

**ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL
MEADOWBROOK
DUBLIN 16**



ASSESSMENT ~ MEASTÚCHÁN



**SCOIL SHINSIREACH NAOMH ATHRACHT
CLUAIN GHLAISE
ÁTH CLIATH 16**

UIMHIR ROLA: 19716B

Scoil Shinsireach Naomh Athracht, Cluain Ghlaise, Áth Cliath 16

Assessment - Meastúchán

St. Attracta's Senior National School.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Attracta's Senior National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school which provides a happy caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential.

St. Attracta's Senior National School promotes excellence in teaching and learning. The school community that we create is welcoming, collegial, safe, respectful and inclusive of all its members. All aspects of the child, academic, spiritual, moral and cultural are cherished.

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement

This policy on Assessment is the product of a detailed consultative process involving all staff.

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, NCCA Guidelines for Schools 2007, p.7).

1.2 Rationale

The Education Act 1998 requires schools to 'regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents'. In fulfilling this requirement, this school has developed assessment procedures, which provide an accurate account of children's progress and achievement. The how, when and where of these procedures are outlined in this policy.

1.3 Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

As stated in the *Primary School Curriculum* (DES, 1999) assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. In keeping with our mission statement, at St. Attracta's S.N.S. we recognise the importance of assessment in making learning more enjoyable, more motivating and overall a more positive experience for both the children and teachers. It enables teachers, pupils and parents to monitor learning outcomes and identify learning needs.

1.4 Aims

The aims of this policy on assessment are:

- to benefit pupil learning
- to monitor learning processes
- to generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievements over time
- to involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths and needs
- to assist teachers' long and short term planning
- to inform the quality of teaching and learning in the school
- to coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

2. Assessment Guidelines

2.1 Purposes of Assessment

Assessment monitors and evaluates pupil's learning. The main purposes of assessment are:

- to inform planning for, and coverage of, all areas of the curriculum
- to gather and interpret data at individual, class and whole-school level and in relation to class and national norms
- to identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the exceptionally able
- to provide information about a pupil's level of ability in relation to knowledge, skills, and understanding
- to contribute to the school's strategy for prevention and management of learning difficulties.
- to enable teachers to reflect on and monitor their own approaches, strategies and methodologies and to modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- to inform teachers' short and long-term planning
- to monitor and compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment
- to gather information for the purpose of reporting to parents, other teachers and the principal
- to facilitate communication between parents and teachers about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- to facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work and to motivate them to reach their potential
- to foster continuity and progression from 3rd to 6th class reflective of the spiral nature of the curriculum
- to meet statutory requirements

2.2 Approaches Used

As outlined in “*Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools*” (NCCA, 2007), the following two principal approaches to assessment are used:

1. **Assessment for Learning (AfL):** teacher gathers, interpret and use information from what children do (or don't) say, do and make in order to make learning relevant and meaningful for children. The child's active role in his/her own learning is emphasised and therefore providing feedback to children is central to AfL.
2. **Assessment of Learning (AoL):** teachers record and report information on children's progress and achievement to the children themselves, their parents, other teachers, and other professionals. Teachers also use this information to take stock of their teaching. The emphasis in AoL is on measuring a child's cumulative progress towards curriculum objectives.

While acknowledging that no single assessment method in St. Attracta's Senior National School is exclusively AfL or AoL, for the purposes of this policy those which have a stronger AfL focus are set out in Section 2.3 and those which have a stronger AoL focus are set out in Section 2.4.

2.3 Assessment for Learning Methods (Formative Assessment)

While assessment of learning (AoL) assesses what a pupil knows, assessment for learning (AfL) actively involves the pupil in recognising their strengths and areas for improvement. It empowers students to take responsibility for their own learning and also creates a cooperative learning environment where students can offer constructive feedback to peers. The active involvement of pupils in their own learning is central to assessment for learning (AfL). The interaction of the student in establishing the learning intentions and success criteria is very important.

We teach children how to self-assess by:

- setting clear learning targets and outcomes
- setting criteria to make judgements before the child commences their work
- assessing their own work according to the agreed criteria when work is completed

A variety of AfL strategies are used throughout the school, as detailed below:

#1 WALT & WILF

Research shows that if teachers share what students are going to learn, and how they will know if they have been successful, students will be more prepared not only to take more responsibility for their own learning but also to engage in peer assessment and self-assessment. Learning intentions and success criteria can be shared in a variety of ways, such as through characters WALT (**We Are Learning To**) and WILF (**What I'm Looking For**).

#2 THINK, PAIR, SHARE.

Pupils need time to respond to questions and so teachers give them time to respond, asking them to discuss their thinking in pairs or in small groups. This strategy involves pupil's thinking by themselves about a question, then talking to a partner and finally answers shared with group or class.

#3 TWO STARS AND A WISH

This can be used in teacher's assessment, peer assessment and self -assessment. e.g. Students exchange books and give comments to a peer by writing two positive things (stars) about the work and one thing that she 'wishes' the other student would do to make it better. The comments should be specific to the qualities of the work and provide clear guidance on what to do to improve.'

#4 PEER ASSESSMENT

Pupils should be taught the habits and skills of collaboration in peer-assessment, both because these are of intrinsic value and because peer - assessment can help to develop the objective required for effective self-assessment.

#5 WAIT TIME

Wait time has to be increased to several seconds in order to give pupils time to think and everyone should be expected to have an answer and to contribute to the discussion. Then all answers right or wrong can be used to develop understanding. The aim is thoughtful improvement rather than getting it right first time.

#6 OPEN ENDED/HINGE POINT QUESTIONING

Hinge point questions are designed to help teachers know when and how to move on, based on what students do or do not understand. This type of question forms a 'hinge' near the middle of the lesson and the student

#7 CAROUSEL

Students send their piece of work around to others in a group and each of them provides constructive feedback for improving the work.

#8 TRAFFIC LIGHTS

These can be used in teacher's assessment, peer assessment or self-assessment. Students are given a RED, AMBER or GREEN mark for a piece of work, and all RED and AMBER work can be redrafted in an attempt to achieve a GREEN mark. Students mark a peer's work to identify his/her level of understanding (green - understand; amber - not sure; red - do not understand). It is important that time is allowed for students to get help with the things they do not understand.

#9 NO HANDS UP

Students only raise their hands if they have a question to ask. A random method of choosing which student answers a question is used, e.g. each student's name is on a stick, a small card or on a randomising program on the whiteboard.

2.3.1 Self-Assessment & Peer Assessment

Children are encouraged to look at their own work in a reflective way, to identify aspects of it that are good and that could be improved, and then to set personal learning targets for themselves.

Self-assessment is used by children of all ability levels and in all areas of learning. The following are some examples of self-assessment in practice, where children:

- look at and respond to their own creative work
- use writing frames
- draft, revise, edit and publish pieces of their own writing
- make presentations in front of the class and field questions
- discuss the outcome of their work with a peer, a group, the whole class, their teacher, and/or their parent
- use the “Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check” strategy to learn their spellings
- proof-read their own work and use a checklist to tick off all the necessary items for inclusion before handing up their work
- choose the best samples of their work to include in their self-assessment folders
- identify what they know about a topic, what they want to know, and what they have learned (using KWL grids)
- use the ‘traffic light’ system to assess how they are managing with the current task in hand. This system also helps the teacher to see at a glance how each pupil in their class is coping with the task.
- create self-assessment folders to help children take an active and engaging role in the assessment of their work.

Children know, understand and act on the following information:

- what good work is
- the extent to which they have achieved the criteria for good work
- ways of bridging the gap between what good work is and the next steps needed to achieve that
- striving for excellence

The benefits of using self-assessment folders are that they:

- are personal to the child
- encourage children to explore their own learning and the learning of other children
- empower children to discuss their learning
- involve peer and public learning
- create a safe context for children to express their own thinking about their learning
- create a classroom climate that supports children in the assessment process
- provide activities that directly and positively build links between home and school around the learning of the child.
- bridge teacher-led learning and assessment with child-led learning and assessment.

Examples of peer assessment include:

- viewing 'best samples' of other children's writing genre work on the 'Wall of Fame' outside of classrooms
- peers giving feedback on their partner's reading/writing/drama etc. by giving them 'two stars and a wish' with regard to their work

2.3.2 Conferencing

Conferencing takes place between: teachers and pupils; teachers and parents; and teachers themselves.

Mainstream and Learning Support teachers meet with their pupils in an informal and relaxed way to chat about their school-work whether it is a single piece of work or their general learning experiences. Children are encouraged to speak openly about their performance. Conferencing usually takes place in the classroom and can occur at any stage. Targets are set for future work.

Assessment information is also shared at **parent/teacher meetings**. Whole school parent/teacher meetings take place in the first term. It provides an opportunity for teachers and parents to learn more about how the child is learning at school and at home, to consider ways to support that learning, and to talk about the child's special interests, anxieties, etc. Expectations concerning future progress are outlined. Other meetings are scheduled between teachers and parents throughout the year as the need arises.

At the end of the school year, **teachers meet with next year's class teacher** to discuss any learning and developmental issues which children may have or unique qualities which may have been identified, and to share strategies that have proven successful. Class teachers also meet the previous year's teacher in the 3rd - 4th week of September for more information. Throughout the school year, team meetings take place between the class teachers of each standard to discuss, among others, children's work and the effectiveness of assessments used.

Similar meetings take place between present learning support teachers and previous learning support teachers.

Informal meetings between class teachers and support teachers take place as the need arises.

Third class mainstream and learning support teachers meet with teachers from St. Attracta's Junior School to discuss the learning needs of the pupils who will attend St. Attracta's Senior School the following year.

Teachers also meet from time to time with outside professionals e.g. speech and language therapists, Occupational Therapists, psychologists, Lucena Clinic etc.

2.3.3 Work Samples, Portfolios, and Projects

Work samples, portfolios and projects are a key element in supporting effective teaching and learning rather than an end in itself. In the senior school, we believe that gathering information about a child's learning is important, but of central importance is **how** this information is used to improve learning.

A folder of work may be retained for each child. This portfolio consists of a selection of work samples chosen by the teacher to help monitor the child's progress in knowledge and skills. Teachers also keep class tests and results in an assessment folder or in the teacher's diary.

Other items for inclusion are chosen by the pupils themselves to reflect work that they are particularly proud of.

Each child has a hard-back A4 English writing 'Genre book' where best samples of written work are displayed. This book is passed on to the following year's teacher so that children build up a portfolio of English writing genre work over a 4 year period.

Samples of art work are kept in a separate Art Portfolio which accumulates the child's art work throughout their entire school stay. At the end of each year, portfolios are passed on to and used by their new class teacher.

Individual and group project work is also used for assessment purposes. These may include

- SESE themed projects
- the Write-a-Book project
- poetry and story books
- Discover Primary Science Project
- Green School's Project
- class Spelling Bee competition results
- digital images of models and artwork
- K'nex projects and
- computer work saved onto the class computer folder.

2.3.4 Mind Mapping & Brainstorming

These visual representations are used to gather information about the children's ideas and understanding in subject areas. It provides evidence of changes in children's thinking over time e.g. a before and after assessment of a topic.

Samples of visual representations may include:

- Main Ideas Wheel
- Spider Web Brainstorming
- KWL
- Writing Frames
- Concept maps
- Mind-mapping

2.3.5 Questioning

Questioning underpins all classroom assessment methods since it allows the teacher to assess knowledge and understanding and to guide children in their learning. In each class, a variety of oral questions are asked by the teacher:

- closed questions requiring a single, factual answer
- open-ended questions which encourage a more critical, analytical response
- probing questions where children are required to elaborate on their answers
- prompting questions where children are guided to key points for consideration to help them reach a correct solution
- higher-order questions which require the children to synthesise and evaluate different pieces of information before giving a reasoned response

Children are encouraged to ask questions both of the teacher and of their peers to help clarify information being covered.

2.3.6 Information & Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT is also used to assess children's learning. Pupils engage in a range of ICT related activities throughout the course of the year, for example, work completed:

- on the interactive whiteboard (quizzes, games, activities)
- in class booklets and/or newsletters
- in their individual or group efolder in the computer room
- on Lexia, Wordshark, Starspell (if required)
- on Typing Tournament where the child can review their typing progress over time (particularly for Learning Support children)
- on the Literacy Planet leader boards (online English programme)
- on Mangahigh medal rewards (maths online programme)
- on Class DoJo which helps strive for improvement
- on Podcasts in the Podcasting room and aired over the school intercom
- on Twitter

Samples of work done on computer are

- printed and included in the pupil's portfolio
- displayed on classroom walls
- displayed on the corridors/in the halla
- relayed to parents to keep them informed of their child's progress
- used as part of an oral project presentation e.g. PowerPoint

2.4 Assessment of Learning Methods (Summative assessment)

2.4.1 Teacher Observation

Teacher observation can be used at any time in a classroom. These observations provide some of the most immediate and accurate information about a child's learning. Together with monitoring children's behaviour and attendance, teachers engage in:

- focused observations where a child or a group of children are observed at an activity
- random observation where the teacher monitors what is happening with various children e.g. works better in a group, alone, tires easily, responds to visual promptings, etc.
- structured observation where one particular child is observed each day at set intervals e.g. to identify behavioural patterns. Their responses, participation, interaction and reaction in class are monitored.

While learning support teachers maintain and update IPLPs and IEPs, class teachers may have an 'Observation copy' or similar record with a section for each child where they write down key observations and monitor a child's progress over time. This helps to create an overall picture of the child. These observations may be shared with parents at Parent Teacher meetings.

In the case of pupils who are identified as having learning difficulties, all teachers are familiar with the Continuum of Support, i.e. a staged approach for teachers to use in the classroom.

2.4.2 Teacher-Designed Tasks and Tests:

Teachers use a range of activities to assess the progress of individuals or groups across the full range of curriculum subjects. These may be oral, pictorial, written or practical and may be embedded in the everyday teaching and learning activities in the class or may be used by the teacher in key areas at the end of topics/activities to provide a fuller picture of the child's performance and progress.

Children's copies are corrected on a regular basis and oral and written feedback is given to pupils on the work that they have produced.

Teacher-designed tasks and tests include:

- mini-projects
- table quizzes
- worksheets
- mini tasks on whiteboard
- oral/written presentations
- spelling tests

- dictation sentences
- cloze procedures
- book reviews
- pre and post samples of writing genres
- cluichí Gaeilge
- trialacha Ghaeilge (abairtí iontacha, litriú, srl.)
- maths tests (including tables)
- times tables quizzes
- mental maths quizzes
- computation tests
- problem-solving
- KWL grids
- treasure hunts
- SESE tests (e.g. map quizzes)
- trails
- experiments
- PE tasks
- subject-related games (whole class, group, pairs)
- mini-white boards/response boards

2.4.3 Standardised Tests & Screening Tests

Standardised tests are used to measure a child's reading and mathematical skills, and to determine children's progress in those areas. Within the school, the following standardised tests are administered:

- NRIT (Non-Reading Intelligence Test) is administered to 3rd class pupils in September and to newcomer children
- DPRT (Drumcondra Primary Reading Test) (all classes)
- Sigma-T Maths Test (all classes)
- DPST (Drumcondra Primary Spelling Test) (all classes)
- (TGD-R) Triail Ghaeilge Dhroim Conrach do Scoileanna Rialta was trialled in 2013/2014 in Rang 4

Following DES guidelines the Sigma-T and DPRT tests are administered in April and May respectively.

Organisation of Standardised and Screening Tests

- The Learning Support team is responsible for the purchase, distribution and co-ordination of tests.
- Class teachers administer these tests to their own classes during the given period (indicated above), adhering strictly to the conditions outlined in the testing manuals.
- Class teachers mark and score the tests as set out in the test manual.

- Exemption from standardised testing is considered when deemed necessary, e.g. International pupils, pupils with language/learning difficulties, members of the Traveller community, etc. (see DES Circular 0138/2006)
- Procedures are in place to cater for pupils who are not taking a test with their classmates, whereby they will work with the learning support teachers instead.
- Children who miss a standardised test will be retested at a later date/ within two weeks by members of the learning support team. However, the scores will no longer be standardised.
- Raw Score, Standard Score, Percentile Rank and STen are recorded manually by the teacher using the testing manual template and subsequently recorded on the online Aladdin system.
- The Principal, Learning Support team and staff are involved in the analysis of standardised test results for an individual pupil, class and whole school level.
- The STen score results are reported to parents in accordance with DES Circular 0138/2006. All teachers use the standard language descriptors outlined in Table 1 below.
- Pupils who have scored at the 12th percentile or lower may be allocated learning support following consultation with teachers and parents.
- Teacher observations and assessments should also be taken into account when allocating learning support.

The table below outlines the range, descriptors and coverage of standardised tests:

Table 1:

Standard Score Range	STen Score Range	Descriptor	Coverage
115 and above	8-10	Well above average	Top one-sixth of pupils
108-114	7	High average	One-sixth of pupils
93-107	5-6	Average	Middle one-third of pupils
85-92	4	Low average	One-sixth of pupils
84 and below	1-3	Well below average	Bottom one-sixth of pupils

Standardised test results are recorded and stored electronically by each teacher. The principal and teachers chart this information on standardised assessments for each class on a regular basis and use the information to differentiate for pupils within the classroom.

Screening Tests

Screening tests are used to facilitate the early intervention of learning strengths/difficulties. One or more of the following screening tests are used:

- Lucid Rapid Dyslexia test
- New Non Reading Intelligence Test (NRIT) administered in September to the new third classes and to any new pupils entering the school
- Schonell Spelling Test

These screening tests are administered and corrected by the class teacher at the beginning of each year or as the need arises, depending in the test. If the class teacher has concerns regarding a child, a teacher appraisal form is filled out and the continuum of support is implemented.

The results are discussed with the Learning Support teacher and intervention methods are agreed (as per DES Circular 02/05). At this point, if diagnostic testing is needed, this may be requested.

The results are communicated to parents by the class teacher at the Parent Teacher Meeting or at a specific meeting where concerns arise.

The criteria which indicate that diagnostic testing is needed are where pupils are struggling at class level and concern is expressed by teachers and/or parents.

Where exceptionally able pupils are identified through screening tests, parents are informed of the various options available to them. Together with the parents, differentiated programmes of work catering to their child's needs within the school, are drawn up, e.g. early finisher sheets, high flyers books/packs, class grouping.

2.4.4 Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic tests are used to determine the appropriate learning support for individual pupils who present with learning difficulties and are usually carried out in September (for newcomers) or in the spring (mid-year testing)

The Diagnostic tests used in the school are:

- Schonell Reading
- Schonell Spelling Test
- Jackson Get Reading Right Test
- Observation of free writing sample
- Lucid Rapid Dyslexia Test
- Maths Tests (under review January 2015)

The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by DES Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing.

Diagnostic tests are carried out on children attending learning support and others on the continuum. These diagnostic tests are administered by the Learning Support teacher. The results are interpreted by the Learning Support teacher, in consultation with the class teacher. Teachers will meet with parents of pupils who may need to attend Learning Support mid-year and an Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLP) is drawn up to support the child's learning, if necessary.

An IPLP profiles the child's test results and identifies the child's learning strengths, the priority learning needs and the targets to be met. A plan of work for the child is drawn up and implemented after which a review of the child's progress is completed at the end of the term of work and the child may be released from Learning Support or receive further input depending on their progress.

Parental permission is sought in writing for diagnostic testing on children not currently attending learning-support but who may be experiencing difficulties and who may benefit from supplementary teaching in English or Maths. This testing will only take place if a teacher has put in place strategies to support the child but considers that there may be underlying issues contributing to the child's difficulties. This process is called the Continuum of Support.

CONTINUUM of SUPPORT

The needs of pupils with special educational needs can best be considered in terms of a continuum and therefore support given is also on the basis of a continuum. The focus is on identifying actions which can be taken to make a positive difference to the pupil/s. These actions are identified using a problem solving approach. An incrementally more systematic process is outlined depending on where the pupil's needs lie on the continuum in terms of intensity and duration. There are three stages in the Continuum of Support:

Stage 1: CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom Support is the most common, and typically the first response to emerging needs. It is a response for pupils who have distinct or individual educational needs and who require approaches to learning and/or behaviour which are additional to or different from those required by other pupils in their class. Problem solving at this level typically begins when a parent or teacher has concerns about an individual pupil. The teacher and parents discuss the nature of the problem and consider strategies which may be effective. **Classroom Support incorporates the simple, informal problem-solving approaches commonly used by class teachers to support emerging needs.**

Stage 2: SCHOOL SUPPORT

In some cases interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. **The class teacher needs to involve the learning support/resource teachers in the problem-solving process at this point** and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan or an Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLP).

Stage 3: SCHOOL SUPPORT PLUS

If a pupil's special educational needs are severe and/or persistent, they are likely to need intensive support. **School Support Plus will generally involve personnel outside the school team in the problem solving, assessment and intervention process.** It is at this point that the school psychologist will normally be contacted. However, the information from Classroom and School Support work will provide the starting point for problem-solving at this level. Classroom support and school support will continue to be an important element of his/her individual education plan (IEP)

2.4.6 Psychological Assessment

The results of diagnostic testing may indicate that a psychological assessment is needed to obtain further information on the child. If a psychological assessment is considered necessary, the class teacher/principal will contact the parents to progress this further.

The results of the diagnostic assessment will be made available to the educational psychologist or other education professionals if further assessment is required, pending parental approval. This assessment will then form a central part of the IEP (Individual Education Plan) for the child and will incorporate recommendations made by the specialised professionals.

The psychological reports are stored in the individual pupil's file in a filing cabinet in the Principal's office and in a secure filing cabinet in the Learning Support room.

2.4.7 Other External Assessments

We use the recommendations from the assessments of Speech and Language therapists, Occupational Therapists, Play Therapists and Physiotherapists to set targets for the progression of skills on an individual basis.

2.5 Interpreting, Recording, Using, and Reporting Results

2.5.1 Interpreting

- When interpreting results arising from formal assessments (i.e. standardised/screening and diagnostic), the associated guidelines are strictly adhered to (where relevant).
- The results of informal assessments are considered together with information gathered from other assessment methods over a period of time to form an overall detailed picture of a child's progress and achievement.
- Informal assessments are generally interpreted by the class teacher while formal assessments are jointly interpreted by the Learning Support team and the class teacher.

2.5.2a Recording in the Mainstream Classroom

Assessment results are recorded in hand written format and increasingly on computer. Three kinds of records are maintained by the school:

- **Teacher's Day-to-Day Records:** Teachers keep their own day-to-day record of observations, remarks, incidents, etc. as they occur in the classroom and playground. The results of teacher-designed tests are recorded in a class Marks Book and/or Computer file.
- **Report Card:** A report card is drawn up on each child in June of each year. This is sent to the child's parent and a copy is placed in the child's file. This report records salient information about the child's educational progress and achievements throughout the year. Following DES guidelines the school report is sent to parents two weeks before the end of the school year so that they have an opportunity to discuss their child's progress with their child's class teacher.

- **Education Passport:** The new *Education Passport* aims to support parents, children and schools in sharing a rounded picture of a child's learning as they move from primary to secondary school. The *Education Passport* will only be shared with the new post-primary school after enrolment has been confirmed. The *Education Passport* consists of
 - A standard end-of-year *6th Class Report Card* to support both the dual information needs of parents and post-primary schools
 - A *My Profile* sheet to give the child a voice in the transfer process
 - A *My Child's Profile* sheet to give parents the option of contributing more information about their child.

2.5.2b Recording in the Learning Support Setting

- **Pupil File:** A file on each child who has an educational and/or psychological assessment is kept in the principal's office. Copies of all reports and any other relevant information on the child are placed in this file.
- Each child also has a file in the Learning Support room. It stores documents filled in by the class teacher, the learning support teacher, and the resource teacher (where applicable). Information is recorded on all aspects of the child's learning and development throughout their school stay. Copies of any relevant IEPs or IPLPs are also kept in this file.

2.5.3 Using Results

Sensitive data is stored in the *pupil's file* in the Principal's office and in the Learning Support Department. This data is confidential and as such, access is restricted to the Principal, the child's learning support teacher and his/her class teacher. Special Needs Assistants may not access this file at any stage.

Assessment results provide the teachers with information to make decisions about what and how the child is learning. The teacher uses this information to identify the next steps in progressing the child's learning. Teaching strategies and/or the learning activities are adapted, as appropriate.

2.5.4 Reporting

- Assessment results are discussed with parents at the Parent Teacher Meeting in November.
- A report card of assessment results is sent to parents in June of each year and a copy is retained in the school.
- In the case of informal testing, the teacher may direct a pupil to be an agent of their own learning when reviewing work and teacher-designed tasks and tests.
- Informal reporting of the child's progress may be conveyed to parents through the child's homework journal.
- In June/September each teacher meets with the previous year's class teacher to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil.
- Meetings between the learning support teachers and parents may take place in September, March and June.

- Representatives from secondary schools may request a meeting with the 6th class teachers, during which a brief report on each child may be given. Where necessary Learning Support teachers may be included in these meetings.
- School reports and in the case of 6th class pupils, the Education Passport - including standardised test results - are also passed on to second level schools once confirmation has been received that the pupil has been enrolled in that school.
- It is the responsibility of parents to pass on any relevant assessments/reports to secondary school.
- Meetings take place at the end of the school year between the 2nd class teachers in St. Attracta's Junior School and the new 3rd class teachers in St. Attracta's Senior School to ensure that all relevant information is passed on.

3. Success Criteria

Practical indicators of the success of this policy will include:

- a range of informal and formal assessment modes being used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning
- procedures running smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects
- the transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happening efficiently at the end of school year and also from learning support teacher to learning support teacher.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

At the initial stage, it is the responsibility of the class teacher to initiate the continuum of support at class level. Following this, responsibilities are shared with the learning support teacher.

The principal assumes a primary role at any further stage when a psychological assessment may be required.

Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must always be kept open.

Scoil Shinsireach Naomh Athracht, Cluain Ghlaise, Áth Cliath 16
Standardised Testing - Note to Parents
St. Attracta's Senior National School, Meadowbrook, Dublin 16.

Dear Parents,

Next week, all of our pupils undertake their annual English Assessment tests and the following week our Maths Assessment tests will take place. These tests are Standardised National Tests and provide a "snapshot in time" as to pupil performance. Schools can choose which standardised tests they use and we currently use the Drumcondra English tests and the Sigma-T in Maths. These tests are based on the curriculum and each class takes the test at a level designed for their class. I hope you will find this information helpful.

Le gach dea ghúí,
Muireann Máirtín (Príomh Oide)

Standardised Assessment

Assessment and monitoring of children's progress is a very important part of our work here in St. Attracta's. It informs both our teaching and learning. We administer Standardised Tests to children in all classes from 3rd to 6th and so I thought it would be helpful for you to read some more about Standardised Tests.

What is a Standardised Test?

We are all familiar with the idea of tests in school. No doubt you are well aware of the regular tests prepared by the teacher. These usually monitor the child's progress and understanding of a given topic or area of work. Our Policy on Assessment will tell you more about that.

A standardised test is another kind of test. It 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 your child's vocabulary development and how well your child can understand what she has read. This test does not gather information on your child's spoken or written English.

The **Maths test** finds out how well your child can use understand concepts, use numbers for different purposes and solve maths problems.

What is a standardised test used for?

Standardised tests are used to:

- report to you as a parent on your child's achievement in English reading and maths
- help your child's teacher plan for further learning across the curriculum because your child's achievement in English reading and maths is important for all learning.
- assist us in preparing and adapting our teaching and additional supports in response to our yearly results.

Should I help my child prepare for standardised tests?

No. The teacher gathers information about your child's learning all the time. Your children will take the standardised tests on a regular school day as part of their daily work in the classroom.

However, you might encourage your children do the best they can, to try to answer all questions and to check over their work if they have time to spare.

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

The results are relayed to parents on the end of year report cards. However if we have any concerns about a child's results, we will make contact with you.

How will I know what the test scores mean?

You will be familiar with your child saying s/he got 70% in a maths test or 7 out of 10 in a spelling test. Standardised tests generally use other types of scores. We use STen scores when we report to you. STen scores go from 1 to 10.

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. There are also Sten scores above and below the average.

A STen score of 1, 2 or 3 may mean that your child has a difficulty in Maths and English. The teacher will look at all of the information about your child's work and progress to date. The teacher will meet with other teachers and with you to plan the supports your child needs.

If your child's score is STen 9 or 10, it may mean your child is a high achiever in English or Maths. The teacher will put this information to good use in planning work across the curriculum.

Remember that your child's score on a test is an indication of achievement but can be affected by how s/he was feeling on the day. It's very important that you support and encourage your child, regardless of what score s/he gets on the test. It is your decision whether or not to discuss the actual score with your child - you know your child best. You can read more about standardised tests on www.ncca.ie.