



# BANDONBRIDGE N.S.

## Assessment Policy

*Learning • Progression • Inclusion • Pupil Agency*

|                             |                                                              |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Original formulation</b> | September 2003                                               |
| <b>Previous reviews</b>     | September 2018; 03/11/2021                                   |
| <b>Current review</b>       | September 2026                                               |
| <b>Next review</b>          | As required by curriculum, assessment or Department guidance |

Updated to reflect the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum and current assessment/testing guidance.

## Introductory Statement and Rationale

This policy provides a transparent, consistent and inclusive whole-school approach to assessment in Bandonbridge N.S. It builds on the school's established assessment practices while reflecting the Primary Curriculum Framework (2023), the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum launched in 2025, current Department of Education and Youth requirements, and emerging NCCA assessment guidance for curriculum enactment.

Assessment is understood as integral to learning and teaching. It is purposeful, ongoing and responsive: teachers gather, interpret and use evidence of learning to make professional judgements, plan next steps, celebrate achievement, identify strengths and needs, and support each child to progress. Assessment is broader than testing and includes the everyday interactions, observations, conversations, tasks and reflections through which learning becomes visible.

## Principles Underpinning Assessment

- Assessment supports the curriculum vision that every child should thrive and flourish and realise their potential.
- Assessment is inclusive and responsive to children's different strengths, needs, identities, languages, experiences and rates of progression.
- Assessment is aligned with curriculum learning outcomes and supports progression in knowledge, skills, concepts, dispositions and the key competencies.
- Children are active participants in assessment. They should increasingly understand learning intentions, recognise quality, reflect on progress and identify appropriate next steps.
- Teacher professional judgement is central and is informed by multiple sources of evidence gathered over time.
- Assessment evidence is used primarily to improve learning and teaching; standardised testing is one element within a broader assessment picture.
- Assessment practices should be proportionate, manageable, ethical and respectful of pupil wellbeing.
- Assessment information is communicated clearly and sensitively to pupils, parents/guardians, relevant staff and, where required, external agencies.

## Aims of the Assessment Policy

- To improve learning by identifying what children know, understand and can do, and by establishing appropriate next steps.
- To monitor and support progression across curriculum stages and learning outcomes.
- To develop children's capacity for self-assessment, reflection, goal-setting and ownership of learning.
- To inform responsive classroom planning, differentiation and teaching methodologies.
- To identify pupils who require additional challenge, targeted support, EAL support or further assessment.
- To provide baseline and longitudinal information that helps teachers monitor individual, group and whole-school progress.
- To support effective communication with parents/guardians and continuity of learning between classes and educational settings.
- To use assessment information to inform School Self-Evaluation, support planning and allocation of resources.
- To coordinate assessment procedures and ensure appropriate recording, reporting, confidentiality and data protection.

## The Assessment Continuum

In line with the Primary Curriculum Framework, Bandonbridge N.S. recognises assessment as a continuum. The three forms below are complementary and together provide a fuller picture of a child's learning.

| Intuitive assessment                                                                                                                               | Planned interactions                                                                                                                                                               | Assessment events                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ongoing, often unplanned and usually unrecorded. Examples: noticing misconceptions, responsive questioning, observation during play or discussion. | Purposeful interactions linked to learning outcomes/competencies; may be recorded. Examples: conferencing, questioning, concept maps, work samples, rubrics, peer/self-assessment. | Distinct and usually recorded. Examples: teacher-designed tests, projects, performance tasks, diagnostic assessments and standardised tests. |

## Assessment Approaches Used Throughout the School

### Ongoing formative assessment

- Teacher observation and professional dialogue
- Purposeful questioning, discussion and conferencing
- Learning intentions and co-constructed or teacher-shared success criteria
- Feedback that identifies strengths, next steps and strategies for improvement
- Pupil self-assessment, reflection, learning logs and age-appropriate goal-setting
- Peer assessment where appropriate and explicitly taught
- Checklists, rubrics, continuums, exemplars and annotated work samples
- Concept mapping, KWL and other approaches that make prior and developing understanding visible
- Drafting, editing, redrafting and portfolio evidence
- Play-based, practical, oral, creative, digital and performance-based evidence
- Teacher-designed tasks, quizzes and short assessments used diagnostically
- Parental/guardian information where it contributes meaningfully to understanding the child's learning

### Summative assessment

- Teacher-designed end-of-unit, term or curriculum-related tasks and tests where useful i.e. Busy at Maths Assessment Tests
- Projects, presentations, performances and portfolios
- Selected work samples that demonstrate achievement in relation to learning outcomes including Word documents, slideshows, documents produced by digital apps i.e. Book Creator
- Standardised assessments used in accordance with Department requirements and school policy. In Bandonbridge NS we use Drumcondra Tests in English, Maths and Spelling, along with NNRIT, SWST and Test2R at various times during a child's schooling
- End-of-year reporting based on a broad range of evidence rather than a single test score

### Assessment across the curriculum

Assessment will reflect the nature of learning in each curriculum area. Teachers will use curriculum learning outcomes, progression supports, examples of children's learning and curriculum toolkit materials as these become available. Assessment should capture not only recall of content but also application, communication, creativity, reasoning, problem-solving, collaboration, reflection and other relevant dimensions of learning.

## Screening, Early Intervention and Additional Assessment

Where classroom assessment indicates a possible learning need, the class teacher will gather further evidence and may implement a classroom support plan in consultation with parents/guardians and the school support team. Screening and diagnostic assessment will be selected according to the child's age, stage, presenting need and the purpose of the assessment. No single score will be used in isolation to determine provision.

- Early literacy and numeracy screening/assessment resources may be used in the infant and junior classes where appropriate.
- Reasoning or non-verbal assessments may be used when professionally appropriate, including where language may affect performance.
- SETs may administer diagnostic literacy, numeracy, language or other assessments to clarify strengths and needs and to inform targeted teaching.
- Existing school resources such as YARC and suitable spelling, reading, reasoning or mathematics diagnostic tools may continue to be used where current, valid and appropriate.
- Assessment accommodations will follow test manuals and Department guidance. Results will always be interpreted in the context of classroom evidence and the pupil's learning profile.

## English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Pupils learning English as an additional language will be assessed using a combination of teacher observation, classroom evidence and appropriate language-proficiency assessment. The NCCA Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) may be used to assess Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing and to inform specific language targets, teaching and review. Current Department criteria for EAL staffing/support applications will be followed. Assessment will distinguish, as far as possible, between additional-language development and other learning needs.

## Standardised Testing

Standardised tests provide norm-referenced information about attainment and are used alongside, not instead of, teacher professional judgement and other assessment evidence. The school will comply with current Department requirements for standardised testing and reporting.

This is the current schedule of testing but tests used, times of testing and classes tested may change as new resources or directives are given.

- The Single Word Spelling Test is administered to 1st - 6th classes in mid-September annually
- The NNRIT is administered in 1st, 3rd and 5th annually at the end of September
- Test2R is administered to all pupils in Senior Infants in October annually
- Drumcondra Spelling Test is administered to children in 1st - 6th classes in early February
- Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy is administered to SI at the end of April/ early May
- Drumcondra Maths Screening Test is administered to 1st at the end of April/ early May
- Drumcondra Maths Test is administered to 2nd - 6th class at the end of April/ early May
- Drumcondra English Test is administered to 1st - 6th class at the end of April/ early May

The school will review the continued use of reasoning tests (including NNRIT or equivalent/current reasoning measures) according to purpose, validity, current norms, cost and professional need.

Teachers will use the most current test manuals, norms and administration instructions and will not compare scores from different test editions or norming periods without appropriate caution.

## Use and Interpretation of Assessment Information

- Teachers will triangulate evidence from observation, pupil work, conversations, curriculum-related tasks and, where relevant, standardised/diagnostic assessments.
- Assessment information will identify strengths as well as needs and will lead to specific, achievable next steps.
- Standard scores, STEN scores and percentile ranks will be interpreted according to the relevant test manual and explained to parents/guardians in accessible language.
- Patterns over time are generally more informative than isolated scores. Unexpected changes or anomalies will prompt review of administration conditions, attendance, language factors, wellbeing, classroom evidence and other relevant information.
- Whole-school data may be aggregated to identify trends and inform School Self-Evaluation, curriculum planning, professional learning and allocation of support. Data will not be used to rank classes or pupils publicly.

## Support Planning and Diagnostic Assessment

Where evidence indicates a need for additional support, the school will follow the Continuum of Support and maintain an appropriate Pupil Support File. Targets will be specific, meaningful and informed by assessment evidence. Progress towards targets will be reviewed regularly, and teaching approaches will be adjusted in response. Diagnostic assessment may be used by SETs where it will add useful information to classroom evidence or support referral to an outside professional.

## Pupil Voice and Agency

- Children will be supported to understand what they are learning and why.
- Success criteria and exemplars will be used where appropriate to help children recognise quality.
- Children will receive timely feedback and opportunities to act on it.
- Self-assessment and reflection will be age- and stage-appropriate and will focus on progress and next steps rather than comparison with peers.
- Pupil views will be considered when support targets are set and reviewed, where appropriate.

## Roles and Responsibilities

- Class teachers: lead ongoing classroom assessment; maintain appropriate records; administer agreed assessments; communicate with pupils and parents/guardians; initiate classroom-level supports.
- Special Education Teachers: contribute to assessment, diagnostic work and support planning; maintain relevant records; monitor progress towards support targets; advise on suitable assessment tools.
- EAL teacher(s): assess English-language proficiency using appropriate tools and classroom evidence; establish and review language targets; liaise with class teachers and families.
- SEN/SET co-ordinator or Deputy Principal: coordinate assessment resources and schedules; ensure current manuals/materials are available; monitor updates to tests and Department/NCCA guidance; support consistency across the school.
- Principal: has overall oversight of assessment policy and statutory reporting; ensures appropriate use of assessment data; oversees referrals and communication with the Board of Management.
- Pupils: participate actively in reflection, self-assessment and goal-setting appropriate to their age and stage.
- Parents/guardians: share relevant information, engage with reports and meetings, and work in partnership with the school to support learning.

## Recording, Data Protection and Storage

- Assessment records will be relevant, accurate, proportionate and securely stored in accordance with data-protection requirements and school retention procedures.
- Standardised test results and agreed assessment information will be recorded on the school's management information system (currently Aladdin) where appropriate.
- Pupil Support Files, diagnostic records and professional reports will be stored securely with access limited to staff who require the information for educational purposes.
- Digital assessment platforms will be used only where the school is satisfied that data-processing and privacy requirements are appropriately addressed.
- Assessment data shared with the Board of Management will normally be aggregated and will protect individual pupil confidentiality.

## Reporting and Transfer

- Parents/guardians will receive clear information on their child's progress through parent-teacher meetings, support teaching meetings and end-of-year reports and other communication as appropriate.
- Reports will draw on a broad range of evidence and will communicate strengths, progress, areas for development and appropriate next steps.
- Standardised test results will be reported to parents/guardians and to the Department/Board of Management in accordance with current requirements.
- The school will use current NCCA reporting and Education Passport materials for transfer to post-primary school and will adopt redeveloped materials when issued.
- Relevant assessment information will be transferred between teachers/classes to support continuity while respecting confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

## 16. Outside Professional Services

Where appropriate, and in consultation with parents/guardians, the school may liaise with services including:

- NEPS and other psychological services
- Primary Care Children's Services, including Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy
- Children's Disability Network Teams
- Assessment of Need services, if requested
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), referrals through family GP only
- Other relevant educational, health or therapeutic professionals

## Review of Assessment Resources

Assessment resources will be reviewed annually by school leadership and the SET team. Selection will take account of alignment with the current curriculum, purpose, age/class level, Irish norms, accessibility, reliability/validity, administration burden, cost, data protection and the usefulness of reports for teaching. The school notes that the Educational Research Centre is continuing to redevelop primary assessment resources; therefore named tests in this policy are examples of current resources rather than permanent requirements.

## Review, Ratification and Communication

This policy will be reviewed as required in response to the publication of NCCA Assessment Guidance for the Primary School Curriculum, new or redeveloped assessment resources, changes to Department requirements, school self-evaluation findings, or identified needs in school practice.

Following ratification by the Board of Management, the policy will be made available to staff through the school's shared drive and will be available to parents/guardians in accordance with school practice.

## Appendix A — Current Reference Points (September 2026)

- Primary Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2023) and the redeveloped Primary School Curriculum.
- Primary Curriculum Toolkit / Curriculum Online resources, including updated 2026 guidance on Preparation for Learning, Teaching and Assessment.
- NCCA Assessment Guidance for the Primary School Curriculum (2026) — to be incorporated when formally published/updated.
- Department of Education and Youth Circular 0048/2026 and current guidance on standardised testing in primary schools.
- Educational Research Centre information and manuals for current Drumcondra primary tests.
- NCCA Primary School Assessment Kit for English as an Additional Language.
- Current NCCA reporting and Education Passport resources.

## Appendix B — Annual Assessment Review Checklist

- Confirm Department requirements and submission deadlines for standardised testing.
- Confirm current test editions, norms, manuals, licences and online-platform arrangements.
- Review accommodations, exemptions/inclusion criteria and pupil accessibility needs.
- Review EAL assessment and staffing-support requirements.
- Check that assessment practices reflect curriculum learning outcomes and pupil progression.
- Review whole-school assessment data for trends without over-reliance on test scores.
- Identify professional learning or resource needs.
- Update this policy/schedule if national guidance or assessment resources change.