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Circular 0018/2012

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Primary Schools

Supporting Assessment: Standardised Testing in Primary Schools

Circular 0056/2011, which issued in October 2011, asked schools to implement a range of measures relating to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. These measures included the implementation of standardised testing at three points in the primary school cycle and the reporting of the information from these tests to parents, boards of management and the Department of Education and Skills

The purpose of this circular is to give further information on the implementation of the revised standardised testing arrangements.

Please bring this circular to the attention of the board of management, principal and teaching staff of your school.

Breda Naughton,
Principal Officer

April 2012

1. Background:

Circular 0056/2011 sets out, in detail, arrangements in relation to assessment under *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life: The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011-2020*.
(www.education.ie/featuredlinks/literacyandnumeracyforlearningandlife)

Schools should consult that circular to ensure that they are fully implementing all the measures relating to the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. This circular focuses on aspects of implementation that relate to the administration of standardised tests and the reporting of the results of those tests.

Paragraph 6.4 of Circular 0056/2011 provides as follows in relation to standardised testing:

Schools are requested to ensure that standardised testing is implemented on an annual basis in the relevant classes beginning in May/June 2012.

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

2. Grants Available

Circular 0056/2011 provided that the grant for test instruments, scoring and manuals would be adjusted to take account of the additional testing point and that payment would be advanced from December 2012 to April 2012. The following grants were lodged in schools' bank accounts in 2012.

- **English medium schools:** A grant of €5.10 per pupil, subject to a minimum grant of €40 per school, based on the overall enrolment at 30 September 2011. This allows for testing at 2nd, 4th and 6th class in English reading and Mathematics.
- **Gaeltacht schools and Gaelscoileanna:** A grant of €6.40 per pupil, subject to a minimum grant of €62 per school based on the enrolments at 30 September 2011. This allows for testing at 2nd, 4th and 6th classes in Irish reading, English reading and Mathematics.

The funds may be used to purchase test instruments and materials such as teachers' manuals, test scoring services or test-related software offered by test providers. Any funds remaining after the standardised testing costs have been met may be spent on diagnostic tests in accordance with school needs.

3. Report Card Templates for Parents

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests. All primary schools must use one of the report card templates for reporting to parents on pupils' progress and achievement at the end of the school year. The report that schools provide for pupils in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes will include the results of standardised tests.

The NCCA has developed an online tool that will help primary schools to create a report card using these report card templates. The Report Card Creator can be accessed at www.reportcard.ncca.ie. A postcard on the Report Card Creator is included in this mailing and at appendix 1 below.

In addition, the NCCA has developed an information leaflet that explains standardised test results to parents. This leaflet is available in several languages at www.ncca.ie and should be enclosed with the school report (see appendix 1 for further information).

4. Reporting to the Department of Education and Skills

As indicated in Circular 0056/2011, data on student achievement are essential to inform national education policy and to identify ways of improving the performance of the education system. All primary schools will be required to report aggregate standardised test results for 2nd, 4th and 6th classes once annually to the Department of Education and Skills.

The Department is developing an online system to enable schools to upload their standardised test data **via Easinet**. Appendix 2 sets out the aggregate data schools will need to retain from the 2011/12 tests to make a return via the online system. It is anticipated that the online system will be operational in Autumn 2012 and guidance will be provided to schools on how to use the system.

Appendix 1

Information for Parents on Standardised Tests:

To access information for Parents on Standardised Testing. On the home page click on “blue NCCA column”. On the right hand side of the page, click on link to “Information for Parents”. In the centre of the page, click on “Primary”. On left hand column “About us”, click on “Standardised Tests”.

Information on NCCA Report Card Creator:

Report Card Creator

www.reportcard.ncca.ie

What is it?


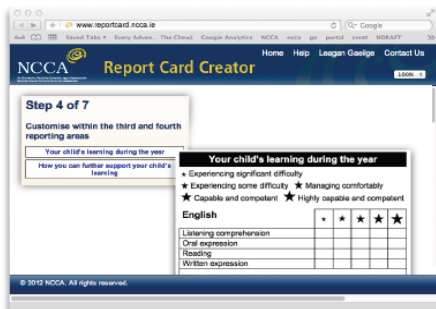
An online tool for primary schools to create a report card to share information about the pupil's learning with parents at the end of the school year.


Why was it developed?

To support schools to meet the requirement to ‘...use one of the (NCCA) report card templates for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school’ (DES Circular letter 0056/2011).

How do I use it?

- Go to:**
www.reportcard.ncca.ie
- Select Language:**
English, Gaeilge or bilingual.
- Follow the **7 steps** to create your school's pupil report card.
- Download** pupil report card.
- Print** and/or **Save** the report card.





NCCA, 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2
T: +353 1 661 7177 W: www.ncca.ie

Live: 4th May 2012

APPENDIX 2

**INFORMATION TO BE RETAINED BY SCHOOLS FOR
ONLINE SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS IN AUTUMN 2012**

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|
| Roll number | | County | | School | |
|--------------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|

ENGLISH READING

Please enter the number of students in second, fourth and sixth classes whose **scores** on a standardised test of English reading fall within the following ranges in respect of tests undertaken in May/June 2012:

| Class | STen 1-3 | STen 4 | STen 5 | STen 6 | STen 7 | STen 8 - 10 | Number of pupils tested | Numbers of pupils exempted from test | Number of pupils absent and not exempted | Total enrolment in class | Test administered |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Second class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Reading Test or Micra-T Reading Test |
| Fourth class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Reading Test or Micra-T Reading Test |
| Sixth class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Reading Test or Micra-T Reading Test |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|--|--------|--|--------|--|
| Roll number | | County | | School | |
|-------------|--|--------|--|--------|--|

IRISH READING (FOR USE ONLY IN IRISH-MEDIUM SCHOOLS)

Please enter the number of students in second, fourth and sixth classes whose **scores** on a standardised test of Irish reading fall within the following ranges in respect of tests undertaken in May/June 2012:

| Class | STen 1-3 | STen 4 | STen 5 | STen 6 | STen 7 | STen 8 - 10 | Number of pupils tested | Numbers of pupils exempted from test | Number of pupils absent and not exempted | Total enrolment in class | Test administered |
|--------------|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Second class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Reading Test |
| Fourth class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Reading Test |
| Sixth class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Reading Test |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|
| Roll number | | County | | School | |
|--------------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|

MATHEMATICS

Please enter the number of students in second, fourth and sixth classes whose **scores** on a standardised test of mathematics fall within the following ranges in respect of tests undertaken in May/June 2012:

| Class | STen 1- 3 | STen 4 | STen 5 | STen 6 | STen 7 | STen 8 - 10 | Number of pupils tested | Numbers of pupils exempted from test | Number of pupils absent and not exempted | Total enrolment in class | Test administered |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Second class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Maths Test or Sigma-T Maths Test |
| Fourth class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Maths Test or Sigma-T Maths Test |
| Sixth class | | | | | | | | | | | Drumcondra Maths Test or Sigma-T Maths Test |