
Assessment Policy



Burriscarra Primary School

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Introduction

This policy has been formulated to provide clarity around assessment practices in Burriscarra Primary School. It outlines the variety of formal and informal assessment tools used by the staff throughout the school year and demonstrates how the methods of assessment are used in improving learning outcomes for pupils attending the school. It is informed by the following publications:

Revised Primary School Curriculum (1999)

Learning Support Guidelines (2000)

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

Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools (2007)

National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2011).

Rationale

Assessment is an essential component of the teaching and learning process. *“The purpose of assessment is to gather, record, interpret, use and report information about a pupil’s progress and achievement in developing knowledge and understanding of concepts, skills and attitudes.”* [Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools, p.7]. Consequently, this guides and informs teaching and learning in the school. *“Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and plans future work accordingly.”* [Primary School Curriculum: Introduction, p.17]. However, it is important to note that the day-to-day informal conversations and interactions between the teacher and pupil are a crucial part of the assessment process.

Relationship to School Ethos

Burriscarra Primary School promotes the full and harmonious development of each pupil, i.e. intellectual, physical, cultural and moral. An effective assessment policy identifies early interventions for pupils experiencing difficulties in order to ensure that each pupil is supported holistically, thereby increasing their confidence and self-esteem.

Aims

The primary aims of this policy are:

- To formalise assessment practices already in use in the school;
- To facilitate and improve pupil learning;
- To assist teachers' long-term and short-term planning;
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths and difficulties;
- To ensure there is a co-ordinated whole-school approach to assessment and reporting practices in the school.

Purpose of Assessment

The main purposes of assessment are as follows:

- To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum;
- To gather and interpret data at class/whole school level and as a comparison with national norms;
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils;
- To enable teachers to differentiate their programmes and their teaching methodologies in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils are being met;
- To compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainments;
- To facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs;
- To facilitate the active involvement of pupils involvement in the assessment of their own work.

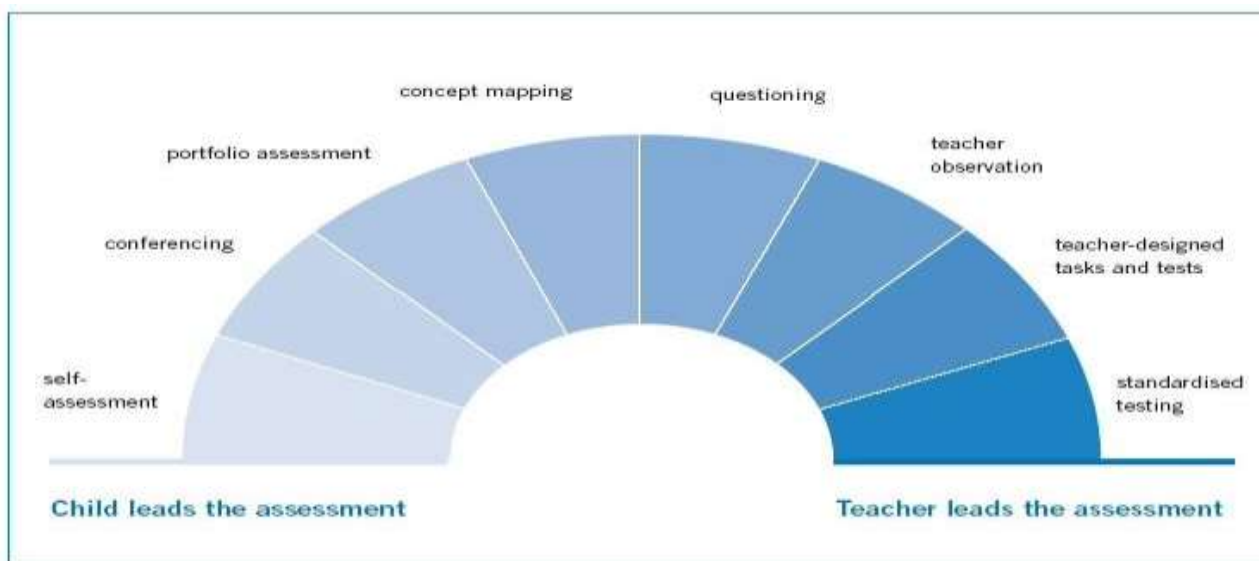
Classroom Assessment Methods

The Revised Primary Curriculum (1999) describes assessment as having four functions-formative, summative, evaluative and informative. Two principal approaches to assessment are used to build on these functions:

- **Assessment for Learning (AFL):** The teacher uses evidence on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning. Assessment for Learning emphasises the pupil's active role in his/her own learning. Communication between the teacher and pupil helps the pupil to become more self-aware as a learner and to develop the skill of self-assessment. Teacher feedback both written and verbal is central to this process.
- **Assessment of Learning (AOL):** The teacher periodically records pupils' progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents, teachers and other relevant persons.

Both approaches will be used by teachers to make professional judgements about pupil progress. The choice of assessment method will be selected by the teacher and will be guided by the objectives in each curriculum area/subject. Each teacher will use the most appropriate assessment method to measure the extent to which pupils have achieved these objectives. Teachers will maintain an assessment folder throughout the school year recording all relevant assessment information pertaining to each individual pupil. The range of assessment methods to be used throughout the school is shown on the diagram below with a short explanation on each.

A Continuum of Assessment Methods



[Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools, p.13]

- **Pupil Self-Assessment**

As the pupils progress through Burriscarra Primary School, they will engage increasingly in self-directed learning. A variety of strategies are used to support them in reflecting on their learning, e.g. 'Two Stars and a Wish', rubrics, KWL grids, talk partners, checklists, evaluation sheet, etc.

- **Conferencing**

This assessment method is used both formally and informally. Weekly feedback on a pupil's written tasks may take place between teacher and pupil. This is an informal conversation that positively reinforces what the pupil has done well and one specific aspect of his/her work that may need further improvement. More formal conferencing takes place at parent-teacher meetings where information about how the pupil learns at home and at school is shared. Formal and informal meetings provide teachers with the opportunity to discuss assessment tools, gather ideas to improve classroom practice and develop common standards through a shared understanding of the quality of pupils' work.

- **Portfolio**

The portfolio is used to collect samples of the pupils work. These samples can be chosen by either the teacher or the pupil. The purpose of the portfolio can be to show improvement in pupils' work, to show a range of work, to show pupils' strengths and interests, or to show their best work. Portfolios may contain samples of the pupils' work in a particular subject including:

- Examples of written work at different stages of development
- Project work in science, history or geography
- Work samples in visual arts
- Charts or diagrams from maths or science
- Photographs of the pupils' participation in a PE activity

- **Concept Mapping/KWL grid/Pyramid Ranking**

Concept mapping is useful in assessing pupils' learning in science, history and geography. It is primarily a picture summary representing a pupil's understanding of ideas and relationships between ideas. This can be completed before a unit to establish a pupil's previous knowledge of a topic or after the topic is completed to assess how pupils' thinking has been modified or extended. An example of a concept map can be found in Appendix A.

- **Questioning**

Questioning underpins all aspects of our daily classroom interactions. It provides valuable assessment information for the class teacher. In order to develop more pupil-led assessment, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to ask questions about a topic. This often results in teachers redefining or paraphrasing what the pupil is asking but ultimately leads to a refinement of a pupil's thinking and understanding.

- **Teacher Observation**

Each teacher maintains a folder/hard back copy divided into individual sections marked with each pupil's name. The teacher will record significant observations on each pupil. This may be the result of a spontaneous or planned pupil observation, anecdotal observation and/or shadow study.

- **Teacher-designed tasks and tests**

Spelling tests, tables tests and mental maths test takes place weekly in each classroom. Teachers may also check pupils' understanding of topics covered during the week with a short teacher-designed test. It facilitates teachers in identifying those pupils who may need some extra support during the following week. Teachers also recognise that correction of pupils' copies is an important aspect of assessment work. In Burriscarra Primary School we value the importance of giving positive written feedback to pupils with suggestions on how they might improve.

Other written tests take place at timely intervals, e.g. Halloween, Christmas, Easter, etc. The nature of the topic covered will dictate the type of task/test formulated by the teacher. Examples of test questions include: closed test, open test questions, multiple-response, free response, correcting responses, matching, multiple-choice, true-false questions.

- **Standardised Testing**

Standardised testing is used to measure a pupil's reading and mathematical skills and to determine pupils' progress in those areas. In Burriscarra Primary School, the Micra T Test (English) and SIGMA-T (Maths) are administered to all classes each May.

Pupils may be excluded from the test if they have a learning difficulty, physical disability or are learning English as a second language where their level of English is such that attempting the test would be inappropriate. The Principal makes the final decision on these exemptions.

The test results are used for the following purposes:

- To identify pupils with learning difficulties so that appropriate supports can be put in place.
- To report to parents on their child's achievement and progress. All parents are informed of their child's sTen score in both English and Maths via the end-of-year school report. This is accompanied with an information sheet explaining how to interpret the score and how parents can further support their child.

Diagnostic Testing

Diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for pupils who have performed at or below the 10th percentile in English and/or Maths standardised tests. See Appendix B for a list of diagnostic tests used in the school.

Parental permission is sought to carry out further diagnostic testing to determine the pupil's learning needs. Parents are invited to a follow-up meeting with the class teacher and the Special Education teacher to discuss learning support provision. A Student Support file is prepared firstly by the class teacher and then by the Special Education teacher if extra support is required.

Psychological Assessment

To ensure a structured and systematic response to pupils who may experience learning difficulties, the school follows the three-stage process to assessment, identification and programme planning outlined in Circular 02/05 [Appendix C] Stages 1 and 2 involve school-based interventions usually with in-class and/or withdrawal support provided.

If the class teacher and learning support teacher continue to have concerns about a pupil's lack of progress, they may recommend to the pupil's parents that advice/assessment should be sought from the educational psychologist [Stage 3: School Support Plus]. It is the responsibility of the

Principal to contact the educational psychologist and co-ordinate future meetings regarding the pupil's assessment. Copies of psychological reports are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Special Education room.

Recording and Storing of Records

As per Department of Education and Skills requirements, the results of second, Fourth and Sixth classes are uploaded onto the Department's database annually (Circular 0018/2012). However, results for all classes are also recorded and tracked. A hard copy of results is also stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Special Education room. Pupil screening and standardised assessment results are held in the school until the pupil reaches 21 years of age.

Reporting

Parents/Guardians

A parent-teacher meeting is held in November each year. Teachers are also available to meet with parents throughout the year to discuss their child's progress. Under GDPR, parents are entitled to access all personal data relating to their child whether stored in any electronic form or in hard and/or manual copy in a filing cabinet. Standardised test results are recorded on the end-of-year report card and posted to parents towards the end of June.

Reporting to other schools

A Pupil Transfer form and the pupil's report card will be forwarded to the Principal of the school to which the pupil is transferring when confirmation of enrolment is confirmed. In the case of 6th class pupils, a My Profile, MyChild's Profile and 6th class report card known collectively as an Education Passport will be forwarded to their new school when confirmation of enrolment is confirmed.

Reporting to outside agencies

Parents will need to give their written consent for personnel such as an educational psychologist, speech and language therapist, etc. to access any previous reports completed about their child.

Success Criteria

Successful implementation of this policy will be evident in the following ways:

- Teacher Pupil Profile Folder: Each teacher will maintain a folder throughout the school year containing a range of informal and formal assessment information on each pupil in their class.
- Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the end of each school year

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal and Deputy Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Special Education teachers are responsible for overseeing the co-ordination of psychological and diagnostic testing.

Each teacher is responsible for tracking and recording individual pupil progress in their assessment folder.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals. It will also be reviewed in response to new legislation and/or directives from the Department of Education and Skills.

Ratification:

This school plan was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

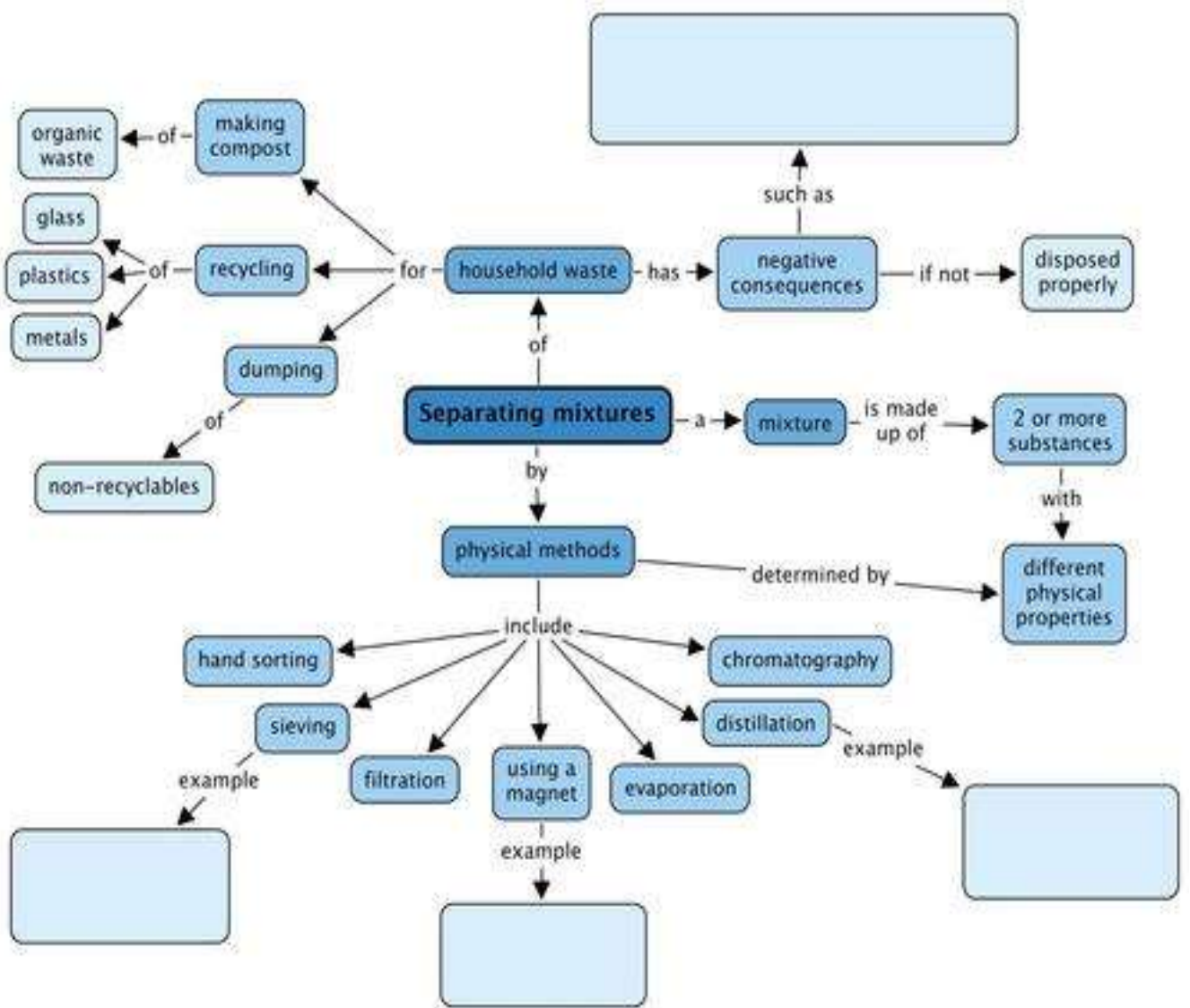
Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A
Example of a Concept Map



Example of a Concept Map about Recycling

Appendix B

List of Diagnostic Tests

Non-Reading Intelligence Test

English

Micra-T

Aston Index

Dyslexia Screening Test

SPAR reading Test

Neale Analysis of Reading Ability

Middle Infant Screening Test

New Drumcondra Primary Reading Test

Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test

Drumcondra tests of early literacy

The York Assessment of Reading Comprehension

Maths

Drumcondra tests of early numeracy

Access maths test

Mathemagic assessment tests

Sigma tests

Appendix C

A Staged Approach to Meeting the Needs of Pupils with Special Educational Needs		
Observation	Process	Personnel Involved

<p>Stage 1 Class Support Class teacher/parent has concerns regarding a pupil's academic, physical, social, behavioural or emotional development</p>	<p>Class teacher informs one of the teachers on the Special Needs team and in consultation with this teacher administers appropriate screening measures. Class teacher devises a plan, which aims to meet pupil's identified needs within the normal classroom setting. The success of this plan is regularly reviewed in consultation with parents.</p>	<p><i>Class teacher</i> <i>Parent</i></p> <p><u>Additional supports available:</u></p> <p><i>SEN Teacher</i> <i>NEPS Psychologist</i></p>
<p><i>If concern remains after a number of reviews, the Special Education Support Team in the School may make a decision to move to Stage 2</i></p>		
<p>Stage 2 School Support Child is referred to SEN teacher, with parental permission for further diagnostic testing.</p>	<p>If diagnostic testing indicates that supplementary teaching would be beneficial, this is arranged. Parent, class teacher and SEN teacher collaborate in devising, implementing and reviewing the pupil's learning plan.</p>	<p><i>Class teacher</i> <i>Parent</i> <i>SEN Teacher</i></p> <p><u>Additional Supports Available</u></p> <p><i>HSE</i> <i>NEPS Psychologist</i> <i>Other Support Staff e.g.</i> <i>Speech and Language Therapist</i></p>
<p><i>If significant concerns remain after a number of reviews, it may be necessary to implement Stage 3</i></p>		
<p>Stage 3: School Support Plus School formally requests a consultation, and, where appropriate, an assessment of need from a specialist outside the school.</p>	<p>A learning plan is devised by personnel involved, which includes identification of any additional available resources that are considered necessary in order to implement the plan. Parents should be fully consulted throughout this process. This learning plan should be subject to regular reviews, leading to regular revisions with a referral for specialist review as necessary.</p> <p>Any private practitioner engaged by Burriscarra NS at Stage 3 will have the relevant Department of Education and Skills Circulars and guidance notes drawn to their attention.</p>	<p><i>Class teacher</i> <i>Parent</i> <i>SEN Teacher</i> <i>Relevant Specialist</i></p> <p><u>Additional Supports Available</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>NEPS Psychologist</i> ● <i>Scheme for Commissioning Psychological Assessments</i> ● <i>Speech and Language Therapist</i> ● <i>Occupational Therapist</i> ● <i>Psychiatrist</i> ● <i>Paediatrician</i>