



**St. John the Baptist  
Junior Boys' National School  
1906 Q**

**Policy on Assessment**

**Introduction**

This policy was originally drafted in 2004. The policy was redrafted in 2012 and then 2024.

**Policy Rationale**

The core of the policy is that each child should experience success at school. This policy seeks to track the progress of all students, identify children who may have learning difficulties and put in place a school response to their needs, at the earliest possible opportunity. It also seeks to employ an array of assessment techniques suited to the different learning styles of the pupils in the school.

**Relationship to School Ethos**

The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and the enhancement of teaching processes. An effective Assessment Policy identifies early interventions that need to be put in place to ensure that increased confidence and enhanced self-esteem is achieved. Our Mission Statement speaks of our aspiration that this school should be a place where children can grow and where they can learn. It speaks of our aspiration that they should feel cherished while they were with us. This policy is a core element of meeting these aspirations.

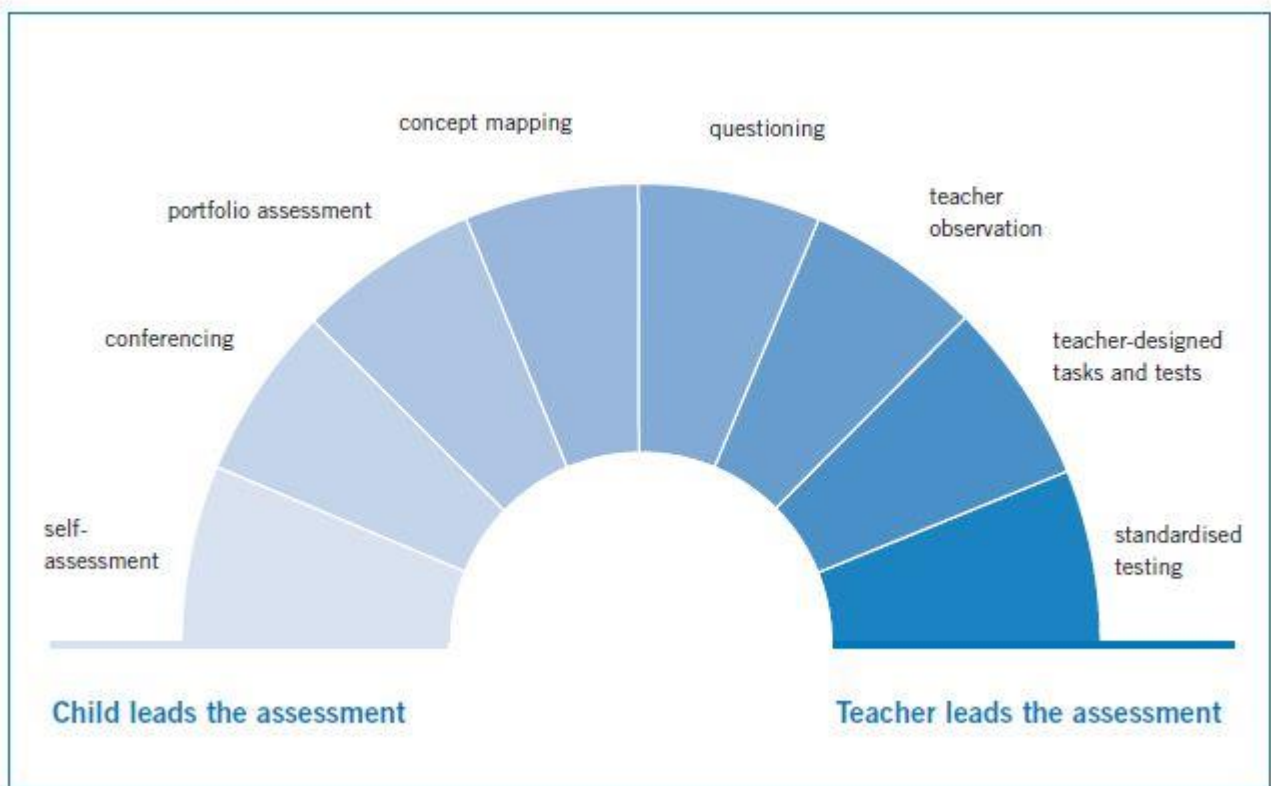
## Aims and Objectives:

The primary aims/objectives of the policy are:

1. To facilitate improved pupil learning
2. To create a procedure for monitoring progress
3. To track learning processes which assist the long- and short-term planning of teachers
4. To co-ordinate assessment procedures on a school basis
5. To cater for different learning styles.

## Classroom Assessment Methods

Figure 2: A continuum of assessment methods



(Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools. NCCA: 2007)

## Types of assessment

There are two principal approaches to assessment. **Assessment Of Learning** which is generally formal, takes place at the end of a learning phase or unit of instruction and usually involves a test or an external evaluative instrument e.g. a standardised test, teacher-designed test.

**Assessment For Learning** involves the teacher and/or learner actively monitoring and evaluating learning and is an informal method.

The following are a selection of assessment methods currently in use in the School:

### **Junior infants**

- Teacher observation & work correction
- In-class notes and feedback to class teacher from SET/team teacher.
- Checklists- sounds, sight vocabulary and blending, gross motor skills
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Self-assessment
- Questioning
- Heggerty assessment (3xyear)
- E-portfolio

### **Senior Infants**

- Oral reading fluency assessment
- Teacher observation & work correction
- In-class notes and feedback to class teacher from SET/team teacher.
- Checklists- sounds, sight vocabulary and blending, gross motor skills
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- Conferencing
- Questioning
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Heggerty assessment (3xyear)
- LETRS spelling screener
- E-portfolio

### **First classes**

- Teacher Observation
- Teacher designed tests and tasks
- Oral tests
- Written tests
- Problem solving
- Projects
- Questioning
- Portfolios
- Homework
- Work samples - worksheets, workbooks, copies.
- checklists PE, sight words etc
- Standardised tests
- Peer assessment
- Self assessment eg of written work
- Quizzes/games e.g. testing vocabulary orally.

- Oral reading fluency test
- LETRS screeners

### **Second classes**

- Standardised tests
- Work samples- copies, workbooks & worksheets
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests
- dictation sentences based on weekly spellings mid-year
- Pupil self-assessment (self-grading of own handwriting in handwriting books)
- Peer assessment
- Work samples in Art
- Oral reading fluency test
- LETRS screeners

### **Standardised testing**

From 1<sup>st</sup> class onwards, all pupils are screened annually using standardised tests or screening instruments. The standardized tests currently used are

- The MICRA-T Level 1 version (English) for 1<sup>st</sup> classes (Term 1 and 3).
- Sigma T Level 1 version (Maths) for 1<sup>st</sup> classes (Term 1 and 3)
- Drumcondra Level 2 (English and Maths) for 2<sup>nd</sup> classes (Term 3).

### **Refer to SET policy for next steps in accessing the Continuum of Support.**

The assessments in Appendix ii, or aspects of them, may be administered to individual students to gain further information.

### **Psychological Assessment:**

Currently, NEPS carry out 1 assessment each year. At the beginning of the school year, SEN Coordinator and principal shortlist candidates for this assessment with the NEPS psychologist.

### **Communication**

Results of standardised tests may be referred to in Parent-Teacher meetings, but only class-based STEN scores are included in reports for 2<sup>nd</sup> class.

### **Success Criteria:**

This policy is considered successful if

- Teaching and learning are enhanced.
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers
- A range of AfL and AoL assessment approaches are used to position assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to use correct and appropriate assessment practices, as per this policy, and to ensure that a staged intervention, differentiated or learning support approach is provided for in line with NEPS (Continuum of Support) guidelines and the school SEN Policy (2022).

Parents are consulted from the earliest stage of the Continuum of Support.

The principal, deputy principal, class teacher, SENCO and SET team have responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

**Ratification & Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in \_\_\_\_\_ and communicated to parents thereafter.

**References:**

DES Circular 56/2011

DES Circular 02/05 – 24/03

DES Learning Support Guidelines 2000

[www.sess.ie](http://www.sess.ie)

Working Together to make a Difference for Children – NEPS

Revised Literacy & Numeracy Strategy. DES: 2011

## Appendix i

### **Your child and standardised testing**

#### **Understanding the STen score**

During your child's time in primary school he/she will complete standardised tests in English reading and in maths. Children in Irish medium schools will also complete standardised tests in Irish reading. Schools must use the tests in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes and share the results with you. This leaflet explains what standardised tests are and how they can help your child's learning.

#### **What is a standardised test?**

We are all familiar with the idea of tests in school. Your child probably tells you how he/she did in a spelling or tables test prepared by the teacher. A standardised test is another kind of test. The standardised tests in English reading and maths measure a child's achievement compared to other children in all schools at the same class level or age level. The standardised test in Irish reading measures a child's achievement compared to other children in Irish medium schools at the same class level or age level. The English reading and Irish reading tests give information about how well your child can understand what he/she has read. The tests do not gather information on your child's written or spoken English and Irish. The maths test finds out how well your child can use numbers for different purposes and solve maths problems.

Schools can choose from a number of standardised tests which have been developed for use in primary schools in Ireland. These tests are based on the curriculum. There are different levels of the tests so, for example, the test your child does in first/second class will relate to your child's age and the curriculum for that class level.

#### **Will all children complete all the standardised tests?**

No. Children in English medium schools will complete standardised tests in English reading and maths. Children in Irish medium schools will complete standardised tests in English reading, maths and Irish reading.

#### **Are standardised tests the same as intelligence tests?**

No. Standardised tests are not intelligence tests. The main purposes of using standardised tests are to help the teacher plan your child's learning, and to inform you about how well your child is doing in English reading, maths and Irish reading. When the test scores are used alongside other information gathered by the teacher through observing your child at work, talking with him/her and looking at his/her work, they show how your child is getting on in English reading, maths, and Irish reading, and help the teacher to identify your child's strengths and needs.

#### **What are standardised tests used for?**

Standardised tests are used to

- report to you as a parent on your child's achievement in English reading, maths and Irish reading

- help to find out if your child has learning difficulties in English reading, maths and Irish reading so that the school can put appropriate supports in place
- help to find out if your child is a high achiever in English reading, maths and Irish reading so that appropriate learning experiences can be provided for him/her
- help your child's teacher plan for further learning across the curriculum because your child's achievement in English reading, maths and Irish reading is important for all his/her learning.

## When are standardised tests carried out?

Schools are required to use standardised tests at three identified stages during your child's time at primary school:

- English- medium schools are required to implement standardised testing in English reading and maths during the period May/June for all children in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes with effect from 2012 onwards
- Irish- medium schools are required to implement standardised testing in Irish reading, English reading and Mathematics during the period May/June for all children in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes with effect from 2012 onwards.

Many schools use standardised tests in other classes too.

## Do all children take standardised tests?

A small number of children might not take the tests. For example, if your child's first language is not English, the teacher may decide that he/she should not take the English reading test. Your child may, however, take the maths test. If your child has a learning or physical disability, the teacher may decide not to give the test but to use a different way to check on your child's progress. In all cases, the teacher will use the information he/she has about your child to decide whether or not your child should take the English reading test, the maths test and Irish reading test.

## Should I help my child prepare for standardised tests?

No. Standardised tests are one source of information about your child's achievement in English reading, maths and Irish reading. The teacher gathers information about your child's learning all the time. Your child will take the standardised tests on a regular school day as part of his/her daily work in the classroom. Indeed, your child may not even realise he/she has taken the tests!

## How will I know how my child has done on the standardised tests?

Your child's class teacher will share the test results with you, typically at a parent/teacher meeting or in a school report. You will see the results of the tests on your child's school report at the end of 2nd, 4th and 6th classes.

## How will I know what the test scores mean?

You will be familiar with hearing your child say he/she got 62% in a maths test or 9 out of 15 in a spelling test. Standardised tests generally use other types of scores. Your child's teacher may tell you how your child did in the test using a STen (standard ten) score.

## Understanding STen scores

STen scores go from 1 to 10. The table below describes what the different STen scores tell you about your child's achievement in English reading, maths and Irish reading.

STen score	What the score means	Proportion of children who get this score
8-10	Well above average	$\frac{1}{6}$
7	High average	$\frac{1}{6}$
5-6	Average	$\frac{1}{3}$
4	low average	$\frac{1}{6}$
1-3	Well below average	$\frac{1}{6}$

If your child's STen score is 5 or 6, you will know that his/her performance on the test is average. About one third of children in Ireland have STen scores in this band. You can see from the table that there are also STen 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, maths and Irish reading. You 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 STen score of 1, 2 or 3 suggests that your child may have difficulties in English reading or in maths or Irish reading. One test score by itself does not give a complete picture of your child's learning in English reading, maths and Irish reading. 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 school work. 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. This extra support may be given by the learning support teacher. Your child's teacher will talk to you about this.

You may find the DVD for parents, [The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school](#) helpful in talking to your child about working with the learning support teacher. Courtney, a girl in second class, and her mum talk on the DVD about their experience in getting extra help with Courtney's English reading. If you don't have a copy of the DVD, you can view an internet video of it from the NCCA website homepage at: [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie). (Click on the button for Primary School Curriculum: Information for parents.)

## 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 or Irish reading. As with low scores, one high score is not enough to confirm this. Your child's teacher will use information from other classroom assessments to understand more clearly how well your child is doing in English reading, maths and Irish reading.

## Should I share the score with my child?

You know your child best. No matter what the score is, you play an important role in encouraging your child to do his/her best, and in helping your child with English reading, maths and Irish reading. If the score is low and your child needs extra help with reading or maths, it may be helpful to talk to him/her about this and to see the help in a positive way.

## Helping my child to enjoy school and to succeed in learning

Using standardised tests at least twice during primary school to gather information on your child's achievement in English reading, maths and Irish reading can play a vital part in supporting your child's learning. Ultimately, this support can help your child enjoy school and make the most of the many opportunities to learn created by you and by your child's teachers.

## **Appendix ii**

### **EAL**

PSAK (Primary School Assessment Kit) – Listening and Speaking

#### **Junior Infants**

BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile) (if required)

Sounds Linkage Phonics Test

PM Testing/ Decodeable Reader Assessment

#### **Senior Infants**

BIAP (Belfield Infant Assessment Profile) (if required)

Senior Infant Diagnostic Assessment (Phonological Awareness, phonemic awareness, working memory, recall, visual discrimination)

MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test)

Post MIST Diagnostic Assessment (Phonological Awareness, phonemic awareness, working memory, recall, visual discrimination)

Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy (Sample in SET room)

York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension – Early Reading

York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension – Passage Reading

Dolch Word Assessment

Frys Word Assessment and Frys Phrases

PM Testing/Decodeable Reader Assessment

### **First Class**

The New Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (New DPRT) Level 1

Micra- T (New) Level 1 Reading Attainment Test

1<sup>st</sup> Class Pupil Assessment Diagnostic (sounds, alphabet, visual discrimination, reading, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness)

York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension – Early Reading

York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension – Passage Reading

PM Testing/Decodeable Reader Assessment

Dolch Word Assessment

Frys Word and Frys Assessment

Fluency Rubric (1 minute fluency)

Spelling – Drumcondra Spelling Assessment Level 1

- Diagnostic Spelling Test 1

### **Maths**

The New Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (New DPMT) Level 1

Sigma- T (New) (Standardised Irish Graded Mathematics Attainment Tests) (New) Level 1

Number Knowledge Test

Pupil Interview

### **Second Class**

The New Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (New DPRT) Level 2

Micra- T(New) Level 2 Reading Attainment Test

2nd Class Pupil Assessment Diagnostic

York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension – Early Reading  
York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension – Passage Reading  
PM Testing/Decodeable Reader Assessment  
Spelling – Drumcondra Spelling Assessment Level 2  
- Diagnostic Spelling Test 2

### **Maths**

The New Drumcondra Primary Maths Test (New DPMT) Level 2  
Sigma- T (Standardised Irish Graded Mathematics Attainment Tests) (New) Level 2  
Number Knowledge Test  
Pupil Interview

### **Language**

Pearson Bracken Receptive Language Assessment (Age 3-6:11)  
Renfrew Word Finding Vocabulary Test  
Checklist of Language Skills

### **Personal Social Development**

Thoughts About School Checklist  
Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire  
Talkabout Assessments

### **Gross Motor Skills**

Gross Motor Assessment  
Smart Moves Assessment

### **General**

#### **Memory and Recall**

Westwood's Short-term Auditory Memory Test  
Pro-ed (1997) Test of Language Development- Primary (Sentence Imitation Test (subtest V)

#### **Dyslexia**

Bangor Dyslexia Test  
Nessy Screener Online

#### **Ability/Reasoning**

New NRIT (Non-Reading Intelligence Test)  
GL Reasoning Assessment (Ages 5-7)  
GL Non-Verbal Reasoning Assessment (Ages 5-7)