised Assessments are conducted by class teachers during the months of May/June in accordance with circular 0056/2011. It may, on occasion, be deemed appropriate by the school to administer alternative standardised tests at the beginning of the school year, to help gain a clearer picture as to any learning needs of a particular child/class. However, it should be noted that this is not required and if carried out will be in addition to the May/June testing.

The results of tests are scrutinised by the Class Teacher, the SEN teacher and Principal. Where results indicate a learning difficulty i.e. where there is a marked difference between the child's chronological and reading/mathematical age and/or whose classroom performance signify some level of difficulty, the pupil is, with written parental approval is placed on the continuum of support. If there is still cause for concern, the child is referred to the Principal and possibly placed on a priority list for educational psychological assessment, again after getting parental written approval.

In line with Circular 0056/2011 the results of pupils who have been tested at the end of 2nd, 4th and 6th classes must be communicated to parents. This result will be accompanied by a standard explanatory note from school. Under the circular, these results must also be reported to the B.O.M as well as the Department of Education and Skills in aggregated form.

This explanation is in accordance with N.C.C.A guidelines. The STEN and/or Standard Score is communicated to parents. The parents of all children in the school, whose results give cause for concern, are asked to come into school and discuss their child's progress and attainment with the class teacher.

The scripts of the standardised tests are kept until the following year when the new test results are collated. Thereafter, only the results section will be stored. The records are stored in a secure filing cabinet. The results are also stored in electronic copy form and these are kept on one computer which is password protected. These records are kept until the child has reached twenty-one years of age.

Fossa National School - MODES OF ASSESSMENT IN JUNIOR AND SENIOR INFANT CLASSES

Tools used		When?	How?	How do the findings impact on practice
Pupil self-assessment focused on learning	Written work, cutting, fine motor skills, comprehension artistic talent	Daily Weekly Daily Weekly	Copies, handwriting books/SALF(SI) Morning activities AISTEAR Teacher Questioning/Thumbs up/down Copy/ Directed drawing/Learning journal(JI)	Highlights needs/strengths that are then addressed through grouping,etc.
Teacher self-assessment and reflection	All the above	Monthly	Using a wide range of data and teacher observations	Practice is changed if required and recorded. Strategies are identified and/or modified and recorded. Good practice is shared.
Conferencing pupil-teacher dialogue	Comprehension Reading Skills Maths Concepts Oral Language Social Skills/ Self Esteem	Daily Weekly Daily Ongoing Ongoing	Verbal interaction/questioning Observation Questioning Observation	Teacher groups children for Maths/Team Teaching based on assessments and differentiates work/instructions accordingly. Any interventions/referrals needed are carried out
Tools used	What is assessed and/or info shared? Knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions. Deciding what to assess is based on the curriculum objectives	Ongoing	Verbal interaction/questioning Observation Questioning	How do the findings impact on practice
Conferencing teacher-teacher dialogue	Content, methodologies, resources, challenges, good practice/ideas	Informally (daily in class)	Daily informally teacher-teacher SET team meet once weekly SET teachers termly team teaching meeting with JI & SI teachers	CPD Shared good practice is incorporated into fortnightly plans
Conferencing teacher-parent	Social, behavioural + academic progress and development	Informally on a regular basis +	Verbal Interaction Notes home in copies where	Continuity + collaboration between home and school

communication		specific meetings when necessary. P/T meetings	necessary School App-daily/weekly	Better understanding of causes of behaviour Parental awareness of importance of involvement with homework, etc.
Portfolio assessment	As No. 1	Termly	SALF folders Assessment folders Child's Folder	As No. 1
Concept mapping	Not currently a form of assessment in Infants			
Questioning	All areas of curriculum	Continuously	Teacher questioning Peer Questioning	As No. 1
Teacher observation	All Areas	Continuously	Observation	As No. 1
Teacher designed tasks and tests	Maths Phonics Sight vocabulary Letter Formation P.E. Oral Language	Termly Weekly Monthly Termly Termly Continuous	Formal Test setting T/P Conferencing " Observation "	AS No. 1
Standardised testing	Early Literacy Test (JI) Drumcondra Early Literacy & Numeracy (SI)	End of year "	Class teacher administer and correct.	Children are grouped for Team Teaching in SI & JI

Fossa National School Assessment Grid Rang 1 agus 2.

Tools used	What is assessed and/or info shared? Knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions. Deciding what to assess is based on the curriculum objectives	When?	How? Certain methods are more suited to certain assessment procedures and to certain subjects. The teacher uses appropriate assessment methods to measure the extent to which the children have achieved these objectives	How do the findings impact on practice?
Pupil self-assessment focused on learning	All of the above	Ongoing	SALF folders 1st class scrapbooks 2nd class learning log	Makes student and teacher more aware of standard of work required/expected Teacher may clarify/change language Teacher becomes more aware of the children's interests and what they enjoy
Teacher self-assessment and reflection	All the above	Monthly	Using a wide range of data and teacher observations	Practice is changed if required and recorded. Strategies are identified and/or modified and recorded. Good practice is shared.
Conferencing pupil-teacher dialogue	All the above	Ongoing	At pupils desk - individually At teachers desk - individually In small group situations	As above
Conferencing teacher-teacher dialogue	As above	Daily-informally	Daily informally teacher-teacher SET team meet once weekly SET teachers termly team teaching meeting with 1st & 2nd class teachers	Sharing of ideas may result in different practice and sharing of resources Review and revision of plans and activities
Conferencing teacher-parent	As above	November P/T	Homework diary Reading record sheets	Change expectations i.e realistic outcomes

communication		meetings, IEP meetings, Incidentally throughout the year	Communication Diaries (when needed) Parent/Teacher meeting School App	Change the way you interact with pupils Setting different tasks for homework
Portfolio assessment	As above	Ongoing Termly	Portfolio – SALF	Shows real problems occurring again and again – e.g. reversal letters, grammatical errors
Concept mapping	As above	Ongoing (Start/end of new topic)	Mind map/web KWL (SESE)	Gives good idea of child's prior knowledge of topic May result in change of teaching and content of lesson
Questioning	As above	Ongoing	Whole class Small group Individual Blooms Taxonomy (Six levels of questioning)	Reteach as necessary Change wording Revise topic
Teacher observation	As above	Ongoing	Station teaching Teacher's diary recording of observations (Running record) as deemed necessary for specific children More effective and purposeful monitoring of specific child/group	Written records make the planning of further work for an individual, group or whole class more focused and systematic Enables the teacher to gather info on the child's learning needs and preferences
Teacher designed tasks and tests		Ongoing	Termly Maths assessment Word lists Spelling Tests/Dictation test	Planning is adjusted accordingly for future work directed towards the children's needs
Standardised testing	Drumcondra (English , Maths , Spelling & Irish)	May	Class teacher administer and correct.	Helps in deciding classes for the following year Results are useful in planning further learning in numeracy and literacy

Fossa National School Assessment modes – Third and Fourth Classes

Tools used:	What is assessed and/or information shared? (Knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions. Deciding what to assess is based on the curriculum objectives)	When?	How?	How do the findings impact on practice?
Pupil self-assessment focused on learning	All of the above	Ongoing	SALF Folders Learning logs	Findings are reflected on to help focus on areas of individual need.
Teacher self-assessment and reflection	All the above	Monthly	Using a wide range of data and teacher observations	Practice is changed if required and recorded. Strategies are identified and/or modified and recorded. Good practice is shared.
Conferencing pupil-teacher dialogue	All of the above	Ongoing	Child goes to teacher. Teacher goes to child. .	Enables teacher to encourage and support the individual learning styles of each individual child. Provides opportunity to praise and challenge children and set individual targets. Provides opportunity to follow up on differentiation.
Tools used:	What is assessed and/or information shared? (Knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions. Deciding what to assess is based on the curriculum objectives)	When?	How?	How do the findings impact on practice?
Conferencing teacher-teacher dialogue	Methodologies Resources Planning/ Scheduling discussed Collaboration in relation to ongoing events in the school. Special Needs/ Concerns of individual children experiencing difficulty.	Informally -Daily	Daily informally teacher-teacher SET team meet once weekly	Sharing of ideas and collaboration. Opportunity for professional dialogue which builds confidence. Sharing practice enriches teaching styles and encourages teachers to build on their own repertoire – work smarter. ‘Many

				heads...'
Conferencing teacher-parent communication	All of the above	(a) October (b) November (c) Ongoing (d) June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/ Teacher Meetings • Incidental meetings re. issues, IEP meetings, • Discussion based on written reports • School App 	Encourages and promotes partnership between school and home which facilitates a better understanding of school life and provides opportunities for real parental involvement. Enriches children's learning experiences by having parents interested and involved. Provides insights and clearer understanding of children's circumstances and priority needs.
Portfolio assessment	All of the above	Ongoing	SALF Folder Art Portfolio Maths Dictionary / Journal Project work	Provides a record of children's learning which develops and builds confidence. Promotes a sense of self-efficacy. Provides a lens by which the teacher gets a sense of the children's sense of self-worth.
Concept mapping	Knowledge Attitudes	Ongoing	SESE Maths P.E.	Informs KWL - A record of knowledge from which to build. A record of progress. For children which builds self – efficacy.
Questioning	All of the above	Daily	Higher Order Lower Order Closed Questions Open Questions	Elicit knowledge which informs further teaching and planning. Platform from which to build on differentiation in an all-inclusive way.
Teacher observation	All of the above	Daily	Listening Observing. Observing interactions as children collaborate during pair work, group work and station teaching.	Informs, interventions. Provide opportunities for praise and further interactions. Informs differentiation of interventions with regard to social and behavioural skills. Informs scaffolding where necessary.
Teacher	(a) All of the above	(a) Weekly	In group work through	Record of progress informs

<p>designed tasks and tests</p>	<p>(b) Knowledge</p>	<p>(b) Termly</p>	<p>collaboration Oral – tables, reading, gaeilge Aural Written</p>	<p>expectations. Informs differentiation. Informs support interventions and further planning for assessment. Facilitates setting individual targets.</p>
<p>Standardised testing</p>	<p>Drumcondra –Literacy, Maths, Spelling, Gaeilge</p>	<p>End of May</p>	<p>Class teacher administer and correct.</p>	<p>Informs class groupings for the following year. Informs groupings for Literacy and Numeracy in classes.</p>

Fossa National School Modes of Assessment- 5th /6th classes

Tools used	What is assessed and/or info shared? Knowledge, skills, attitudes, dispositions. Deciding what to assess is based on the curriculum objectives	When?	How?	How do the findings impact on practice
Pupil self-assessment focused on learning	Knowledge, skills and reasoning	Fortnightly (SALF) Daily	Thumbs up, thumbs down, smiley faces, traffic lights	Dictates differentiation used
Teacher self-assessment and reflection	All the above	Monthly	Using a wide range of data and teacher observations	Practice is changed if required and recorded. Strategies are identified and/or modified and recorded. Good practice is shared.
Conferencing pupil-teacher dialogue	Individual learning targets/goals	weekly	one to one/one to group	Change methodology to suit individual/group need
Conferencing teacher-teacher dialogue	Learning objectives/outcomes and associated activities. Sharing good practice	Informally - daily	Daily informally teacher-teacher SET team meet once weekly	enhances teaching Teaching ideas extended
Conferencing teacher-parent communication	Child's learning outcomes and social and emotional development	Formally bi-annually. Ongoing as needed	P/T meetings Appointments with parents as needed.	Greater understanding of child's needs
Portfolio assessment	Learning outcomes, knowledge and skills	Ongoing	Teacher designed tasks put together in a folder. maths journal	Used to assess learning outcomes which is then used to influence differentiation
Concept mapping	Knowledge and skills and attainment of learning targets	End of a topic	In copy/SALF ;individual child, using concept map details learning/knowledge of topic	Can clearly see number of learning outcomes achieved

Questioning	All of the above	Always	Variety of questioning; using open/closed or higher order thinking questions	Models good questioning to children. Provides immediate feedback on children's learning
Teacher observation	All of the above	Ongoing	Mentally noted Brief notes jotted occasionally when deemed necessary	Provides immediate feedback on children's learning thus allowing for AoL which impacts on AfL
Teacher designed tasks and tests	Knowledge and skills-learning objectives	Ongoing as appropriate	Prepare test questions or tasks which demonstrate particular understanding or skill in a curricular area.	Provides evidence of learning in context (tasks) Provides samples of children's work which impacts on planning of future lessons
Standardised testing	Drumcondra –Literacy, Maths, Spelling, Gaeilge	Annually	Class teacher administer and correct.	Highlights learning support needs, both high and low percentiles

Psychological Assessment

When a child is prioritised for an educational psychologist assessment, a meeting will be held with the parents to discuss this procedure. The S.E.N team in conjunction with the Principal will organise the assessment. The assessment will inform the drafting of an IEP (Individual Educationa Plan) for the child. The Psychological reports can only be accessed by personnel as outlined in page 95 of the NCCA Guidelines. These reports are stored securely in locked filing cabinets.

Assessment information on an individual child may be provided to another school, primary or post-primary, to which the child is transferring. This will only be done upon receipt of written enrolment confirmation. If a school requests our school to forward the educational psychological assessment, this request will be conveyed to the parent.

Recording and storage of assessment information

The records of report cards and standardised assessments are stored in a secure filing cabinet. These records are kept until the child has reached twenty one years of age. In accordance with circular 0056/2011 and upon enrolment confirmation, appropriate information will be forwarded to other schools to which pupils are transferring.

The following designated persons are also entitled to direct access to individual, group or class assessment information.

The child's Class Teacher

The Class Teacher, within the same school, to whom the child is transferring
The Principal
Special Education Teachers (SET)
The DES Inspector
The NEPS psychologist
The Education Welfare Board and its officers
Other relevant professionals

Success Criteria

We will know this policy has succeeded when:

A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.

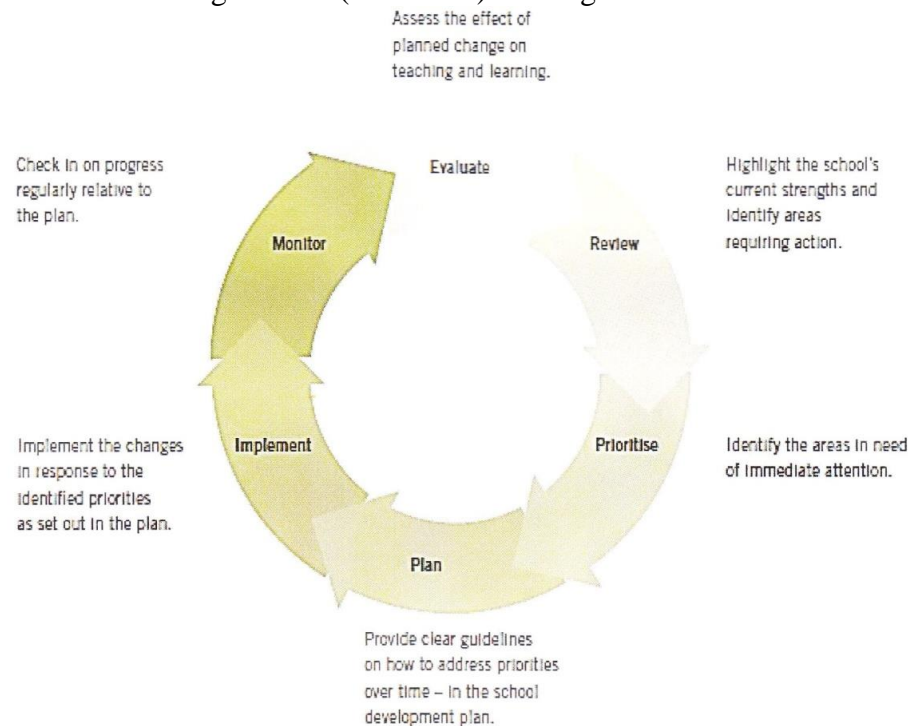
Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for the different aspects.

Transfer of information from teacher to teacher happens efficiently at the beginning and end of the school year.

Each child has been presented with the opportunity of assessment from the spectrum of assessment tools mentioned above.

Reflective practise becomes a regular feature of teachers' notes and preparation.

A system of measuring success (see below) is being used to assess how effectively the policy is being used.



All teaching staff members have responsibility for the implementation of this policy in their classroom and support settings. The Principal will monitor the implementation of the policy guidelines.

Implementation Date

This policy will take effect after the period of consultation has taken place with the whole school community and once the policy has been ratified by the B.O.M.

Timetable for review

This policy, once ratified, will be reviewed once annually at staff meetings to assess if amendments are required and on a rotational three year cycle at B.O.M level. It will be the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that this takes place.

Ratification & Communication

The B.O.M. officially ratified this policy on __11/06/2018_____

Signed _____
Chairperson B.O.M.

Reference Section

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for School NCCA 2007

Special educational Needs – a Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers and Learning Support Guidelines DES 2007

Circular 0056/2011 Numeracy and Literacy Strategy

Circular 0138/2006 Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools

Circular 02/05 Organisation of Teaching Resources for Pupils who need Additional Support in Mainstream Primary Schools

Primary School Curriculum – section on assessment for each subject

Drumcondra English Profiles, G Shiel & R.Murphy ERC 2000

Commonsense methods for children with Special Needs, Peter Westwood, Routledge

A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website

Draft Report Cards templates. www.ncca.ie

