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# ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING POLICY DOCUMENT

Nov. 2014





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Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach Policy Development / St Attracta's Junior School

Stage 1: 2011 - 2012 / Stage 2: 2012 - 2013 / Stage 3: 2013 - 2014 / Stage 4: 2014 - 2015

Introduction

Rationale

The primary purpose of this policy is to clearly outline our approach to **Assessment** 

for Learning (AfL) in St. Attracta's Junior School across all curricular areas. This

policy was a work in progress and was developed and extended over a four year

academic period (2011 – 2015).

The policy reflects:

**#** best international practise on assessment;

\*Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum; Guidelines for Schools,"

NCCA:

**#** agreed, collaborative practise across streams from Junior Infants to Seconds

classes;

**#** agreed, collaborative practise in Learning Support/Resource settings.

The development of this policy was facilitated initially, by Dr. Michael O'Leary, St

Patrick's College, Drumcondra over a two year period.

Vision

In accordance with our mission statement, which places emphasis on the holistic

development of our pupils and views the school as a learning organisation that is

open to change and innovation, we acknowledge how The Primary School

Curriculum accentuates, in general terms, the importance of assessment in

enabling the teacher to extend and enrich children's learning across all curriculum

areas. In recent years, research, theory and practice in teaching and learning have

highlighted more specifically **how** the teacher can use assessment to make learning

more enjoyable, more motivating, and more successful for each child. Drawing on

these developments, this policy aims to show how assessment translates into daily practice in the classroom in St Attracta's Junior School.

#### **Aims**

The aims of this policy are to

- allow the staff of St Attracta's Junior School plan and implement in a measured and systematic manner over a four year period, an approach to *AfL* that further enhances teaching and learning from Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> class;
- identify and implement agreed strategies across 4 areas (feedback; peer & self assessment; sharing learning intentions & success criteria; questioning & classroom discussion) in each of four streams, from Junior Infants to Second class
- track our work in this area over a four year period;
- record decisions taken;
- inform ourselves, new teachers to the school, BOM, parents, inspectors and other interested parties on our agreed practise in the area of *AfL*;
- provide a written document that can be used to inform our teaching and learning
- provide a written document that can be used for reflection and evaluation purposes;
- **t** complement and support already established practises in the area of **Assessment of Learning** (**AoL**);
- contribute in a real and meaningful way to St Attracta's **School Improvement**Plan (SIP).

#### **Success Criteria**

Criteria which will be used to measure the success of this policy in St. Attracta's J.N.S. include:-

- # Teacher feedback
- **#** Positive feedback from parents
- # Feedback from pupils
- ☐ Inspectors' suggestions/reports

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■ Positive feedback from the Senior School

We will know if the policy has been implemented if:

the pupils in each stream are familiar with and are able to use the agreed strategies to be taught and implemented year to year;

we are using this policy to inform our teaching and learning;

the procedures outlined in this policy are being consistently followed.

#### **Support Mechanisms**

The following support mechanisms for teachers have been implemented, organised and/or designed to help the start-up of this process:

☐ Invitation to Dr Michael O'Leary to facilitate 2 workshops to promote and support good assessment practise in our school / Croke Park hours;

**T** Completion by staff of an 'AfL Audit Instrument' to help teachers identify needs in this area:

# Time dedicated at staff meetings;

☐ Agreement by staff to begin the process by implementing '*WALT*' throughout the school, 2011 – 2012;

Meetings within streams and in Learning Support/Resource settings over a four year period to identify and agree 4 *AfL* strategies to be implemented, 2012 -2015;

**♯** Fortnightly notes have been re-formatted for use, where required, to take into account agreed *AfL* strategies to be implemented at each class level;

□ Samples of fortnightly notes that already indicate AfL strategies have been shared with colleagues.

#### **Literacy and Numeracy**

This policy and ensuing practice in all classes in St Attracta's Junior School is intended to directly help the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in our school. As requested, (Circular 0050/2011), the 'School management and staff have reviewed their assessment policies and practices

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in the light of the NCCA publication, 'Assessment in the Primary School: Guidelines for Schools' as well as the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy.

#### <u>School Self-Evaluation / School Improvement Plan (SIP)</u>

This policy and ensuing practice reflect how the staff, St Attracta's Junior School is engaging in the process of *self-evaluation*. This policy has been arrived at in a collaborative, inclusive and reflective process of internal school review. It followed the *School Self-Evaluation Guidelines for Primary Schools* recommended six-step process (*Gather evidence; Analyse evidence; Draw conclusions; SSE report; Improvement plan; Implement and monitor).* This policy was developed over a four year period during which, the policy and practises were reviewed annually.

#### 2013 - 2104

The teaching and learning of **Maths** was targeted for review and further development initially, through the school's ongoing self-evaluation process and subsequently, as part of the **School Improvement Plan (SIP).** Consequently, this policy had particular resonance with the teaching and learning maths in its early stages. In time, all curricular policies will be reviewed in line with our whole school approach to **AfL**.

#### **Implementation and Review**

This policy has been written to guide teachers in the area of **Assessment for Learning (AfL)** across all curricular areas. It is the responsibility of the staff of St.

Attracta's J.N.S. to implement this agreed programme of work. The policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure the decisions that have been made and agreed collaboratively are being implemented.

The following table clearly outlines, the **AfL** strategies that have been agreed **collaboratively** (over the past four years), for implementation from November 2014, for each stream from Junior Infants to 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. The nominated strategies are

cumulative and progressive in nature and are designed to be extended from one year to the next, starting in Junior Infants.

The Staff of St Attracta's Junior School agrees that these strategies:

- **#** are easily implemented at each stream level.
- **#** are appropriate to the age and stage of the pupils in each stream.
- will improve the overall quality of teaching and learning in our school.

We agree to:

- **#** implement these strategies.
- commit these strategies to a policy that says: 'These are the AfL strategies we use / I implement / the pupils are familiar with in St Attracta's JNS to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.

#### **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management of St. Attracta's J.N.S ratified this policy document on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013. Parents or other interested parties may view this policy on the school website or by appointment with the principal.

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# Appendices

# Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a Greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) Approach

These are the AfL strategies to be implemented at each level	Feedback	Peer-and Self-Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questioning and Classroom Discussion
Junior Infants	# Link feedback to WALT and/or WILF	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	# Think, pair, share
Senior Infants	Link feedback to WALT and/or WILF  2 Stars & a Wish	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	<ul><li></li></ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	<ul><li>■ Link feedback to WALT and/or WILF</li><li>■ 2 Stars &amp; a Wish</li></ul>	<ul><li> ☐ Thumbs up, thumbs down</li><li> ☐ Traffic Lights</li><li> ☐ One Star &amp; a Wish</li></ul>	# WALT # WILF	<ul><li>Think, pair, share</li><li>Lollipop Questioning</li><li>Open-ended Questioning</li></ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	☐ I found WILF ☐ WALT achieved ☐ 2 stars & a wish	<ul><li></li></ul>	# WALT # WILF	<ul> <li>Think, pair, share</li> <li>Lollipop questioning</li> <li>Open-ended Questioning</li> <li>Pupils can explain to others what they are learning</li> </ul>
Learning Support / Resource Junior / Senior Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	<ul><li>Comment on each other's work</li></ul>	# WALT # WILF	# Open-ended questioning
Learning Support / Resource 1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes	<ul><li>■ Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF</li><li>■ Conferencing</li></ul>	☐ Traffic Lights ☐ One star & a wish	# WALT # WILF	<b>♯</b> Open-ended questioning

#### Appendix 6 / Stage 1 / 2011 -2012

# Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach

Follow up work by the staff of St Attracta's Junior School following a Continuing Professional Development workshop facilitated by Michael O Leary, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, 2011 - 2012

#### Ref: Minutes of Staff meeting, Wednesday 1st February 2012:

It was agreed that we would initially introduce WALT (What we are learning to) and share learning intentions verbally with the children.

We hope then to begin to introduce WILF (What I am looking for) and perhaps in the longer term to incorporate TILT (Today I learned to...).

Other suggestions were to allow children to assess their own work with the 'two stars and a wish' strategy, to use 'peer assessment', 'praise with feedback', 'thumbs up/thumbs down', and 'lollipop questioning'. In our planning templates, we may include 'WALTS' and 'WILFS' in the assessment area and just asterix where we are using them.

### Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach

#### Stage 1 / 2011 - 2012

	Feedback	Peer- and Self-Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questioning and Classroom Discussion
The Staff of St Attracta's Junior School has priotised this AfL approach for development from Junior Infants to Second Class 2011-2012			WALT	

#### Appendix 7 / Stage 2 /2012-2013

## Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) approach

Follow up work by the staff of St Attracta's Junior School following a Continuing Professional Development workshop facilitated by Michael O Leary, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Wednesday, 7<sup>134</sup> November, 2012

- 1. Using Michael O Leary's audit instrument, please agree, <u>one strategy in each of the 4 areas</u> that your stream will implement over the next 4 months.
- 2. It is taken that <u>WALT</u> is now an established, embedded practice (if this is not true for you/your class, you may consider beginning to implement over the coming months). We are now slowly, very slowly building on this start.
- 3. We are only at the very beginning of this process so, it is important that we agree within a corridor one strategy in each area that each of the three classes will work on.
- 4. Choose strategies that are within everyone's comfort zone and it maybe an idea to look at what you are doing already.
- 5. Consider recommending a strategy to your colleagues that is working for you and is easy to implement.
- 6. Refer to the minutes of the Staff Meeting / February 2012 attached to get some easy ideas to start with.
- 7. There is every possibility that we will be formalising what is going on already, rather than taking on anything new.

- 8. At the end of this academic year, the strategies that have been agreed and have been worked on will be passed on to next year's teacher so that there is continuity and a slow build up of AfL strategies over the next 4 years.
- 9. Agreeing one strategy in each area does not preclude you from trying other strategies highlighted on the audit, but there is a need to have common strategies in each corridor which can be passed up and built on.
- 10. We will review again before the end of this academic year (2013) to give everyone a chance to implement what has been agreed.
- 11. Learning Support teachers will be part of the evolving process and need to consider
  - **♦** Will we implement the strategies nominated by each stream in our work?

or

- ▶ Will we agree a different, specially chosen set of strategies in each of the 4 areas for AfL that we consider more appropriate to our particular work?
- 12. Finally, let's keep this simple to start with and easy to implement. This will be an evolving process over the next 4 years so, there is plenty of time.

#### Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a Greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) Approach Summary 2012-2013

Stage 2 / 2012 - 2013

Following colour denotes year strategies was introduced to each class

Green: 2011 - 2012 Black:2012 - 2013

Each stream has agreed to príorítíse the following approaches for implementatíon From February 2013	Feedback	Peer-and Self- Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questioning and Classroom Discussion
Juníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	# Think, pair, share
Seníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	# Think, pair, share
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	# 2 stars & a wish	# Traffic Lights	# WALT # WILF	# Think, pair, share
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	<ul><li>Thumbs up, thumbs</li><li>down</li><li>2 stars &amp; a wish</li><li>Traffic Lights</li></ul>	# WALT # WILF	# Lollipop questioning

Following colour denotes year strategies was introduced to each class Green: 2011 - 2012 Black:2012 - 2013				
Learning Support / Resource have agreed to prioritise the following approaches for implementation From February 2013	Feedback	Peer-and Self- Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questíoníng and Classroom Díscussíon
Juníor / Seníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	# Comment on each other's work	# WALT # WILF	# Open-ended questioning
1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	# Traffic Lights # One star & a wish	# WALT # WILF	# Open-ended questioning

#### Appendíx 8 / Stage 2 /2013-2014

#### Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a Greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) Approach Summary 2013-2014

Stage 3 / 2013 - 2014

Each stream has agreed to implement the	Following colour denotes year strategies was introduced to each class Green: 2011 - 2012 Black:2012 - 2013 <mark>Red: 2013-2014</mark>			
following approaches during the academic year 2013 - 2014	Feedback	Peer-and Self- Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questíoníng and Classroom Díscussíon
Juníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	# Think, pair, share
Seníor Infants	<ul><li>■ Link feed back to</li><li>WALT and/or WILF</li><li>■ 2 Stars &amp; a Wish</li></ul>	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	# Think, pair, share # Lollipop Questioning
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	<ul><li># Thumbs up, thumbs</li><li>down</li><li># Traffic Lights</li><li># One Star &amp; a Wish</li></ul>	# WALT # WILF	<ul><li>Think, pair, share</li><li>Lollipop Questioning</li><li>Open-ended</li><li>Questioning</li></ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	# 2 stars & a wish # WALT achieved # I found WILF	# Traffic Lights # Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	<ul><li>Think, pair, share</li><li>Lollipop questioning</li><li>Pupils can explain to others what they are learning</li></ul>

	Following colour ( Green: 2011 - 2012	denotes year strategíes wa: Black:2012 - 2013	s introduced to each class Red: 2013-2014	
Learning Support / Resource have agreed to prioritise the following approaches for implementation From February 2013	Feedback	Peer-and Self- Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questíoníng and Classroom Díscussíon
Juníor / Seníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	<b>I</b> Comment on each other's work	# WALT # WILF	<b>n</b> Open-ended questioning
1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes	<ul><li>■ Link feed back to</li><li>WALT and/or WILF</li><li>■ Conferencing</li></ul>	# Traffic Lights # One star & a wish	# WALT # WILF	<b>#</b> Open-ended questioning

#### Appendix 9 / Stage 2 /2014 - 2015

#### Assessment for Learning (AfL) 2014-2015

The following pages show the strategies that have been chosen **collaboratively** for implementation by each stream over the past 3 years. If you look closely, they are fairly progressive in nature and build from one year to the next. No one is limited by these strategies. They represent the basic requirement year to year. You can use whatever AfL strategy you like, as long as you implement what we have agreed as a whole staff. So, don't feel you have to add in anything extra as, the bucket is already overflowing!

So, with your colleagues on the corridor, can you look at the indicated strategies for your class grouping and chat to answer the questions? The following pages (to be revised / amended at the next Staff meeting) will indicate the work we are committing to as a group and represents what we will do on a regular and ongoing basis, year to year from now on.

#### In general terms.....

- 1. Are these strategies easily implemented for this stream?
- 2. Are these strategies appropriate to the age and stage of the pupils in this stream?
- 3. Will they help teaching and learning in my room?
- 4. Would I like to remove any strategy for a particular reason?
- 5. Would I like to add in any strategy that I think our corridor should be using?
- 6. Can I implement these strategies?
- 7. Will I implement these strategies?
- 8. Am I happy to commit these strategies to a policy that says: These are the AfL strategies we use / I implement / the pupils are familiar with in St Attracta's JNS to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning?

#### Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a Greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) Approach Summary 2014-2015

Final Stage / Stage 4 / 2014 - 2015

Each stream has agreed to implement the	Following colour denotes year strategies was introduced to each class Green: 2011 - 2012 <b>Black:2012 - 2013 Red: 2013-2014</b> Purple 2014-2015			
following approaches during the academic year 2013 - 2014	Feedback	Peer-and Self- Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questíoníng and Classroom Díscussíon
Juníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	# Think, pair, share
Seníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF # 2 Stars & a Wish	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	<ul><li>■ Think, pair, share</li><li>■ Lollipop Questioning</li></ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	<ul><li>Thumbs up, thumbs</li><li>down</li><li>Traffic Lights</li><li>One Star &amp; a Wish</li></ul>	# WALT # WILF	<ul><li>Think, pair, share</li><li>Lollipop Questioning</li><li>Open-ended</li><li>Questioning</li></ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	# 2 stars & a wish # WALT achieved # I found WILF	# Traffic Lights # Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT # WILF	<ul> <li>Think, pair, share</li> <li>Pupils can explain to others what they are learning</li> <li>Lollipop questioning</li> </ul>

Following colour denotes year strategies was introduced to each class Green: 2011 - 2012				
Learning Support / Resource have agreed to prioritise the following approaches for implementation From February 2013	Feedback	Peer-and Self- Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questíoníng and Classroom Díscussíon
Juníor / Seníor Infants	# Link feed back to WALT and/or WILF	# Comment on each other's work	# WALT # WILF	# Open-ended questioning
1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes	<ul><li>■ Link feed back to</li><li>WALT and/or WILF</li><li>■ Conferencing</li></ul>	# Traffic Lights # One star & a wish	# WALT # WILF	# Open-ended questioning

## Re-thinking Assessment in our School: Towards a Greater use of the Assessment for Learning (AfL) Approach

#### Final Document /2014 - 201

Stream	Feedback	Peer-and Self-Assessment	Sharing Learning Intentions and Success Criteria	Questioning and Classroom Discussion
Junior Infants	# Link feed back to WALT	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT	# Think, pair, share
	and/or WILF		# WILF	
Senior Infants	# Link feed back to WALT	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT	# Think, pair, share
	and/or WILF		# WILF	# Lollipop Questioning
	🗯 2 Stars & a Wish			
1 <sup>st</sup> Class	# Link feed back to WALT	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT	# Think, pair, share
	and/or WILF	# Traffic Lights	# WILF	# Lollipop Questioning
	🛱 2 Stars & a Wish	🛱 One Star & a Wish		■ Open-ended Questioning
2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	# I found WILF	# Thumbs up, thumbs down	# WALT	# Think, pair, share
	# WALT achieved	# Traffic Lights	# WILF	# Lollipop questioning
	🛱 2 stars & a wish	One Star & a Wish		Open-ended Questioning
				# Pupils can explain to others
				what they are learning
Learning Support / Resource	# Link feed back to WALT	Comment on each other's	# WALT	# Open-ended questioning
Junior / Senior Infants	and/or WILF	work	# WILF	
Learning Support / Resource	# Link feed back to WALT	# Traffic Lights	# WALT	□ Open-ended questioning
1 <sup>st</sup> / 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes	and/or WILF	🛱 One star & a wish	# WILF	
	# Conferencing			