



St. Ultan's Assessment Policy 2025
Flowerhill,
Navan,
Co. Meath
Roll Number 19216E

Assessment Policy Introductory Statement

Assessment is central to the teaching and learning in our school. Assessment for and of learning takes place in line with the Assessment Guidelines published by the Department of Education.

Rationale

Assessment is central to effective teaching and learning and therefore it is necessary to assess, inform and monitor the progress of all pupils. The information that we glean from the assessment process has to impact on the subsequent teaching and learning in our classrooms if all pupils are to succeed. Our policy therefore covers both **assessment of learning** and **assessment for learning**.

Assessment **of** learning is assessment for accountability purposes, to determine a student's level of performance on a specific task or at the conclusion of a unit of teaching and learning, as well as assessment to enable teachers to compare the reading and Math performances of their pupils with reading and Math age norms. This type of assessment includes standardised testing. The information gained from this kind of assessment will be used in reporting. Assessment **for** learning, on the other hand, acknowledges that assessment will occur as a regular part of teaching and learning and that the information gained from assessment activities will be used to shape the teaching and learning as well as the planning process in our school.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

We as a staff endeavour to use assessment to inform teaching and learning in every classroom and as a staff we will model the characteristic spirit of our school, which in essence means that we work with children's strengths and use a strengths based approach to assessment.

Aims

Working from the understanding that *Assessment* refers to the process of gathering information, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievements in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes, the aims of our policy on assessment include:

- The identification of student strengths.
- to inform our teaching methods, strategies, resources and approaches
- to monitor the holistic progress of every pupil
- 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 challenges
- to inform teachers' long and short-term planning
- to coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis
- to inform the establishment of instructional groups
- to diagnose difficulties in learning in order to provide intervention strategies
- to give positive feedback to the learner with clear ways forward
- to keep records of attainment that will inform the reporting process.

Purposes of assessment are:

- to inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curricula and syllabi
- to gather and interpret data at class/whole school level
- to identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils
- to inform the Individual Education/Pupil Profile Planning process
- 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.

Assessment of and for Learning

Each pupil in our school has an assessment folder and pupil profile, with each pupil's progression in specified areas such as literacy; numeracy and social skills, so information on every pupil can be updated and passed on with ease of access from teacher to teacher. In St. Ultan's we use a variety of assessment methods and these include:

- Teacher observation (every class)
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests (every class)
- Interview and questioning (every class)

- Diagnostic tests
- Standardised tests
- Psychological tests
- Adaptive skills tests
- QQI and LPL2 PLU Portfolios
- Classroom based Assessment
- QQI tasks and key assignments.

Work samples, portfolios and projects are used to assess post-primary syllabi in our school and are examined by both external and internal examiners. The assessment relies on the production of work samples, projects and portfolios which are developed by the pupils over time. Other formats of assessment are also used and include:

- Assessment of the Junior Cycle L2LP and QQI Level 2 and 3 in line with the Office for State Examination Commission and the Department of Education
- Some assessments are given at the discretion of individual teachers. However, it is necessary for the whole school to have a cohesive approach to assessment of each pupil and therefore the checklists provided in the relevant plans/policies will be completed for each pupil individually
- Assessments of literacy and numeracy will be carried out by the class teacher to identify areas of strengths, needs and to inform areas of learning for teachers
- Checklists, mastery records, profiles and teacher notes will be used to support teacher observation
- Portfolios and work samples will be used in all classes and in particular the post-primary classes
- The school's plan for identified curriculum subjects addresses the issue of assessment. Please refer to the 'assessment' section for each subject in the St Ultan's School Plan and subject plans
- In each subject of the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to engage in self-assessment. This is achieved by asking them to choose work to be displayed in their profiles as well as providing rating scales, self-editing of work, pupil self-reflection and group discussion.
- Our school has a centralised system for storing and monitoring information on a pupil's behaviour. (Aladdin). This can be accessed by staff on the server and provides information on pupil's progress with regard to behaviour.
- This centralised system has been designed to support our Code of Behaviour and will form the basis of future references for pupils.

Psychological Assessment

It is mandatory for a prospective pupil to have an up-to-date psycho-educational report before enrolling at St. Ultan's Special School. Our current enrolment policy states that assessment, including psychological assessments, are a central component in school life in St. Ultan's. Parents are requested to sign a consent form in this regard when the pupil is enrolled. However, if during the pupil's time in the school it is necessary to carry out a psychological assessment, the parents will be informed by the psychologist, explaining the procedures to be followed. The parent will have the

right to refuse permission for a psychological assessment at any time. After the assessment, the parents will be invited to a feedback session where the results of the assessment will be explained. Where pupils refuse permission for a psychological assessment to be completed and where this impacts on the placement of the pupil in the school, the BoM may have to make a decision in relation to the placement of a pupil on reports that are already available. With parental consent the class teacher and school principal are responsible for requesting and arranging an assessment for pupils from specialists needs such as a Speech and Language Therapist, Audiologist, Occupational Therapist etc. This can be facilitated through the school. The psycho-educational assessment will be central in drafting an educational plan for a pupil. A psychological report is stored in the pupil's personal file. These files are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the administrative area of the school which is further protected by an electronic alarm system. All information is stored in compliance with Data Protection principles. Please see our Data Protection Policy for details.

Standardised and Diagnostic Assessments

Standardised and diagnostic tests are available for use within the school and are administered in relevant classes where necessary. The appropriateness of a test for a particular pupil will be established before being administered. This refers to culture- fairness, special needs, home language, sensory impairment and learning difficulties of the individual pupil. The Young Group Reading Assessment and WRaPS (word recognition and phonic skills test) are used to obtain age equivalent scores so that the whole school reading scheme can be organised in accordance with pupils' level of ability. York is used for literacy throughout our senior school. Any exemption from testing / assessment will take place in accordance with Circular 0138/2006. If it is not possible to administer a standardised test due to the significant challenges a particular pupil may have, a number of other suitable teacher designed assessments will be undertaken where possible including, but not limited to: happiness audit, checklist for fine motor skills, social skills observation profile, movement ABC, shape, colour and number identification, SNIP Behaviour checklist.

Results can be recorded by giving the age equivalent and, where possible, a standard score and percentile rank may be given but only if deemed appropriate. Analysis and interpretation of results will be carried out by the management team in consultation with the teachers. The information gathered from tests will be conveyed to the class teacher and parents as appropriate. This information will be central to the formulation of Individual Education Programmes, preparation of lessons, including differentiation and the provision of remediation by the relevant class teacher. In addition, results will be used for the formation of instructional groups within the school and the deployment of teachers who have skills appropriate to the group's needs. Results of testing and the pupil's holistic progress will be communicated to parents twice during academic year. In the first term information will be provided to parents at the IEP/PPP meetings. Written reports to parents will be *qualitative* rather than *quantitative* in nature and school reports will be completed via the Aladdin Communication System.

Autism-specific assessment

Although formal assessments will be administered as appropriate, additional assessments may be utilised based on recommendations from the Department of Education. The Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools (Government of Ireland, 2022) state the following:

"Students with autism can present with strengths and needs across multiple areas of functioning related to academic development, language and communication, social and emotional development and life skills. Accordingly, assessment should be comprehensive and cover all domains relevant to the individual student". (p.40)

Therefore, some of the below assessments may be administered in relevant classes where necessary:

Autism-specific assessment tools include:

Psychoeducational Profile (PEP-3)

TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile (T-TAP)

Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS)

Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)

Record Keeping

Regarding recording the results of assessment:

- pupils standardised assessment results are recorded on pupil's IEP which are stored electronically on Aladdin for 7 years after the pupil has left the school
- psychological reports are kept in the pupil's personal file and retained by the school indefinitely
- agreed terminology is used to communicate results and teachers are mindful of the need to record any comments in an objective and instructive manner
- sensitive data is securely stored in the relevant files of each pupil which is stored in a locked filing cabinet
- test results are communicated to those with an involvement in the pupil's learning – parents, therapist, school to which a pupil is transferring etc.
- once requested, relevant records, are given to the parents to give to the school to which the pupil is transferring.
- When accepting the files and transferring children to another school parents need to sign to say they have received the files from the school and they are taking full responsibility for them.

Note: Please see lists of assessments used for state examinations in our school in appendix 1.

Success Criteria

A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of curriculum planning, teaching and learning in St. Ultan's. 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. The success of this policy will depend on the progress of all of our pupils. This progress will depend on the impact that assessment has on the teaching and learning in our school.

Roles and Responsibilities

All of the staff will have responsibility for ensuring this policy is implemented. The management team will oversee and co-ordinate the assessments of the L2LP and QQI, the literacy, numeracy and checklist assessments by each class teacher.

Implementation, Ratification and Communication

The Principal completed an initial draft of the policy following whole school evaluation. The draft of the policy was given to all of the staff for their input and recommendations. As part of our whole school planning day and NCSE advisor gave input to management on the area of assessment and the staff gave further recommendations as to what should be included in our assessment policy. A committee was established to further revise the policy with the support of the school psychologist. A subsequent draft of this policy was completed and discussed with all staff present on the whole school planning day and again at a committee meeting in November 2024. This draft was reviewed by the principal and sent for comment before being discussed again at a staff meeting. The final draft was sent to the parent representatives as well as other Board of Management members for comment before ratification in January 2025. This policy was ratified by the BoM in February 2025.

Date: 29 January 2025

Signed: 
Chairperson

Primary	Junior Cycle	Senior Cycle
Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Checklist • Early literacy test • Young's Group Reading Test • WRaPS • Teacher designed assessments Numeracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy Checklist • Teacher designed assessments 	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Checklist • York assessment • Schonell spelling • GRTII • Teacher designed assessments Numeracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy Checklist • Mathemagic • PLU Checklist Level 1 & Level 2 • PLU Portfolio's L2LP • Classroom Based Assessments in Short Courses • Teacher designed assessments 	Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Checklist • York Assessment • GRTII • Teacher designed assessments Numeracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numeracy Checklist • Mathemagic • QQI Level 2 • Teacher designed assessments

Appendix Assessments in our School

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
- Report Cards Templates. www.ncca.ie
- info@ncca, September 2005. Issue 1, p. 8. Assessment for Learning