



## *St. Malachy's Primary School*

### **Assessment Policy:**

*'Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get them there.'* (Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles. The Assessment Reform Group, 2002)

### **Key Statement**

This policy statement should not be read in isolation, but links with all other school policies and the schools stated aims and objectives. It is a working document which will change in line with the demands and spirit of the Northern Ireland Revised Curriculum.

### **We believe Assessment for teaching:**

- ▶ is vital in facilitating effective teaching,
- ▶ is about making informed judgements about pupils' progress and achievements, knowledge, understanding and skills,
- ▶ is an on-going process and should not be seen as separate from teaching,
- ▶ is integral to successful planning for future teaching and learning.

This is how we conceive of 'summative assessment' and it is what CCEA (Assessment for Learning; 2007) describe as assessment *of* learning.

### **We believe Assessment for learning**

- ▶ is effective when clear learning intentions are shared with the pupils,
- ▶ is effective when children are aware of the skills and knowledge that are being developed and how these can be transferred to other areas of learning.
- ▶ is effective when it is linked to an awareness of the learning strategies children are employing,
- ▶ is effective when feed back is given in an appropriate way linked to motivation and self esteem
- ▶ is effective when it allows children to evaluate their own and others' work and set appropriate goals and success criteria
- ▶ is effective when children are clearly understand how to improve
- ▶ should form the basis for reporting on pupils' progress and attainment
- ▶ should become, as far as is possible, the child's responsibility assisted by the teacher.



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Such assessment aims at providing a climate of growing learning independence, increased motivation and risk taking independent of extrinsic rewards. It aims at improving relationships and a sense of reflection in the classroom.

### **We believe Assessment for reporting**

- ▶ is effective when it provides a comprehensive picture which enables learning for the future
- ▶ provides an agreed and fair indication of what a child's skills, understanding and knowledge are at a specific point in time for summative reflection.
- ▶ provides an effective currency for discussion between teachers promoting reflective practice and also acts as an aid to transition discussions.

### **Diagnostic Assessment**

Diagnostic tests will be used by teachers and SENCO. Such tests can be formal or simply a teacher using best judgement to seek an understanding of where weaknesses are in order to address them. Teachers then share this information with the pupil to plan the next steps to improve their learning and involve the pupil in his or her learning.

### **Formative Assessment**

**'Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.'** *Assessment Reform Group (ARG), 2002*

Formative assessments are on-going assessments, reviews, and observations in a classroom. Teachers will use formative assessment to improve instructional methods and pupil feedback throughout the teaching and learning process. For example, if a teacher observes that some students do not grasp a concept, she or he can design a review activity or use a different instructional strategy. Likewise, students can monitor their progress with performance tasks. The results of formative assessments are used to modify and improve instruction. Pupil involvement is important.

Such formative assessment encompasses teacher observation, questioning, classroom discussion, and marking of student work, including homework and diagnostic tests.

Assessment for Learning will:

- be part of effective planning;
- focus on how pupils learn;
- be central to classroom practice;
- be a key professional skill;
- be sensitive and constructive;
- foster motivation;
- promote understanding of goals and criteria;



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- help learners know how to improve;
- develop the capacity for self-assessment; and
- recognise all educational achievement. *ARG, 2002*

### **Summative Assessment:**

Teachers use summative assessment information to inform the next steps in their planning or to highlight gaps in pupil knowledge and identify areas that they may need to re-emphasise. The information gathered from summative assessment can also be analysed at whole-school level for benchmarking and target setting.

#### Summative assessment:

- takes account of all the objectives or outcomes of the programme of study/topic
- makes use of several short assessments rather than the 'big test' at the end of the year;
- takes account of formative assessments throughout the year,
- is formative in its own right;
- provides feedback on what learners did or did not do well; and
- provides teachers with insights into what pupils have and have not learned in order to adjust and refine their teaching.

### **Evaluative Assessment.**

The main purpose of evaluative assessment is to ensure that there is appropriate accountability at all levels for the performance of our school system (CCEA, 2011).

Data will be collected to identify patterns of performance that can be used to improve learning outcomes in the future. Data will be used at whole school, Key Stage, Coordinator level and class teacher level to evaluate outcomes and determine future improvement planning. Benchmarking information will be used to monitor expected progress and set targets.

### **Summary:**

The link between teaching and learning and pupil involvement is very important if new targets are to be met. The importance of the self-esteem and motivation of the pupil is crucial and rewards and praise etc. will play a significant role.

In summary, assessment needs to be informative, diagnostic (formative), summative and evaluative. Assessment informs teaching, diagnoses areas for learning development, provides appropriate summative 'pictures' of a child's progress at a moment in time, and helps allow the school to evaluate its own effectiveness.

The school's new Learning and Teaching, and Marking and Feedback Policies will provide greater detail on how assessment is implemented.