



St. Michael's School

Assessment Policy

June 2025

Introduction

Under Article 22 of the Education Act, schools must “regularly evaluate pupils and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the pupils and their parents.” The Department of Education Circular 0138/2006, *Supporting Assessment in Primary Schools*, provides a framework for assessment, complemented by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment’s *Guidelines for Schools: Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum*.

Following an assessment audit by teachers (Appendix 1) in the school year 2024/2025, this policy was reviewed by staff in June 2025. Following consultations with pupils and parents, it was subsequently updated to reflect the evolving needs of the school community and align with current standards. This revised policy was shared with the Board of Management in June 2025.

Rationale

Assessment is the systematic process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using, and reporting information about a pupil’s progress and achievements. At St. Michael’s School, we see assessment as integral to teaching and learning. The core of our Assessment Policy is to identify pupils’ particular needs so that they will experience success at school. This enables teachers to set appropriate work at the level necessary for pupils’ continuing progress. We strive to motivate pupils by fostering self-esteem and empowering each pupil to reach his/her full potential.

Effective assessment:

- Is part of the teaching and learning process and built into teachers’ planning
- Is based on evidence of what pupils know, understand, and can do.
- Includes written records and the retention of relevant evidence.
- Is inclusive, enabling age-appropriate student self-assessment.

Relationship to School Ethos

We provide a secure, healthy and caring environment which values the uniqueness of each pupil(Mission Statement). The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each pupil and to the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. It is our wish that our pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life-skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives satisfying to themselves and lives which will contribute to the betterment of society. We believe that an effective assessment policy will help teachers to identify interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that pupils reach their full potential, thus increasing confidence and raising self-esteem.

Aims

In order to help pupils attain their potential, it is essential that there are effective assessment processes in place. The primary aims of this policy are to:

- Enhance teaching and learning outcomes.
- Establish a structured process for monitoring achievement.

- Inform long- and short-term planning through accurate tracking of learning.
- Coordinate consistent assessment procedures school-wide, engaging parents and pupils in managing strengths and weaknesses.
- Diagnose difficulties in learning to inform intervention strategies.
- Guide transitions into appropriate classes/programmes at senior levels.

To achieve these aims, we:

- Ensure records are manageable and purposeful.
- Promote objective teacher judgments.
- Use a variety of assessment techniques (e.g., observation, questioning, photography and recording).
- Deliver clear, constructive feedback and where possible target based (verbal and written).
- Involve stakeholders: pupils, teachers, parents, and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs).

Assessment Types

- Formative Assessment- Helping the pupil in the process of learning
- Evaluative Assessment- Helping the teacher to evaluate the learning opportunities provided. Activities can be planned taking into account the particular needs of the pupil so that their skills, knowledge and understanding may be further developed. Pupils may also be involved in assessing their own work.
- Summative Information- Providing information for reports and school records. A summary report may then be written based on the evidence of what a pupil knows, understands and can do.

Our policy encompasses Assessment of Learning, Assessment for Learning, and Assessment as Learning.

1. Assessment of Learning (AoL Summative) evaluates pupils' performance on specific tasks to inform:
 - a. Planning and target setting.
 - b. Reporting to parents and other stakeholders.
 - c. Feedback for end-of-year reviews.
2. Assessment for Learning (AfL Formative) 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 process in our school. It is integrated into day-to-day teaching and involves:
 - a. Identifying current learning levels. Where are they now in their learning?
 - b. Establishing future learning goals. Where are they going in their learning?
 - c. Charting steps to achieve these goals. How will they get to the next point in their learning?

Providing feedback to pupils is central to assessment for learning and this feedback is based on evidence of how and what the pupil is learning. Based on the information gathered from the pupils, teachers can make changes to their planning, organisational strategies and teaching methodologies in order to make learning more successful for the pupils

3. Assessment as Learning (AaL, an aspect of formative) involves peer assessment, self marking and learning conversations. It encourages pupils to set goals, track progress and understand their strengths and weaknesses. It emphasizes student autonomy and reflection:
 - a. Encourages pupils to reflect on their learning and set goals.
 - b. Builds metacognitive skills and responsibility for progress.
 - c. Involves peer assessment, self-marking, and learning conversations.

Through assessment the teacher constructs a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and plans future work accordingly. Assessment may take many forms and range from informal day-to-day teacher assessment to the formal processes.

Informal Assessment

Informal assessment includes teacher observation, teacher-designed tests, assignments, and may include homework. Each teacher decides the frequency and format of these assessments based on student needs. Examples of informal assessment techniques:

- Focused or random observations.
- Structured observations (e.g., monitoring specific pupils at intervals).
- Teacher-student discussions and conferencing.
- Monitoring spelling, tables, and tasks.
- Portfolios, photographic records, and behavioural tracking.

The most common form of assessment used in our school is teacher observation and teacher designed tests/tasks and assignments. These informal assessments are at the discretion of individual teachers. Each teacher has discretion as to the format, administration and frequency of in-class testing. Different assessment levels are used depending on age and ability. Records of teacher-designed tests are kept by the individual teachers and may be communicated to parents at the Parent-Teacher Meeting and in the end of year School Report.

Each form of assessment will enable teachers to:

- Inform planning for and coverage of all relevant areas of the curriculum
 - Gather and interpret data at individual, class and whole-school level
 - Identify the particular learning needs of pupils or groups of pupils
 - Monitor pupil progress and attainment
 - Enable teachers to modify their progress in order to ensure that the particular needs of individual pupil/groups are being addressed
 - Compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment
 - Facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
 - Facilitate the involvement of pupils in the assessment of their own work (age appropriate)
 - Enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies
- Techniques for Informal Assessment:
- Focused observations – observing a pupil or group of pupils at an activity
 - Random observations – monitoring what is happening, i.e. works better in a group, alone, tires easily etc.

- Structured observations – observing one particular pupil each day at set intervals
- Discussion, conferencing – talking to and questioning the pupils about their work, setting targets for future work

Formal Assessment

Formal assessments provide objective data on pupils' abilities, progress, and placement. Examples include:

- Teacher-designed tests and tasks.
- Results from standardised and diagnostic tests.
- Junior Cycle L1 and L2LPs, Short Courses, and CBAs (Including Level 3).
- Senior Cycle L1 and L2LPs in Communication and Numeracy.
- QQI Level 3 Certification.

Following on from our ongoing school self-evaluations, we assess pupils using checklists in the following areas:

- Social Skills (September)
- Money (November/December)
- Oral Language (May/June)

These checklists help inform the IEPs and end of year reports.

Test Instruments- Standardised and diagnostic tools include:

- Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA)
- Wide-Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT 4)
- Drumcondra Primary Reading, Maths, and Spelling Tests
- Aston Index
- Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST)
- Micra-T and Sigma-T
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)

Methodologies- Reasonable accommodations are done during testing to support pupils with additional needs, including:

- One-to-one assistance.
- Small group settings.
- Extended testing periods.
- Recorded adjustments (e.g., repetitions, phonic support).

Testing protocols and accommodations are documented to ensure transparency and consistency.

Current Practice

To build a longitudinal profile of pupil progress assessment is used consistently. In September assessments such as Young Reading assessment, maths school developed assessments and wellbeing assessments are shared amongst staff. Results are stored in the

class pupil files (blue folder) together with their current Individual Education Plans (IEPs) during the year and shared with relevant staff.

Teachers retain informal assessment records for annual planning and reporting purposes. Formal assessment data is stored in pupils' individual files and retained until the pupil reaches 21 years of age, in compliance with statutory requirements.

Specialist Assessments/Psychological Assessments:

As part of the referral process, all pupils attending St. Michael's School have been psychologically assessed prior to enrolment. In addition, assessments are allocated by NEPS to the school each year. School leavers requiring up to date assessments for college placements will be identified.

Reporting and Communication

Teachers maintain assessment records in alignment with their planning. Informal assessments are not kept beyond the school year. Formal assessments should be sent to the office and stored in the pupils' school file in the office or on Aladdin.

These assessments are used to inform:

- Parent-Teacher and (IEP) meetings.
- Year-end reports
- Certification in the Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle L1LP/L2LPs and QQI

Pupils files include the following;

- Professional reports
- End of year school reports
- Results of formal testing and any reasonable accommodations made

Files are available to teachers on request. Staff are requested to sign on receipt and on return of files. Files must be returned at the end of the school day. Teachers are encouraged to read pupils' files in planning their work.

Emerging Needs and Teacher Recommendations:

- Develop a centralised, easily accessible list of school-wide assessments and when/how to use them.
- Introduce a post-Junior Cycle screening tool to determine suitability for QQI Level 3.
- Allocate more time and support for informal and formative assessment activities.
- Provide ongoing Continual Professional Development/ Teacher Professional Learning (CPD/TPL) in areas such as digital assessment and inclusive assessment practices.
- Enhance consistency in recording and using assessment data across class levels

The needs identified will be progressed during the school year 2025/2026.

Parent Communication:

- Parents are informed of their child's progress through formal reports and meetings.
- Assessment results are shared with sensitivity and in alignment with realistic national standards.
- Test booklets may be reviewed upon request.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal and designated post-holders (Deputy Principal/ Assistant Principal I) oversee policy implementation. Teachers are responsible for conducting assessments and maintaining accurate records.

Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed successful if:

- Pupils' needs are identified early, and interventions are timely.
- Procedures are clear, consistent, and efficient.
- Information is effectively shared among teachers, parents, and multi-disciplinary teams.

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed biannually or as necessary to reflect changes in statutory requirements, school practices, or educational advancements. The next scheduled review is September 2027.

Ratification and Communication

This updated policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 18th June 2025. Copies will be available to teachers on the Aladdin platform and will be shared with parents via the school website (www.stmichaelsholyangels.com), and/or available upon request from the school office.

Signed: *Sr. Bernadette Carron*

Date: 18.06.2025

Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1 : Class Assessment Audit Summary (December 2024)

As part of the December 2024 school-wide assessment audit, teachers reviewed the range of assessment tools and practices currently in use across class levels. The following is a summary of key findings and the specific assessments used by class teachers:

Assessments in Use by Class Teachers

Formal Standardised and Diagnostic Assessments:

- Micra-T (Reading)
- Sigma-T (Maths)
- Drumcondra Primary Tests (Reading, Maths, Spelling)
- WRAT 4 (Reading, Spelling, Numeracy)
- Aston Index (Cognitive and Literacy Screening)
- DRA (Diagnostic Reading Assessment)
- MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test)
- NGRT (New Group Reading Test)
- Young Reading Assessment
- Fluent Readers Rubrik (Rasinski)
- NCSE Wellbeing Assessment

Teacher-Designed and Informal Assessments:

- School Self- Evaluation Checklists: Money, Oral Language, Social Skills
- Spelling and tables tests (weekly/fortnightly)
- Phonics checklists and word recognition tasks
- Dolce and High Frequency Word lists
- Mental maths challenges and mini-assessments
- Oral language interviews/discussions
- Observation checklists (e.g. for behaviour, social interaction, classroom routines)
- Running records and reading journals
- Writing samples and genre-specific writing tasks

Digital Assessment Tools:

- Kahoot (quizzes and revision)
- Blooket (subject-based quizzes)
- Google Forms (formative quizzes and surveys)
- Seesaw (student portfolios, recorded responses)
- iPad-based apps for phonics, numeracy, and SESE topics

Portfolio-Based and Visual Assessments:

- Student learning portfolios (physical and digital)
- Photographic evidence of projects, artwork, and practical activities
- Work samples annotated with teacher feedback
- Checklists linked to L1LP and L2LP learning outcomes

- Rubrics for oral presentations and visual tasks

Self and Peer Assessment Tools:

- Traffic light systems (red/yellow/green for understanding)
- Exit slips and reflection journals
- Peer feedback templates (especially in creative writing and visual arts)
- Class discussions on learning goals and next steps