**Geashill N.S.**

**Assessment Policy**

In formulating and operating this policy, Geashill 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 NCCA2007]

**Introduction**

This policy document was composed following a series of collaborative meetings held as part of a policy review in the academic year 2016-17. We aim, through this policy to continue to develop and extend the good practice in assessment already established in the school as identified in the WSE Report published in June 2011.

“*The school has developed a very good system of recording attainments in standardised tests that enable the tracking of pupils’ progress and the identification of learning difficulties. All mainstream class teachers implement a broad range of useful assessment strategies. The school is now advised to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies and to incorporate the most valuable of them into a co-ordinated, whole-school approach to assessment in mainstream classes. Diagnostic assessment is utilised to very good effect in special educational needs settings.”*

*WSE Report June 2011*

**Policy Rationale**

The core of the policy is that all children should experience success at school. This 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. Our school believes that an effective assessment policy is central to this core objective. It is of overriding importance that assessment at Geashill National School should motivate pupils and enable and encourage them to achieve to the best of their ability.

**Relationship to School Ethos**

We aim to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. We believe that an effective Assessment Policy will help teachers to identify early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

**Aims and Objectives**

The primary aims and objectives of the policy are:

• To facilitate improved teaching and pupil learning.

• To create a procedure for monitoring achievement.

• To generate base-line data that can be used to monitor achievement over time.

• To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers.

• To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.

• To plan the assessment of learning outcomes that informs future teaching.

• To diagnose difficulties in learning in order to provide intervention strategies.

• To identify gifted and able or talented children who require extension activities.

• To give positive feedback to the learner with clear ways forward.

• To encourage increasing skills of self-assessment.

• To keep records of attainment that will inform the reporting process.

**Range of Assessment Methods used throughout the School**

Both *assessment* ***of*** *learning* and *assessment* ***for*** *learning* will be 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. Each teacher will use the most appropriate assessment method to measure the extent to which children have achieved these objectives.

In line with WSE recommendation we have developed a whole school objective based assessment profile for each child. Class teachers are responsible for recording the children’s progress at designated intervals throughout each school year.

**Assessment for Learning**

The main purpose of AfL is to improve the child’s learning on a daily basis. When a teacher notes a child’s difficulties, or gains insight into a child’s preferred ways of learning, he/she can use this information to adapt his/her teaching to suit. Assessment for learning is a way of informing and involving the learners themselves in the process of assessment. The following methods of Assessment for Learning (AfL) are used in the school

* **Teacher observation**
* **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**
* **Pupil Self-Assessment**
* **Rubrics**
* **Completed assignments by pupils** – projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework
* **Parental, pupil feedback or observation**
* **Standardised tests**
* **Diagnostic tests**
* **Assessment by psychologist**

**Assessment of Learning**

The mainpurpose of AoL is to determine the extent to which curriculum objectives have been met. The teacher can use this information in different ways when planning the next steps in the child’s learning.

* **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**
* **Completed assignments by pupils** – projects, copybooks, activities, work samples, homework
* **Parental, pupil feedback or observation**
* **Standardised tests**

**Techniques for Assessment**

* Focused Observations – observing a child or a group of children at an activity.
* Random Observations – monitoring what is happening i.e. works better in a group, alone, tires easily, responds to visual promptings etc.
* Structured Observations – observing one particular child each day at set intervals.
* Discussion, conferencing – talking to and questioning the children about their work, setting targets for future work.
* Presentations – evaluating with the child the outcome or end product – writing, drawing, diagram, model charts etc.
* Monitoring spelling and table tests.
* Teacher designed tests
* Portfolios of work.
* Staged assessments at the end of blocks of work, particularly in Mathematics.
* Mental Maths tests
* Behaviour and attendance monitored where necessary.

**Screening**

To ensure appropriate early intervention takes place, any children struggling with the Junior Infant programme are screened using the B.I.A.P (Belfield Infant Assessment Programme). Some of these early risk indicators are included in an appendix.

The middle Infants Screening Test (MIST) is administered by the Learning Support Teacher to all Senior Infants in the second term of Senior Infants.

**Standardised Tests**

Senior Infants complete

* Drumcondra Early Numeracy Test
* Drumcondra Early Literacy Test

All classes from 1st to 6th complete standardised tests in October each year.

1st class

* Micra-T
* Sigma-T

2nd to 6th

* Drumcondra Reading Test
* Drumcondra Maths Test

In May standardised tests are completed by 2nd, 4th and 6th classes.

* Micra-T
* Sigma-T

Results of these tests are reported to Department of Education in line with Circular 0018/2012

* Class teachers administer these tests to their own classes during the given period (indicated above), adhering strictly to the conditions outlined in the testing manuals.
* Exemption from standardised testing is considered when deemed necessary following Department of Education guidelines
* Raw Score, Standard Score, Percentile Rank, STEN and Reading Age are recorded manually, with standard score and STEN recorded electronically.
* Principal, S.E.N and class teachers are involved in the analysis of standardised test results for an individual pupil, class and whole school level.
* First priority for learning support is given to children with a percentile of ten or below. Support is also offered to Senior Infants under Early Intervention Programme.
* Information gathered from the analysis of results informs long term and short term plans, I.E.P.’s and I.L.P.’s.
* Results of standardised tests are communicated to parents at annual parent-teacher meetings and end of year reports.
* Standard score and STEN explanation guide are used to communicate results to parents. See Appendix

In addition to the above, Cairdeas classes are assessed using the Reynell Language Test and the Assessment of Comprehension and Expression test. Pupils who have received a cochlear implant have an annual Speech & Language assessment carried out by therapists in Beaumont Hospital. This supplementary information informs teachers regarding integration and in devising appropriate educational programmes and plans.

**NRIT**

The NRIT is administered to 1st class and 3rd and 5th classes every year by our S.E.N. teacher. Results are recorded together with STEN and standard scores from standardised tests.

**Diagnostic Testing**

Diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual

pupils who present with learning difficulties. A list of diagnostic tests used in the school is attached as an appendix to this document.

The class teacher and SEN teacher are involved in selecting children for diagnostic assessment. These children will normally have been on Stage 1 of the Continuum of Support.

After consultation with parents and consent given, appropriate diagnostic tests will be carried out.

The SEN teacher administers the diagnostic tests and interprets the results.

If the diagnostic assessment indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial this will be arranged. In consultation with the classroom teacher, a learning programme will be drawn up and the child will be on Stage 2 of the Continuum of Support.

The results of the diagnostic assessment are recorded in the Individual Learning Profile for each pupil. The profile will also include:

* Previous test results
* Relevant information from class teachers, parents and other professionals
* Identification of the pupil’s particular needs.

**Procedures for Further Assessment**

After diagnostic assessment and a block of learning support, each child’s progress will be reviewed. Continuum of Support guidelines are followed. If there are serious concerns expressed by the parents, class teacher and SEN teacher, further intervention will be explored. This may include referrals to Speech & Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy or a request for NEPS involvement. The Principal/Learning Support Teacher will seek the advice of the NEPS psychologist and discuss the test results and concerns about the pupil. The pupil is now on Stage 3 of the Continuum of Support. Based on the advice received, the application for a full assessment, if required, will be completed by the class teacher, SEN teacher and principal.

**Success Criteria**

This policy will be successful when:

* Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects.
* A co-ordinated, whole-school approach to assessment will continue to develop throughout the school.
* The transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year.
* The transfer of information to post primary will occur appropriately.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

While assessment is the responsibility of all teachers, the Principal will have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

**Ratification & Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2016. It will be reviewed in the school year 2018/19.

Signed :\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson

Signed :\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal