



Assessment Policy Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa Ballymurn

Introductory Statement

This policy is a record of practice in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa regarding assessment and record keeping in the different areas of the curriculum by individual teachers in their various roles, and by the educational services we access. It was formulated by the whole school teaching staff. It is informed by the Curriculum Statements, Curriculum Guidelines of the Department of Education and Skills, NCCA Assessment in the Primary School, Circular 56/2011- Initial steps in the Implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy and by the completed policies in various curricular areas.

Rationale

"Assessment is an essential element of the teaching & learning process" (Curriculum Guidelines)

The purpose of assessment in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa is to provide continuous detailed information about pupils' development, their knowledge, their grasp of concepts and their mastery of skills. This will in turn inform, guide and direct teaching and learning in our school. We acknowledge that assessment is an essential component of a successful teaching and learning environment.

Relationship to School Ethos:

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child, the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment Policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

Our aims are:

1. To have in place coordinated approaches to assessment in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa that will best facilitate the learning process, and will provide the most relevant information about the progress of individual children.
2. To monitor pupil's progress by comparison with their own previous attainments, with the attainments of their current class peers and with nationally standardised norms.
3. To continue to develop an effective system of assessment that provides us with the means of identifying the needs of individual children, and enables us to plan and modify our teaching strategies to facilitate effective learning.
4. To inform planning for all areas of the curriculum.
5. To examine each curricular area and outline the different assessment procedures that can be used.
6. To have in place a coordinated method of recording assessment.
7. To contribute to the school's strategy for the prevention of learning difficulties.

What is Assessment?

"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". (Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum, Guidelines for Schools; NCCA, 2007, p.7).

Assessment monitors and evaluates the pupil's learning. Self-assessment through reflection is used by teachers to monitor teaching and learning in their classrooms and practice (effective or not) shared with colleagues.

Assessment of Learning (AoL) and **Assessment For Learning (AfL)** are an integral part of the teaching and learning process. AoL is summative assessment typically done at the end of an instructional unit. Formative assessment is used to feedback to the teaching/learning process and looks forward, informing what will be done next. Teachers in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa observe and discuss weekly with their pupils both work in progress and completed work. While teacher reflection on practice and learning is on-going, teachers in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa give a written reflection on teaching and learning to the principal at the end of every month as part of their Cuntas Míosúil.

Why assess learning and teaching?

Our reasons for assessment are as follows:

- To inform teachers' setting of learning targets and activities for individual pupils, groups and the whole class
- To inform the school improvement plan and to revise and update whole school improvement targets.
- To assist planning, evaluate and modify teaching strategies based on the outcomes of assessment
- To inform class groupings and differentiation of work
- To identify pupils with learning difficulties
- To use assessment outcomes to assist and improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning programmes used in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa
- To effectively and sensitively use assessment outcomes to assist pupils to reflect on their own learning
- To be able to provide accurate information about pupil's progress to relevant parties particularly parents
- To evaluate pupil achievement in curriculum areas in comparison with national norms

In Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa the gathering of information on pupils' learning is timely and happens at regular intervals.

How do we assess learning and teaching?

A broad range of assessment approaches/strategies/tools are used in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa in all subjects, to cater for a wide spectrum of needs among the pupils taking into account their individual learning styles and needs. The pupils may be assessed with their class or individually out of the classroom, whichever is deemed the most appropriate for the pupil, at the time. Alternative assessment tools will be designed, altered or sourced by the Special Education Needs (SEN) and class teachers should the assessments be deemed inappropriate to the pupil's level of ability.

Assessment Planning

- On-going assessment in the curricular areas – mainstream class teacher
- Standardised Testing and Screening – all teaching staff

- Assessment for children with different needs – mainstream class teacher
- Educational Assessment from Support Services – NEPS, NCSE, SESS

Ongoing Assessment in the Curricular Subjects – Mainstream Class Teachers and Special Class Teachers

All teachers at each class level engage in continuous assessment throughout the year. Individual curricular areas will require teachers to choose the most appropriate tools of assessment. These will be determined by the aims and objectives of the teaching and learning programme. Teachers in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa use a wide range of assessment modes and techniques which may include the following:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher designed tasks and tests*
- Self-assessment
- Questioning
- Work samples/ Portfolios.
- Pupil profiles.
- Projects.
- Concept mapping.
- Checklists.
- Curricular profiles.
- Standardised testing.
- Screening tests.
- Diagnostic tests.
- End-of-year reports.
- Parental feedback and observation.

*Any of the above approaches may be utilised by individual teachers as part of their continuous assessment of individual curricular areas. Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa recognises the importance of Assessment for Learning(AFL). Teachers gather information for AFL as part of the general classroom routine. AFL also involves the learner actively and offers ways of involving the child in reflecting on and assessing his/her work.

As a school we have decided the following specific approaches to teacher testing:

- Self-assessment by pupils and peer led assessment will play an important role in classroom assessment
- During the academic year subject-based tests in English, Gaeilge and Maths will be administered and designed by the class teacher.
- The testing format of History, Geography, and Science is to be at the individual teacher's discretion e.g. project assessment work, topic testing and reports on educational tours.
- Where possible mainstream teachers at the same grade level shall consult when formulating class tests on common topic themes. They may differentiate for their class level.
- A variety of test-formats will be employed
- Tests should be completed within a given timeframe.
- Children should be instructed in utilising time productively during tests.
- Results of these tests will be recorded by the class teacher.

As such, these tests are Assessment of learning (AOL) and they aid the ongoing planning of teaching and learning approaches. Teachers are advised to refer to the curriculum guidelines and to our school policies in subject areas for guidance when selecting the most appropriate assessment modes and techniques.

Standardised Testing and Screening – a whole school approach

A formal whole school approach to assessment will co-exist with individual teacher assessment. This will help identify pupils with greater needs and be instrumental in pupil selection for supplementary teaching. The whole school approach will also identify learning areas that need focus or modification at both class and school level and will have implications for ongoing curricular review.

Standardised tests are currently used in most primary schools on a regular basis to test a child's reading and mathematical skills and to measure children's progress in these areas. These norm-referenced standardised tests help the teacher to provide a more accurate picture of the child's development with reference to age or class group. When used in combination with other assessment methods, standardised tests contribute to the accuracy of the teacher's monitoring and assist in identifying the needs of individual children.

Standardised tests are tests of a pupil's **achievement**, rather than tests of a pupil's ability. However, because standardised tests provide accurate information on achievement, a tendency to extend specific judgements on achievement into more general judgements on ability can sometimes emerge in practice. For example, standardised tests are sometimes perceived as proxies for testing a pupil's IQ. This is an important issue as standardised tests simply measure the pupil's achievement on particular test items at a given time, and relate it to the achievement of pupils of similar age, whereas the potential of a pupil to realise his/her innate ability is determined by a range of in-school and out-of-school factors, some of which relate only indirectly to the process of learning.

A single assessment instrument cannot answer multiple questions. In the letter to the NCCA requesting advice on standardised testing, a number of purposes are linked with standardised testing including the identification of progress, the allocation of resources and the provision of information for decision making among others. The question of fitness-for-purpose of standardised testing emerges as an important issue in this context.

The purposes which standardised tests currently serve in Irish schools include the following:

- Standardised tests are used to identify pupils with learning difficulties at the earliest possible stage so that appropriate support and intervention can be put in place. While standardised tests do not indicate the nature of a learning difficulty, they are used to flag potential difficulties and prompt further assessment.
- Standardised tests contribute to the evaluation of schools by the Inspectorate of the DES. Standardised test data are corroborated with other measures of pupil progress and attainment, as part of an Inspector's evaluation of overall learning progress in the school.
- Standardised tests are used to report on their children's achievement to parents and guardians. Test results, as well as information gleaned through other assessment measures are used to present a full picture of the child's progress to his/her parents/guardians.
- Standardised tests are used to conduct national assessments of educational achievement in primary schools, approximately every five years. The Educational Research Centre (ERC), in

conjunction with the DES uses standardised tests with population samples, in English (reading), Irish (reading, and oral language in co-operation with Institiúid Teangeolaíochta

Éireann), and Mathematics. These data are used to gauge the overall standards of achievement in the system as well as changes over time.

- Standardised tests are used to identify pupils who require learning support. The number of learning support hours allocated to a school is based on the number of factors, including the number of pupils achieving scores at or below the 10th Percentile in standardised tests.
- Standardised tests have been used in research commissioned by the NCCA to provide information of student achievement in junior cycle. Tests were administered to pupils participating in the JCSP as part of the review of that programme, and to pupils in the case study schools in the cohort study as a baseline against which subsequent examination performance can be measured.
- Standardised test results are used by the DES to allocate Special Education Teacher hours to each school.

Screening in English

Junior Infants

The Jolly Phonic Assessment Test will be used in May/June to assess Junior Infant learning of sounds, blending, word reading, sentence reading and tricky words.

Teacher designed tests

- ✓ Phonics
- ✓ Digraphs path dictation grammar e.g. Capital letters, full stops etc.
- ✓ Phonic sound names
- ✓ High frequency words/Tricky Words test

Teacher observation

- ✓ Stages of the Oxford/ Jolly Phonic levelled readers will be recorded

Belfield Infant Assessment Profile will be administered by the SET team if the class teacher has any concerns about a particular child. The test will be administered in the second term of the school year.

Senior Infants

- ✓ The Middle Infant's Screening Test (M.I.S.T.) will be administered in the second term at senior infant level.
- ✓ M.I.S.T. is administered and corrected by the class teacher and SEN teacher.
- ✓ Children who fall below 12% shall be retested after an eight week period, having received SEN support through the 'Forward Together Programme'.
- ✓ The Jolly Phonic Assessment Test will be used in May/ June to assess Senior Infant learning of sounds, blending, word reading, sentence reading and tricky words.

First Class

- ✓ In first class, Drumcondra Primary Reading and Maths Test will administered by the class teacher.

- ✓ Screening using Quest maybe also be administered if needed and corrected by the SEN teacher.
- ✓ Children identified with learning difficulties may be be tested diagnostically using Quest.
- ✓ SEN groups may be reviewed as necessary following the results of Quest.

Second Class – Sixth class

- ✓ Drumcondra Primary Reading Test, Drumcondra Primary Maths Test and Drumcondra Irish Test will be administered by the class teacher.

- ✓ Non-Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) is administered to the pupils in second and fifth class in November by the SEN/Class Teacher
- ✓ Neale Analysis may also be used for screening in second class.

Other

- ✓ Other screening and diagnostic tests available in the school are listed under the resource section of this policy –Appendix B

Screening in Maths

Pupil to be offered SET in Maths shall be decided by the SEN team and class teacher, based on, Drumcondra Primary Maths Test results, on-going classroom observation and informal assessment during the year

- ✓ The Quest diagnostic screening test maybe administered to 1st class pupils during the first term to aid early detection of mathematical difficulties. Learning Support group membership may be adjusted depending upon the outcome of this screening test.
- ✓ Children identified with learning difficulties in Maths maybe be tested diagnostically using Primary SEN Dyscalculia Screening Test.

Standardised testing in English, Irish and Maths

- The Drumcondra Primary Reading and Maths tests are administered in the last two weeks of May to all classes from 1st to 6th.
- The Drumcondra Irish Test is administered to pupils from 2nd-6th class each year.
- These tests are administered by the class teacher with the SEN team in an advisory role.
- The SEN team will be available each year to support and administer the tests in a case where a teacher is administering the Drumcondra Primary Reading Test and Drumcondra Primary Maths Test for the first time.
- The class teacher in conjunction with the SEN team is responsible for marking the tests, and recording the outcomes.
- Alternative tests, may used to screen new pupils joining the school at the beginning or during the school year.
- In accordance with the National Literacy and Numeracy strategy arrangements are put in place for combined results of standardised tests in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa to be reported once annually to the Board of Management and the Department of Education and Skills.
- Analysis of these results will inform the implementation of programmes to address areas of further improvement.

Educational Assessment from Support Services

Our school is supported by the National Educational Psychological Service. Pupils are referred to this service when serious concerns arise regarding individual pupils with learning, behaviour, social and emotional development. Our NEPS psychologist will:

- Engage in individual casework with students with special needs.
- Advise teachers and parents when devising and evaluating appropriate interventions for such students.
- Provide a consultancy service to teachers and parents of students with special needs.
- Contribute to whole school planning in relation to the inclusion of these children.
- Parents may also choose to have their children privately assessed.
- Children with speech and language difficulties/ OT are referred to Primary Care Services with the HSE or CDNT services in the case of pupils with complex needs. y.
- The resulting recommendations from these reports will assist teachers to plan effectively for individual special needs pupils. Due consideration must be given to the sensitive nature of these educational reports. They are to be filed in the pupil's file in the main office.
- A copy will also be filed in SET support room. All reports must be returned to the child's individual file when he or she moves class.

Children with Different Needs

As outlined in the SEN policy, identification and selection for supplementary teaching are informed by

- (a) Formal educational assessment
- (b) Observation and judgement of the classroom teacher in consultation with the SET teacher and parents.
- (c) Outcomes of standardised testing

Assessment in the Crescent Class will be based on the needs of the pupils in the class at any given time. Some assessments that may be used in this setting include, but are not limited to:

- ABLLS (The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills)
- Communication & language checklists for pre/emerging communicators & early/advanced communicators
- Oral language assessment based on SEN Pathways from PLC
- Reading assessment based on Edmark programme
- Jolly phonics assessments in Junior infants where appropriate
- Teacher designed handwriting / sight reading assessments
- SSPs devised twice yearly and reviewed on an ongoing basis

Monitoring progress/on-going assessment

As outlined in learning support/resource teaching policy, ongoing monitoring of the pupil's progress will ensure that the supplementary teaching programme will be responsive to the pupil's need at all times.

(a) Special Education Teaching

Pupil progress will be monitored using the following methods:

- Daily observation of pupil's work by SET team and classroom teacher
- Termly SSP Reviews
- Testing in consultation with class teachers and SEN team teachers.
- Consultation with:



- Class teacher
- SEN team
- Parents
- Other professionals

Gifted Children

Screening for Giftedness occurs in Second class when the Learning Support teacher administers the NRIT. Our school's standardised tests are also used to identify gifted pupils in conjunction with performance on class tests.

Recording of Assessment in Scoil Croí Ró Naofa

Teacher's Records

Teachers keep his/her own day to day records of observations/remarks/incidents as they occur in the classroom and playground. They keep an assessment folder containing results/checklists/ self-assessment items.

Junior/Senior Infants

All assessment worksheets, work samples and class tests to be kept in child's individual folder – data from which shall inform end of year report to parents.

MIST (Middle Infants Screening Test) to be filed in the main pupil's file in office

1st-6th

All written tests to be recorded by the class teacher. Worksheets, work samples, class test to be kept in individual folders/copies - data from which shall inform end of year report to parents

Recording of Standardised Tests

- The results of these are recorded in two places:
 - The pupil's file in the office.
 - Scores are also kept electronically on Aladdin.
 - Analysis and evaluation of standardised test results is conducted by the Principal Teacher.

- Completed mandatory standardised test booklets are retained in the pupil's file until **they are 21 years old.**

Other screening tests such as NRIT and QUEST will be filed in the pupil's file in the office. A school file with all class summary sheets for standardised tests and screening tests will be maintained and kept in the Principals office.

Recording of referrals and received written reports from outside agencies

All referrals and received written reports are recorded and kept on the pupil's file in the main office.

Pupil's File

Each pupil has an individual file stored in the main office. This file is to store documents filed by the class teacher, Principal and the SET team.

The file contains:

- Home school details
- Enrolment data

- School attendance

- Medical history
- Preschool information
- Assessment information
- Incident sheets
- Copies of reports
- Copies of reports from outside agencies
- Information re exemptions from Irish, RSE lessons, religion etc.
- Record of attendance at SET support class

All teachers have unlimited access to these files. Pupil's files are retained by the school until the pupil reaches the age of twenty one.

Equality of Participation and Access

It is policy in our school that all children have equal access to education. Assessment is a prerequisite for effective learning. Therefore, Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa will ensure that all pupils can benefit from the school's assessment policy, resulting in the optimum learning environment.

Consideration may be given to alternative assessment settings/arrangements when administering tests to:

- (a) Some pupils with learning difficulties
- (b) Pupils exempted from Irish
- (c) Non- Nationals whose standard of English might invalidate results
- (d) Pupils with speech and language difficulties.

Staff Development

Staff development in assessment will be facilitated through the following:

- Access to professional development courses (BOM-supported)
- Access to current research, reference books and resource materials
- Allocated time at staff meetings for discussion and review of assessment techniques.
- Support from PPDS Primary Professional Development Services, NEPS representatives and organisations such as ILSA

Parental Involvement

In Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa, parental involvement is at all times welcomed and encouraged. Effective communication in regards to pupil's progress is critically important.

The following facilitates this:

- Ensuring parents are aware of outcomes of class testing and Standardised Tests. Results of standardised tests are communicated verbally at parent-teacher meetings and in written form at the end of the year. Standard scores to be used when reporting to parents.
- Tests are signed regularly by parents.
- Formal parent/teacher meetings are held annually for all pupils.
- End-of-year reports are issued to every pupil in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa, two weeks prior to the end of the school year in time to query the report before end of term.

- Informal meetings/correspondence. Parents are encouraged to make contact as soon as possible if they have any concerns arise over academic progress.
- School Support Plans (SSPs) are devised by the SEN team in collaboration with class teachers, parents and signed by them.
- NEPS meetings facilitated by the school
- Information meetings

Success Criteria

The success of this plan will be judged by its impact on planning, teaching and learning in our school. Various criteria will be employed as indicators of that success including the following:

- The policy works, i.e. is manageable and in proportion, in terms of its administration and recording
- The assessment work done produces reliable, valid information on strengths and weakness in learning of individual pupils, and across the class levels; it also indicates strengths and weakness within subject areas
- Assessment results are used to inform the school's curriculum policies, and they aid planning by individual teachers
- Assessment information is communicated to the relevant people.
- Teachers and parents have confidence in the school's assessment policy.

Balanced Approach

Assessment must not become "the tail that wags the curriculum dog". While assessment is essential in evaluating the learning that has gone on and is going on in the classroom, it should not be allowed to dictate the curriculum content or teacher's methodologies, when it could have a narrowing effect on both.

Rather the modes and techniques of assessment utilised should be influenced by the nature of the learning that has gone on and the content of it. This implies a balance of formal and informal assessment, a blend of formative and summative testing, a mix of practical and written tasks.

Balance is also required in the weight attached to formal and informal types of assessment. Teachers are advised that subjective kinds of assessment need to be moderated by reference to the opinions and evaluations of other teachers:

"A great proportion of the teacher's assessment will involve the use of less structured methods and will be an integral part of the teaching process. Assessment techniques like observation, teacher-designed tasks and tests and the use of work samples and/or portfolios are, by their nature, subjective. It is important therefore, that teachers moderate their standards and criteria against a broader base of teacher experience". (English Curriculum, p.66-7).

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities:

The Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal have the responsibility along with the Principal for the development and implementation of policy.

(b) Timeframe. This revised plan will be implemented in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa as and from September 2016. This plan will be subject to on-going review.

Ratification and Communication

The policy was subsequently reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its Meeting on the 23rd June, 2016. It was reviewed by staff in January 2023 and most recently in April 2025.

A copy of this Policy is made available to all members of staff.

Signed:
Matthew Kelly

Date: April 1st 2025

Chairperson
Board of Management

Appendix A

Teacher designed tests/surveys

Data from these tests/surveys are used by teachers to inform teaching and learning, adapting teaching methods/strategies, deciding where to focus their attention in their teaching and for sharing good practice and seeking advice with and from colleagues when required.

Phonics tests

Jolly Phonics is used in Junior Infants and Senior Infants and is monitored at class level linked to the weekly spelling/phonics tests.

Vocabulary tests

Sight vocabulary/high-frequency word tests are administered regularly by the SEN team and class teachers from Junior Infants – 2nd Class. These are compiled using vocabulary from the DOLCH list. The Jolly Phonics word boxes are used in Junior and Senior infants with ongoing assessment (at least once weekly depending on the needs of the child).

Oral language tests

The teachers assess oral language using a range of tools. The Drumcondra oral language profiles are used with three tracker children in each class (below average (not including children allocated resource hours), average and above average. Teachers keep these records on file.

Junior and Senior Infants teacher-designed Maths test:

A teacher designed mathematics test is administered at the end of every term based on the content material that has been covered.

1st – 6th Class - Mathematics tests

Teachers administer check-up assessments based on objectives covered in the textbooks throughout the year.

Work samples, portfolio and project assessment

A file/portfolio containing information, samples of work, attendance notes, test results etc. are kept by the class teacher for each child in a locked filing cabinet in each child's classroom. An on-going record of student progress is also kept on file in teachers' classrooms. This folder on each child supports the teacher in reporting on a child's learning progress and achievement to parents and others (AoL) while also helping the teacher identify the next steps to be taken to build on and develop the child's learning (AfL). The assessment folder is a key element in supporting effective teaching and learning rather than an end in itself. Gathering information about a child's learning is important, but of central importance is *how* this information is used to improve learning.

Curriculum objectives/ learning outcomes/ concept mapping

Teachers and children shall ask daily at the beginning of each lesson: "What are we learning today?", "What I **K**now already? What I **W**ant to know? What I have **L**earnt?". Reminders of WALT (What are we learning today?) and WILF (What I am looking for?) would be displayed in all classrooms.

It is noted that there is a shift of focus in the literature and in DES policy from the phrase 'curriculum objective' to 'learning outcome'. Where a curriculum objective is focused on the content to be taught, a 'learning outcome' is focused on the pupil. *"Learning outcomes are statements of what is expected that the student will be able to do as a result of learning the activity"* (Jenkins and Unwin, 2001).

Simply stated, expected learning outcome statements describe:

1. What teachers want the student to know at the end of a lesson (content) AND
2. What teachers want students to be able to do at the end of a lesson (skill)

Learning outcomes have three major characteristics:

1. They specify an action by the students/learners that is observable
2. They specify an action by the students/learners that is measurable
3. They specify an action that is done by the students/learners (rather than the teacher)

Teachers in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa regularly use the KWL strategy – asking children before a lesson what they know and what they want to know and then at the end of the lesson asking them what they have learned. Concept mapping is often used by teachers to elicit what a child knows before and after a lesson.

Self-assessment

It is very important that children are involved in assessing their learning through self-assessment and/or peer assessment. Children regularly are encouraged children to choose their best work and see with help from teachers and peers where they need to improve. Children in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa

are taught how to assess a fellow pupil's work sensitively and constructively. Such skills are important in life.

Conferencing: teacher/pupil, teacher/teacher, teacher/parent communication

Pupils work, including non-written work and homework is regularly monitored and corrected. Pupils are provided with constructive feedback on their learning. Teaching is amended in the light of feedback. Teachers check pupil understanding during and at the end of lessons. Pupils are provided with meaningful feedback on their work to improve their Learning. Station teaching also facilitates teacher/pupil conferencing.

A written report giving a profile of pupil achievement in each curriculum area in qualitative and quantitative terms that are easily understood and meaningful are sent home to parents at the end of the school year. Parents are informed of the standardised test score in literacy and numeracy on the end of year report card. It was agreed, that to avoid misinterpretation of written standardised test results by parents, information on standardised test scores and how to interpret results is sent home with the end of year report card. The report is sent home two weeks before the end of the school year to facilitate parents who wish to respond to the report and meet the class teacher before the end of June. (Appendix C)

Standardised tests and diagnostic tests

The DES require all schools to assess children using standardised tests normed on the Irish population at the end of 2nd, 4th and 6th classes.

To assess **literacy**, the Drumcondra Primary Reading test and to assess **numeracy**, The Drumcondra Primary Maths test is used. It is administered in May to all pupils from 1st – 6th Classes. Scores are used in order to identify pupils for learning support the following year.

YARC test: (York Assessment of Reading Comprehension) is used in Senior Infants. The MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test) is used in Scoil Chroí Ró Naofa. However, as a large majority of children scored well in MIST it is felt that this test failed to identify the broad range of reading ability within the senior infant group. Consequently, from September 2016, all children in Senior Infants identified as possibly needing support shall also complete the YARC test.

Pupils who are absent on the day standardised tests are administered: If pupils are absent on the day of testing the test will be administered to them by a SET teacher at a later date.

How does the data from standardised tests inform teaching and learning?

At whole school level the scores are used to inform teachers on how the children are doing in literacy and numeracy compared to their peers nationally. The child's standardised test scores are recorded on the front page of their report card stored on file in individual classrooms. Teachers compare standardised test scores from one year to the next to identify whether or not a child is improving or dis-improving. Concerns are discussed with the SET team and interventions made.

Teachers at different class levels use data from the standardised tests to identify strands/strand units in the curriculum where the children are scoring well/poorly and adapt their planning accordingly.

School Support Plans (SSPs) and group educational programmes (see Special Needs Policy)

Children allocated SET hours have specific learning targets set for them. Attainment of these targets and decisions on what will be done next are recorded in individual SSPs. Learning support teachers use group educational programmes and assess the learning outcomes of the children as a group. Results of assessments are shared with relevant teachers/ personnel.

Record Keeping

Copies of individual end-of-year reports and standardised assessments are kept in the school for nine years after the pupil leaves 6th class. Results of class standardised assessments are kept on file in the principal's office and used by staff to evaluate learning and compare results from one year to the next. Teachers' and school assessment records are useful and easy to interpret. Parents are entitled to their child's results. Results are given to them at the parent/teacher meeting in November. However, parents are welcome to arrange a meeting with teachers to discuss assessment outcomes at other times during the year and arrangements are made for this in consultation with the principal. These meetings are arranged generally outside school hours. If this is not possible, the principal will arrange supervision of classes to facilitate such a meeting.

Storage of Assessments

A file on each child is stored in the teacher's classroom. Teachers on the SET team also hold relevant documentation on each child. All such information is treated as *confidential*. However, parents may view any information held on their child by making an appointment with the class teacher and/or SEN team.

One only of a child's psychological/ occupational therapy/speech and language reports etc. are kept in the school: in the filing cabinet accessed by the SET team. No arrangement is made to assess a child by the school, without parent/s' consent. Teachers treat all such information as *confidential* and with respect. A folder with monthly teacher reflections on learning and teaching is kept in the principal's office.

Appendix B

Diagnostic Tests available in the school

1. BIAP – Belfield Infant Assessment Programme
2. Drumcondra Primary Maths Test – standardised mathematical assessment
3. Drumcondra Primary Reading Test – standardised literacy assessment
4. Drumcondra Primary Irish Test: standardised Gaeilge assessment
5. Jolly Phonics Infant Assessment Test
6. IPSA- T (Irish Primary Science Achievement) – 2nd, 4th and 6th class
7. NARA II – Neale Analysis of Reading Ability (Revised)
8. Diagnostic Reading Analysis (2nd Edition)
9. SSRT – Salford Sentence Reading Test
10. MIST – middle infant standards test
11. Forward Together Activity Book
12. Nesy Learning Programme
13. The Dyscalculia Toolkit
14. The Spell Right Programme
15. NNRIT (1-3) – New Non-Reading Intelligence Test
16. NVRT – Non Verbal Reading Test
17. Verbal Reasoning (Age 7)
18. Sounds and Linkage
19. Sounds Abound
20. YARC – individual reading test for comprehension
21. PM Benchmarking Kit

Appendix C

Information on Standardised Testing

What is a standardised test?

A standardised test is a test, which is used to measure a child's achievement in English reading and Maths compared to other children throughout the country at the same class level or age level. The English reading test gives information about how well your child can understand what he/she has read. This test does not gather information on your child's written or spoken English. The Maths test finds out how well your child can use numbers for different purposes and solve Maths problems.

With regard to **English and Mathematics** the following gauge may help you to better understand the comments on your child's report. If you wish this further explained to you please make an appointment to see the class teacher or principal before the end of the school year.

Comment	Attainment	Standardised test score (60 – 130+)	STen score (1 – 10)	Approx. % of children who get this score
Highly capable and competent	> above average	130 or higher	9-10	9%
Capable and competent	above average	108 - 122	7-8	16%
Managing comfortably	average	93 - 107	5-6	50%
Experiencing some difficulty	below average	77 - 92	3-4	16%
Experiencing significant difficulty	< below average	76 or less	1-2	9%

Understanding standard/raw scores

Standard or raw scores usually go from 55 to 145 with **100** being an **average score** on a standardised test. About half of the children in Ireland have standard scores in the average range. You can see from the table that there are also standard scores above and below the average. As with other tests your child does in school, his/her result on a standardised test can be affected by how he/she feels on the test day or by worry or excitement about a home or school event.

This means that each test result is **an indication** of your child's achievement in English reading and Maths. You can play an important role in encouraging and supporting your child no matter what he/she scores on the test.

If my child's score is low, what does this tell me?

A low standard score (for example, 80) suggests that your child may have difficulties in **English reading** or **maths**. One test score by itself does not give a complete picture of your child's learning in **English reading** or **maths**. The teacher might decide to gather more information about your

child from other tests, as well as his/her observations in class. You too will have additional information from helping your child with homework, and hearing him/her talking about schoolwork.

The teacher may ask a colleague called the learning support teacher to look at your child's test scores and other assessment information. They may decide that your child would benefit from extra support with reading or maths. The extra support may be given by the learning support teacher. The child's teacher will talk to you about this.

If my child's score is high, what does this tell me?

A high score on the test may suggest that your child is a high achiever in **English reading** or **Maths**. As with low scores, one high score is not enough to confirm this. Your child's teacher will use more information from other classroom assessments to understand more clearly how well your child is doing in **English reading** and **Maths**.

Understanding the percentile rank

A pupil's percentile rank indicates the percentage of pupils in the relevant standardization sample, who obtained a score that was lower than that achieved by the pupil. For example, a child with a percentile rank of 84 at the end of 2nd class has scored as well as, or better than, 84 out of every 100 children who formed the standardization sample at the particular level.

This graph shows the relationship between **standard scores** and **percentiles**.

More Information

If you would like more information on how to help your child, you may find the DVD "The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school" helpful. The website address is www.ncca.ie where the DVD can be accessed.