

Assessment and Reporting Policy

Abacas Special School Kilnamanagh

Introduction

There is a legislative requirement for schools to have an assessment policy and the guidelines set out the relevant implications for recording and reporting about children's progress and achievement. The implications of the Education Act (1998), Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003), the Equal Status Act (2000), Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) and the Freedom of Information Acts (1997 & 2003) are outlined. The guidelines also include some useful information on the roles of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) in supporting children's learning.

This school policy on Assessment and Reporting is informed by Assessment in the Primary School – Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007) and by the National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life 2011-2020. It was formulated in collaboration with the principal, the teaching staff and the Behaviour Analyst in January 2014.

All students should experience success at school. Fundamental to our approach to the curriculum at Abacas Special School is the ability and commitment to adapt teaching to the unique qualities and needs of each pupil. This policy endeavours to identify, at the earliest possible opportunity, knowledge of the strengths and difficulties which our students present with. Central to this is the need for an effective assessment policy. 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.

The Primary Curriculum emphasises in general terms, the importance of assessment in enabling the teacher to extend and enrich pupils' learning across all curriculum areas. Research has highlighted more specifically how teachers can use assessment to make learning more enjoyable, more motivating and more successful for each child. The renewed focus on assessment recognises the growing confidence "that assessment can be used as a means of increasing student achievement and not simply as a means of measuring it" (O'Leary, 2006)

Our belief, supported by empirical research, is that a carefully personalised curriculum and education, planned and delivered and using evidence-based principles, has the potential to remove the barriers to learning faced by children with autism. This allows us to tailor the curriculum that best meets the needs of each pupil, with an appropriate emphasis on developing functional, life-enhancing skills and knowledge and on teaching appropriate behaviours. The curriculum has the flexibility to address the individual and very specific needs of each pupil. Our ultimate goal is to improve learning through effective assessment practices, ensuring that each pupil is enabled to reach their full potential.

Aims and Objectives

- 1) To facilitate improved pupil learning
- 2) To create a procedure for monitoring achievement
- 3) To track learning processes which assist the long and short term planning of teachers
- 4) To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis involving parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses

Purpose of assessment

- 1) Provide a context in which our pupils can demonstrate what he/she knows, understands
- 2) To provide motivation, challenge and encouragement to the pupil to ensure good progress.
- 3) Provide a baseline measure to ensure that teaching and learning begins at an appropriate level.
- 4) Inform planning and target setting for individual pupils and small groups of pupils.
- 5) Track and monitoring the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils.
- 6) Evaluate the effectiveness of existing interventions.

- 7) Reinforce the delivery of each pupil's personalised curriculum by enabling the learning needs of each individual student to be identified and allow future teaching strategies based on evidence.
- 8) Gathering and reporting information for pupils, parents, colleagues and outside agencies.

Methods and range of assessment

A wide variety of assessment methods are used within Abacas Special School.

- Assessment for learning (formative assessment) based on the day to day, moment to moment assessment of the pupils attainment.
- Assessment of learning (summative assessment) provides a snapshot of what the pupil knows and understands at a given point. Includes both statutory and annual assessments
- Baseline assessments are used to provide an initial profile of strengths and weaknesses for new pupils and to provide baseline measures for particular skills prior to intervention.

Assessment for Learning

- Assessment for learning takes place within teaching sequences and at the point of learning. Central to good practice in the field of ABA/evidence based programmes is the commitment to data driven learning and decision making, that is, decisions regarding the pupils progress and the next teaching steps are driven by the evidence of learning at the previous teaching point. Classroom staff collect data on responses to all targets within the pupils' personalised programme each day. Data collection is continuous, patterns in the data are instantly recognised, and alterations can be made to the teaching sequence to ensure success. Daily analysis of this data allows learning successes and pupil difficulties to be picked up and analysed speedily and objectively.
- Continuous data collection allows for the tracking and monitoring of progress in a moment to moment fashion. As the pupils' rate of acquisition varies, all pupils have an individualised 'mastery criterion' specified for each programme. This criterion is an observable measure of the standard of performance that must be demonstrated before the skill can be considered mastered. Mastery criteria are also used to identify when the

student is ready to move on to the next stage in a sequence and/or for the teaching of a new skill to be introduced. Decision analysis criteria are used to ensure that students are learning as efficiently as possible. These criteria are reached when a student has not mastered a skill within a certain number of teaching sessions or opportunities. If this happens, the teaching strategies are re-examined and changes made to ensure that the student has the greatest chance of success. Tracking and monitoring within the teaching session allows for mastery and decision analysis criteria to be adhered to and instantly recognised in order for pupils to move forward in their learning as quickly as possible.

- Baseline performance is recorded for all potential learning/teaching targets before the teaching process begins. This allows teachers to identify if the teaching strategies being used are effective and allows comparison of performance pre- and post-intervention.

Assessment of learning

- Pupils are assessed on an annual basis using a variety of assessment tools. The aims of these assessments are to monitor progress over the year, to contribute to target setting and to inform planning. Annual assessments include the following.

Assessment	Person responsible
PEP- 3	Teacher
VB-MAPP	Teacher
ABLLS-R: Assessment of Basic Language & Learning Skills	Teacher
AFLS: Assessment of Functional Living Skills	Teacher
T-TAP	Teacher

In addition to annual assessment of pupils' progress through their IEP, teachers assess progress on individual goals and monitor this progress closely through the use of short term objective setting.

Baseline Assessments

Baseline assessments are conducted prior to where possible or else within the first few weeks of term for all new students starting in Abacas Special School. This allows us to obtain a clear picture of the child's strength & needs and allows for planning, programming, and teaching to begin at the right level. Assessments include

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Recording

The purpose of recording is to

- Inform planning, programme and target setting.
- Monitor progress on a moment to moment basis
- Monitor termly and annual progress
- Document evidence of learning
- Identify and analyse strengths and weaknesses
- Recognise achievements and celebrate with the school community and family
- Provide a summary for discussion, and inform verbal and written reports
- Form a basis of reporting to parents, DES and other agencies.

What is recorded?

- Pupil's progress throughout all areas of their personalised curriculum. This is achieved through data collection on pupils responses both within their discrete learning targets and within wider curriculum activities
- Termly and annual progress through IEP and annual reports.
- Qualities, skills, achievements and interests as well as dietary requirements through pupil profiles.

- Data on the effectiveness of behavioural strategies implemented as part of a Behaviour Plan (BP). These plans are specific to each pupil and created based on functional assessment.
- Highlights from the day through the home-school communication book.
- Results of formal assessments and accreditations e.g. ABBLs, T-Tap, PEP 3 & ASDAN
- Monthly work plans

What records are kept?

What records are kept?	Where are they kept?
Student Profiles	Teacher folders
Monthly Work Plan – Cuntas Míosúil	Student folder when in use. Principal's office when completed
Behaviour Plan (where applicable)	Student folder and school server.
IEP	A copy is kept in the teacher's folder. When completed they are stored in the Principals office. All information regarding IEP meetings are stored in the Principals office
Home/ School correspondence books	When in use by the classroom teacher on the desk then transferred to student's bag. When completed sent home to parents.
Termly plans	When in use in teachers own folders.
Long & Short Term Objectives	When in use in students own folder. The archived once mastery has been met.
Attendance	Roll books held in classrooms
Data Collection Sheets	Held on file in classroom for one month
Incident and Injury Report Forms	Stored in Incident folder in Principal's Office and copy supplied to parent if student injured or involved in an incident

Reporting

Arrangements for reporting to parents/carers:

Daily- parents/carers receive a daily home school journal communication containing information about the pupil's day. This book will contain information of a

personal nature in addition to information about specific skills that parents/ carers/teachers have indicated that they would particularly like to hear about.

IEP meetings are scheduled for October and April each academic year. Parents will be allocated a time and arrangements made to re-schedule if unable to attend. Invitations will be extended to all professionals working with the student i.e. SLT, OT.

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
- Staff have roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers/staff

Roles and Responsibilities:

Class Teachers, Behaviour Analyst, and the Principal assume shared responsibility. It is the responsibility of the class teacher and Behaviour Analyst to train staff in interventions for individual students.

Implementation:

This policy reflects current practice in the school.

Review Timetable:

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years' time or amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

The Board of Management ratified this Policy on

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Chairperson