



Woodstock Educate Together National School

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Woodstock Educate Together is a newly established 2019 Developing school. Over the next 8 years it is envisioned an intake of 1 cohort of Junior Infants annually, with an allocation of an additional teacher on reaching projected enrolment figures. At present (2023-24) we have 3 Permanent Mainstream Teachers and a Teaching principal alongside 1 SET teacher. Cognizant of this dynamic situation, the plan below will need consistent collaboration and reviewing on an ongoing basis.

Rationale

This assessment policy is the first assessment policy for the school. It will be reviewed at two year intervals until the school is fully grown. It is prepared in line with the NCCA guidance on assessment with the purpose of ensuring assessment informs our teaching practices

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

Woodstock Educate Together N.S. is an equality based schools throughout the country. The representative organisation for these schools is 'Educate Together'.

Educate Together aims to meet a growing need in Irish society for schools that recognise the developing diversity of Irish life and the modern need for democratic management structures. In particular, Educate Together guarantees children and parents of all faiths and none equal respect in the operation and governing of education.

The schools operated by the member associations of Educate Together are fully recognised by the Irish Department of Education and Skills and work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools. However, they have a distinct ethos or governing spirit. This has been defined in the following terms:

- **Equality based** i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
- **Co-educational** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities,
- **Child centred** in their approach to education
- **Democratically run** with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers (*Source: Educate Together Charter*)

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Whilst the concepts of child-centredness and co-educationalism are now widely accepted in Irish primary education, what distinguishes the Educate Together schools is their hard work in developing a culturally inclusive and democratic ethos. This has pioneered unique approaches to inclusion of minority opinions and faiths in the Irish context. The schools have developed education programmes which open the eyes of children to the naturally positive contribution that social, religious and cultural diversity and difference of viewpoint and opinion make to society.

The other characteristic feature of these schools is that they are democratically organised and governed. This maximises the potential for building a genuine partnership between the professional, objective role of the teacher and the necessarily personal involvement of the parent in contributing to their children's education.

Information taken from the Educate Together website www.educatetogether.ie

Aims

By introducing this policy, the school hopes:

- 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 have a cohesive plan on assessment throughout the school
- To support practice on assessment for learning and assessment of learning
- To support the assessment guidelines set out by the NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment)

Guidelines (content of policy)

(Refer to Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools, NCCA, 2007) a.

Purposes of assessment:

- To inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To identify and support the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able
- To contribute to the school's strategy for prevention of learning difficulties
- To monitor pupil progress and attainment
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning 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 involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies

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b. Assessment for learning:

The following types of informal assessment methods are used in the school:

- *Teacher observation*
- *Teacher-designed tasks and tests*
- *Questioning*
- *Work samples, portfolios and projects*
- *Peer Assessment*
- *Self-Assessment*
- There are different assessment methods depending on age, level and subject (e.g. weekly checks, phonics screeners, termly reviews, exit tickets etc)
- Teachers assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples and projects. What is included is at the discretion of the teacher, or in some cases the pupils
- The school's plan for each curriculum subject will address the issue of assessment
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests may be used for all curricular areas. However, they are always used for English, Irish and Maths
- Pupils should be involved in the assessment of their own work/progress (e.g. self-correcting, compilation of portfolios and paired/collaborative assessment)

c. Standardised tests

The following standardised tests are used in the school:

- Boxall Assessment
- PSAK
- Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (DPRT)
- Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (DPMT)
- Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test (DPST)
- Senior Infants are tested in Term 2 or 3 with Jackson Profile
- 2nd – 6th classes are tested in Term 3 and results are based on Spring Norms
- Pupils are boxalled annually with Nurture group pupils boxalled termly
- The Additional Educational Needs (AEN) co-ordinator, principal and middle management team are responsible for ordering and co-ordination of testing

For Standardised Assessments in Term 3 (2nd to 6th) * Will we reach this class cohort *

- Each class group's class teacher and Support Teacher is responsible for the distribution of the tests
- The class teacher administers the standardised tests in co-ordination with the Support Teacher
In the case of children with specific needs, the tests may be carried out on a one-to-one basis or within a small group
- Pupils who are not taking a test with their classmates complete the test in the AEN room under the supervision of a Support Teacher

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- The raw score, standard score, percentile rank, and STen (Standard Ten) scores are recorded. There is a uniform approach across all classes
- The Support Teacher and class teacher are involved in the analysis of results for an individual class. The AEN co-ordinator and principal are involved in the analysis of results across a number of classes and at whole school level
- Information gathered from tests inform teaching and learning by showing pupils' areas of weakness, areas of strength in relation to national norms
- Results of the standardised tests from 2nd -6th are communicated to parents in the end of year report card. The STen score is used to communicate results. An explanatory note is enclosed with the end of year report. Efforts are made to provide this sheet in the parent's mother tongue
- The results of these tests are used to inform the AEN team of those who require further diagnostic testing. Furthermore, they have bearing on the allocation of learning support hours in the school. Those who score below the 12th percentile in either English or Maths are prioritised for academic support

d. Screening Testing: *(Refer to Learning Support Guidelines and Circular 02/05)*

The following screening tests are used to facilitate the early identification of learning strengths / difficulties:

- Phonics Screeners
- The class teacher, Support teacher, AEN co-ordinator and principal are involved in interpreting results
- Screening leads to specific intervention by the class teacher based on the Continuum of Support
- Children who score below the specified criteria undergo further diagnostic testing
- Parents are informed by the class teacher following diagnostic assessment
- An additional screening test is used for all children with English as Additional Language (EAL) in their first two years of schooling and as deemed necessary therein. This screening test is called the Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) and it is administered by the EAL Teacher at regular intervals in accordance with Additional Educational Needs Policy

e. Diagnostic Assessment: *(Refer to Learning Support Guidelines, Chapter 4)*

- Formal diagnostic tests may be used as appropriate to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties.
- These include the Test 2R Jackson Phonics,
- the Neale Analysis and the Drumcondra Early Numeracy Diagnostic Test, PEARSONS ,
- Dyslexia Screening Test, Non-verbal Reasoning Test etc. This is not an exhaustive list
- The class teacher and Support Teacher are involved in selecting pupils for diagnostic assessment
- The Support Teacher administers the diagnostic tests
- The class teacher and Support Teacher interpret the results

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- The school has a staged approach to assessment to ensure that the results of the assessments inform subsequent learning plans
- For criteria used when deciding which pupils should be referred for supplementary teaching, refer to the AEN policy
- If it is felt necessary to consult a psychologist (NEPS or other) about diagnostic test results, the support teacher and principal and/or parents arrange for such consultation

f. Psychological Assessment:

- The Principal, Supportn Teacher and class teacher liaise with parents if it is felt that a psychological assessment or other assessment is required
- The principal or Support teacher is responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment from specialists (e.g. Psychologist, Speech & Language Therapist, Audiologist, etc...)
- The assessment plays an important role in drafting an educational plan for a pupil as it identifies areas of weakness and strength as well as providing recommendations for learning
- All reports are stored in Aladdin.

g. Recording the results of assessment

- All results are stored on Aladdin Schools
- An agreed terminology is used and understood by all teachers
- Teachers are made aware of the need to record comments in an objective and instructive manner
- Arrangements are in place for the transfer of appropriate information based on assessments. We request that parents provide information (report cards) if their child is transferring to or from another school

Success Criteria

The school wide implementation of this policy will ensure:

- 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 different aspects
- Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year

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Roles and Responsibility

The following people have particular responsibilities for aspects of this policy:

- Teaching staff
- Parents
- Principal
- Board of Management
- Psychologists, Therapists etc

Implementation Date

This policy was implemented by September 2022.

Timetable for Review

The operation of the new policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended during the school year 2024/2025.

Signed: 

Date: 18th September 2022

CHAIRPERSON of the BOM

Reference Section

- Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum – Guidelines for Schools, NCCA, 2007
- Special Educational Needs – a Continuum of Support, Guidelines for Teachers and Resource Pack for Teachers, NEPS, 2007
- Learning Support Guidelines, DES, 2000
- 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
- Working together to Make a Difference for Children, NEPS
- Drumcondra English Profiles. G. Shiel & R. Murphy, ERC, 2000
- Commonsense Methods for Children with Special Needs, Peter Westwood, Routledge Falmer, 1997
- A range of assessment tests are listed on the SESS website www.sess.ie
- Draft Report Cards Templates. www.ncca.ie
- info@ncca, September 2005. Issue 1, p. 8. Assessment for Learning

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