

Rathcoffey National School Assessment Policy 2025

In Ireland, assessment policies for primary schools are guided by a combination of national education frameworks, school policies, and ongoing educational reforms. Assessment practices are designed to help improve teaching and learning, ensuring that all students reach their full potential.

- **The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)** plays a crucial role in shaping assessment policy and guidelines in Ireland. They provide support to schools and teachers regarding best practices for assessment.
- **The Primary Language Curriculum (2015)** and the **Primary Mathematics Curriculum (2019)** both provide specific guidelines on assessing student learning in language and mathematics, promoting a focus on developing **critical thinking skills** and fostering a love of learning.

Below is an overview of the key aspects of assessment within Rathcoffey National School.

1. Types of Assessment

These are different types of assessments used within our school.

- **Formative Assessment:** This is ongoing, informal assessment used by teachers to monitor student progress and inform teaching. Examples include questioning, observation, discussions, quizzes, peer and self-assessment, and regular feedback.
- **Summative Assessment:** These assessments evaluate students learning at a particular point in time, usually at the end of a unit or term. This includes tests, written assignments, and end-of-term reports.
- **Diagnostic Assessment:** This type of assessment is used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of a learning period or to identify learning needs for additional support.
- **Norm-Referenced and Criterion-Referenced Assessments:** These may be used in some cases, especially for comparing student performance against national or international standards or specific learning outcomes.

Formative Assessment	Summative Assessment	Diagnostic Assessment** Could do with further input from SEN teachers.**	Norm-Referenced and Criterion Referenced Assessments
Classroom discussions	Projects	PM reader assessments	Drumcondra and SIGMA-T assessments. (2 nd , 4 th and 6 th).
Teacher observation	Termly tests (Maths, English and Gaeilge).	NNRIT	
Quizzes	Weekly spelling and tables tests.	YARC (The York Assessment of	

		Reading Comprehension)	
Regular written and oral feedback	Drumcondra and SIGMA-T assessments. (1 st -6 th classes)	Dyslexia Portfolio	
Peer and self-assessments.	MIST assessment (Senior Infants)		
	Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy (Senior Infants)		
	Alpaca (Literacy assessment Junior and Senior Infant)		

2. Curriculum-Based Assessment

The Irish National Curriculum is divided into different subjects, and assessment is focused on ensuring that children are meeting the learning objectives for each subject.

Key subject areas for assessment include:

- Mathematics (Tables, Problem-Solving, Fluency Checks, Tests)
- English (Reading Comprehension, Writing Samples, Phonics, Spellings)
- Gaeilge (Scribhneoireacht, Léitheoireacht, Briathra, Comhrá)
- SESE (History, Geography, Science)
- Arts Education (Visual Arts, Drama, Music - Portfolios, Reflections)
- SPHE & Wellbeing (Social & Emotional Learning, Reflection Sheets)
- Physical Education (PE Assessment Checklists, Fundamental Movement Skills)

Assessment should reflect the **outcomes** of the curriculum and consider both the process and product of learning.

3. Standardised Testing

In addition to teacher-generated assessments, standardised tests are used to assess student achievement in a broader context. The following are utilised within our school:

- **Drumcondra Tests of Achievement:** These are carried out from 1st class to 6th class to assess literacy across the different stages. These are administered annually nearing the end of the academic year.

- **MIST (Middle Infant Screening Test):** This is a standardized test for younger children to assess early literacy skills. This is administered in Senior Infants during term 3.
- **SIGMA-T Maths Attainment Test:** These are carried out from 1st class to 6th class. This standardised test is used to assess the main Mathematic strands. This is administered annually nearing the end of the academic year.
- **School Reports:** End of year reports document each students progress over time, highlighting achievements and areas for further development.

3. Recording

Each pupil has a digital file which is stored on "Aladdin". All Standardised Test results are also stored in a secure filing cabinet in the principal's office. This file is accessible to the class teacher/ SEN teacher/Principal. All pupils have a pupil profile which includes class tests and samples of work. The class teacher holds these documents in a secure cupboard in the classroom and they are passed on to next class teacher at the start of every new school year. Each child also has a digital portfolio on Seesaw/Google Classroom. This holds samples of the children's work including self and peer assessments. Teacher can also give feedback on the platform.

4. Reporting to Parents

- **Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Parent Teacher meetings are held annually between teachers and parents allowing for discussion of individual student progress, strengths, and any areas requiring support.
- **Written Reports:** Every June, teachers provide a written report to parents, detailing the child's academic performance, behaviour, and progress in all subject areas.
- **Continuous Communication:** The school caters for ongoing communication with parents through newsletters, meetings, phone calls and Aladdin notices.

5. Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL)

- **AfL:** Assessment is used to help students improve by focusing on their strengths and weaknesses. It emphasises **feedback** and encourages students to reflect on their learning.
- **AoL:** This type of assessment measures what the students have achieved in a formal manner, such as through exams, projects, or reports.

6. Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

- Assessment for students with special educational needs within our school (SEN) is adjusted to reflect individual learning needs. **Differentiated assessment strategies** are used where necessary, to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

The Continuum of Support suggests the following levels of support:

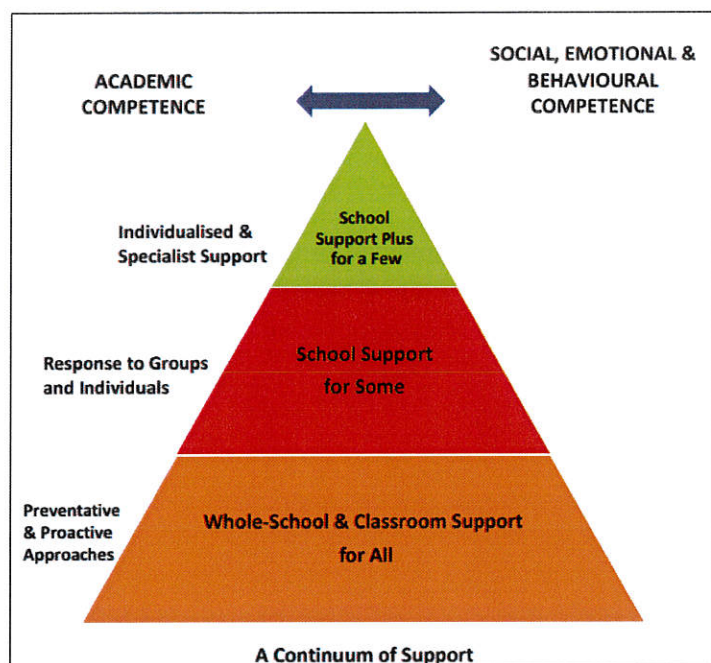


Table 1 below outlines how a school can collect evidence about pupils' educational needs at each level of the Continuum of Support. This evidence can then be used to adapt teaching, to plan the next steps in pupils' learning and to gauge their responses to interventions. When data are carefully collected, shared and compared, schools can identify and respond to all those pupils who have special educational needs.

Table 1: Identification of Educational Needs throughout the Continuum of Support Process

Classroom Support	The class teacher considers how to differentiate the learning programme effectively to accommodate the needs of all pupils in the class. A classroom support plan is developed and/or adjusted over time for those pupils who do not respond appropriately to the differentiated programme. This is informed by: ● Parental consultation ● Teacher observation records ● Teacher-designed measures/assessments ● Basic needs checklist ● Pupil consultation – My Thoughts About School Checklist ● Literacy and numeracy tests ● Screening tests of language skills A Classroom Support plan runs for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.
School Support	At this level a Support Plan is devised and informed by: ● Teacher observation records

	• Teacher-designed measures/assessments • Parent and pupil interviews • Learning environment checklist • Diagnostic assessments in literacy/numeracy • Formal observation of behaviour including ABC charts, frequency measures • Functional assessment as appropriate, including screening measures for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties A support plan at this level may detail suitable teaching approaches including team-teaching, small group or individual tuition. A School Support Plan operates for an agreed period of time and is subject to review.
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School Support Plus	This level of the Continuum is informed by a detailed, systematic approach to information gathering and assessment using a broad range of formal and informal assessment tools, reports from outside professionals (as appropriate) and may include: • Teacher observation and teacher-designed measures • Parent and pupil interviews • Functional assessment • Results of standardised testing such as measures of cognitive ability; social, emotional and behavioural functioning; adaptive functioning etc. Data generated from this process are then used to plan an appropriate intervention and can serve as a baseline against which to map progress. A support plan at this level is likely to be more detailed and individualised, and to include longer term planning and consultation.
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Educational planning

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced through clear identification processes and careful planning of interventions to address academic and/or personal and social development needs. Identification of needs, planning, target-setting and monitoring of outcomes are essential elements of an integrated and collaborative problem –solving process. The process involved the class teacher, special education teachers, parents, the pupil and relevant professionals. Interventions should draw on evidence-informed practice and the professional knowledge and experience of teachers. These interventions should reflect the priority learning needs of pupils, as well as building on their strengths and interests. Support plans should set out the agreed targets, the resources required, the strategies for implementation and a time-frame for review.

Student Support File

A Student Support File has been developed to enable schools to plan interventions and to track a pupil's pathway through the continuum of support. It facilitates teachers in documenting progress and needs over time and assists them in providing an appropriate level of support to pupils, in line with their level of need. Following a period of intervention and review of progress, a decision is made as to the appropriate level of support required by the pupil. This may result in a decision to discontinue support, to continue the same level of support, or move to a higher or lower level of support.

Irish Exemptions

Circular 0054/2022 : (EXEMPTIONS FROM THE STUDY OF IRISH: REVISING CIRCULAR 0052/2019) allows a principal to grant an Irish exemption in exceptional circumstances (section 2) without the need for an educational assessment.

Details of when an exemption can be granted is given in much detail in Section 2.2 of Circular 0054/2022.

The decision to exempt a pupil from the study of Irish is an important decision that has implications for his/her access to the curriculum and his/her future learning. The decision to grant an exemption from the study of Irish is made by the Principal teacher, but it must be made following detailed discussion with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s), the class teacher, S.E.N. teacher and the pupil.

Schools are required to record data on pupils who are exempt from the study of Irish and the reason for that exemption on the Primary Online Database (POD), see section 2.3(c) of said circular.

Section 2.2.2 states; An exemption from the study of Irish may be granted to a pupil:

(i) who has at least reached second class **AND**

(ii) who presents with significant literacy difficulties that are persistent despite having had access to a differentiated approach to language and literacy learning in all subjects/across the curriculum and over time. Documentary evidence to this effect, held by the school, should include Student Support Plans detailing:

- regular reviews of learning needs as part of an ongoing cycle of assessment
- target-setting
- evidence-informed intervention and review, including test scores (Word Reading, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, other scores of language/literacy) at key points of review **AND**

(iii) who, at the time of the application for exemption presents with a standardised score on a discrete test in either Word Reading, Reading Comprehension or Spelling at/below the 10th percentile.

7. Student Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment

- Students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning through **self-assessment** practices, which helps them develop critical thinking and self-regulation skills.

These may include:

- Self-Assessment Checklists
 - Traffic Light System (Red, Amber, Green)
 - Smiley Face / Emoji-Based Reflections for Younger Pupils
 - Learning Journals & Reflection Sheets
 - Goal-Setting Templates (Short-Term & Long-Term)
 - Exit Tickets & Reflection Prompts
 - Self-Assessment Rubrics for Specific Subjects (Writing, Maths, etc.)
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- **Peer assessment** is promoted in every classroom to help students engage with and understand each other's learning experiences.
 - These may include:
 - Peer Feedback Forms (Two Stars and a Wish)
 - WWW (What Went Well) / EBI (Even Better If) Reflection Sheets
 - Peer-Editing Checklists (Writing, Projects, Presentations)
 - Verbal & Written Feedback Records
 - Group Work Evaluation Sheets
 - Collaborative Learning Logs

8. Implementation

This policy supersedes the previous policy and is effective from May 2025.

9. Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in December 2025, and communicated to parents thereafter.

10. Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed every three years (or as circumstances may warrant) and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in 1/12/25

Signed: John Cleary

Date: 1/12/25

Eugene Keogh

1/12/25