



Pelletstown Educate Together National School

Assessment Policy

September 2025

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated by the teaching staff in November 2017 and reviewed in 2025, so as to have a transparent and uniform approach to assessment throughout the school. The NCCA Assessment Guidelines were consulted and form the basis of this policy.

Rationale

In order to ensure that all children in our school achieve to the best of their ability, we believe it is imperative that any learning difficulties are identified at the earliest opportunity and that the school puts in place an appropriate response to the emergent needs.

An effective assessment policy ensures quality in education is central to the process of teaching and learning. Through assessment, teachers are enabled to construct a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the child and thus plan accordingly. Assessment assists communication between all parties involved in the child's education i.e. teacher and child, teacher and parent/carer and teacher and other relevant staff members, teacher and relevant external personnel. Assessment also helps the child become more self-aware as a learner and develops the power of self-assessment. It is integral to all areas of the curriculum and to the child's growth in self-esteem and acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Relationship to the Ethos of the School

As an Educate Together school, Pelletstown ETNS adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching and learning processes. An effective policy of assessment will identify the early interventions required to be put in place to ensure that enhancement, increased confidence and raised self-esteem is achieved.

Aims

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths or difficulties
- To assist teachers in their long- and short-term planning
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis and to establish a firm link between assessment and decision making with regard to future strategies, content and methodologies in the classroom
- To describe strategies for assessment of pupils over as many areas of development as possible
- To emphasise the importance of early identification of pupils with specific numeracy and literacy problems through establishing relevant baseline data which in turn can be used to monitor achievement over time.
- To ensure availability of finance to purchase texts and resources
- To outline specific strategies for monitoring the progress of all pupils with particular learning needs

Policy Content

The purpose of assessment within our school is as follows;

- To inform planning for, and coverage of all areas of the curriculum
- To gather and interpret data at class / whole school level and in relation to national norms
- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils / groups including the exceptionally able if applicable
- To monitor pupils progress and attainment
- To enable teachers to modify their preparation for teaching and learning in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils / groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individual pupils' progress and attainment
- To facilitate the involvement of pupils in assessment of their own work where feasible
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies

Assessment of Learning and Assessment for Learning

As a school we are developing good practice in assessing learning. The results or outcome of such assessments are then used for the following purposes:

- Selecting necessary interventions if required
- Measuring the progress of the children's learning
- Evaluating for planning targets of class teachers and AEN/Support teachers
- Guiding professional development
- Guiding the school to select target areas of various subjects for further school development planning
- Reporting to parents
- Highlighting good practice and school strengths
- Keeping a clear focus on effective teaching effective good teaching and learning
- Informing the BOM and DEY of levels attained in Numeracy & Literacy

Assessment of Learning

Appendix 1 outlines the list of formal assessments used at each class level. In addition to these, *Appendix 2* outlines various assessment methods which are used across the whole school, at the discretion of individual teachers, depending on the requirements of individual pupils, class level or curricular area. These assessment approaches will be detailed by class teacher's in their short-term (fortnightly) planning document.

Depending on the curricular area, the class level and the needs of individual pupils, teachers may assemble portfolios of pupil assignments, work samples, projects etc.

As the school reviews and updates the school plan in line with the New Primary Curriculum Framework (2025), assessment for each individual curricular area will also be outlined.

Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the assessment of their own work / progress.

This data collected from assessment of learning will be stored in assessment folders/children's copies/pupil's individual Aladdin profiles.

Assessment for Learning

Pelletstown ETNS believes that it is important that children reflect on and be aware of their own learning. We plan to ultimately teach children how to self-assess by;

- (a) Setting clear outcomes at the start of a lesson or topic (WALT & WILF)
- (b) Setting criteria to make judgements before the child commences their work (Rubrics)
- (c) Assessing their work according to the agreed criteria already set, upon completion of a task
- (d) Using and answering reflective questions at the end of each school day (displayed in each classroom – see *Appendix 3*)

Standardised Testing

Literacy and Numeracy testing

Pelletstown ETNS uses the Drumcondra Primary Reading/Maths tests for all classes from First class upwards. The tests are usually administered early in Term 3 by the class teacher, assisted by the support teacher. Standardised scores and percentile ranking scores are recorded on Aladdin. The support team analyse the results in June, in collaboration with the Principal, for allocation of resources to pupils in September. The support team will then draw up a student support plan for the child and prioritise them for in-class support, withdrawal support or both.

Results of standardised tests are reported to parents using the end of year report card.

In 1st Class, terminology such as Criterion Reached, Approaching Criterion & Criterion not reached is used to report the results to parents/carers. From 2nd – 6th Class, the STen score is used to report results to parents/carers (see *Appendix 4* for Understanding STen scores).

The Principal will provide a report, outlining the standardised test results, to the Board of Management in Term 3 of each school year, so that the Board of Management can review overall school standards in Literacy / Numeracy (No individual results will be identifiable).

Standardised test scores will also be provided to the Department of Education, as per the relevant guidelines, for 2nd, 4th and 6th classes. This will be done using the Esinet system and will be coordinated by the Additional Educational Needs Coordinator in the school.

Exemptions from standardised testing

As per Circular 0056/2011, students may be excluded from standardised testing if, in the view of the school principal, they have a learning or physical difficulty which would prevent them from attempting the tests or, in the case of EAL pupils, where the level of English required in the test would make attempting the test inappropriate.

Screening Tests

The first step in identifying pupils who may need support in Literacy or Numeracy is for the class teacher to administer screening tests. The particular screening measures that are administered will depend on the age and stage of development of the pupils.

In Junior Infants, early intervention testing which includes the BIAP test is used.

In the last term of Senior Infants, the Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy & Numeracy test is administered by class teacher or support teacher.

In 2nd and 5th class, a Verbal Reasoning Test (VRT) is administered in Term 2.

The Non-Verbal Reasoning Test (NVRT) is administered to those that fall under the 30th percentile, those with significant EAL needs & those on the School Support Plus level of the Continuum of Support.

Diagnostic Tests

Diagnostic tests have an important role to play in identifying children with learning difficulties. The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by the Department of Education, where a staged approach is used by individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing.

Two Peas in a Pod or Sound Linkage assessment both test Phonological Awareness which would be tested in the early years' classrooms.

LETRS & Core Phonics Survey are two tests that include letter sound knowledge and word reading abilities.

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) tests are used to test ORF and as a running record to analyse a child's mistakes while reading.

WIAT-III is a literacy test used in the school for those showing significant literacy difficulties. These results are used in consultation with NEPS about how best to approach teaching and learning for these pupils, or if follow-on steps are required. The results may also be used in applications for exemptions from the study of Irish.

Accelerated Reader STAR assessments are used to give significant diagnostic information for literacy and are used from 3rd – 6th class.

PEP-3, VBMAPP, ABLSS, AFLSS are assessments that may be used with pupils in the Autism classes.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Children requiring support for English as an Additional Language will be tested in Speaking & Listening (all classes) and Reading & Writing (1st class upwards only). The Primary School Assessment Kit (PSAK) is used for such assessment.

Pelletstown ETNS has adapted the following EAL testing schedule:

	September	June
Junior Infants	<u>Placement test</u> for all Junior Infant pupils	<u>PSAK testing</u> for all pupils who received EAL support throughout the year
All other classes	<u>Placement test</u> for new pupils only	<u>PSAK testing</u> for all pupils who received EAL support throughout the year

The overall results of EAL assessments will be stored on an Excel Spreadsheet on the school's Google Drive to track individual pupil results and progress from year to year.

This data will be reported to the Department of Education, through the EAL application/EAL appeal process annually.

Additional Educational Needs and External Support Services

Referral pathways

Onward referrals for Assessment of Need (HSE) may be discussed with parents/carers as a child's needs are observed in school. If the referral is completed with school staff, a record will be kept on the child's Aladdin profile, including on their Log of Actions.

Staff will support parents/carers if they decide to proceed privately with assessments for their child, and will liaise with such assessors if requested, to provide information about the child's presentation

Following the Needs Analysis meeting in Term 3 by the support team & Principal, a small number of children will be prioritised for support from NEPS. Depending on the needs of the child and the recommendation from NEPS, indirect support or direct support may be carried out with the consent of parents.

Assessments and Recommendations

Pupils being assessed or supported by external services such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Psychologist/Psychiatry services etc. may receive an assessment or be provided with a list of recommendations to be implemented by the school. Staff will make every effort to include such recommendations in the child's Student Support Plan as they see fit and as resources allow. This will be discussed in student support plan meetings with the child's parents/carers.

Transfer of Information to Post-Primary School

The AP1 post holder with responsibility for transition to post-primary school will ensure that relevant information for 6th class pupils is transferred, with those pupils, on their transition to secondary school. This will be completed in line with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's 'Education Passport' guidelines and procedures. For those students on the School Support Plus level of the Continuum of Support, a NEPS Student Transfer Form will be completed by the relevant support teacher.

Recording Results of Assessment

Each pupil has a file in a locked cabinet in the school office, to store relevant documentation, including their standardised test booklet. The Standardised test booklet is shredded once a new test supersedes it. If a child is supported on the Continuum of Support, they will also have a support file that is kept in a locked filing cabinet in their support room. Copies of diagnostic assessments will be kept here, as well as reports from external professionals.

Assessment records are also kept on pupil files on the Aladdin Schools system. All data is sensitive to each child and therefore cabinets will be locked at all times, and support files on Aladdin will be password protected.

Success Criteria

This policy will be considered successful if;

- Early identification and intervention are achieved
- Clarity is achieved regarding procedures involved in a staged approach
- Procedures are clear, with roles and responsibilities defined
- The support team have clearly defined roles and objectives
- There is efficient transfer of information between teachers

Roles and Responsibilities

The Additional Educational Needs Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of this policy, and will oversee its implementation. Class teachers and shared responsibility for its implementation within their own setting. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set staged interventions at class level. At School Support level, the responsibilities are shared with the support team. The Additional Educational Needs Coordinator assumes a primary role at School Support Plus level when support from external professionals may be required. Parents/carers have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open, in keeping with the ethos of the school.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2027 when we will reflect meaningfully on how well assessment has been used in the school. The policy will be reviewed at an earlier date should a need arise or to reflect relevant circulars or legislation.

Implementation, Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 30th September 2025, and will be implemented thereafter.

The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to this policy upon their appointment to the school by the Droichead Professional Support Team. This policy will be published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Youth, and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school upon request.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 30th September 2025.

Signed:  (Chairperson, BOM) Date: 30/9/25

Signed:  (School Principal) Date: 30/9/25

Date: 30th September 2025

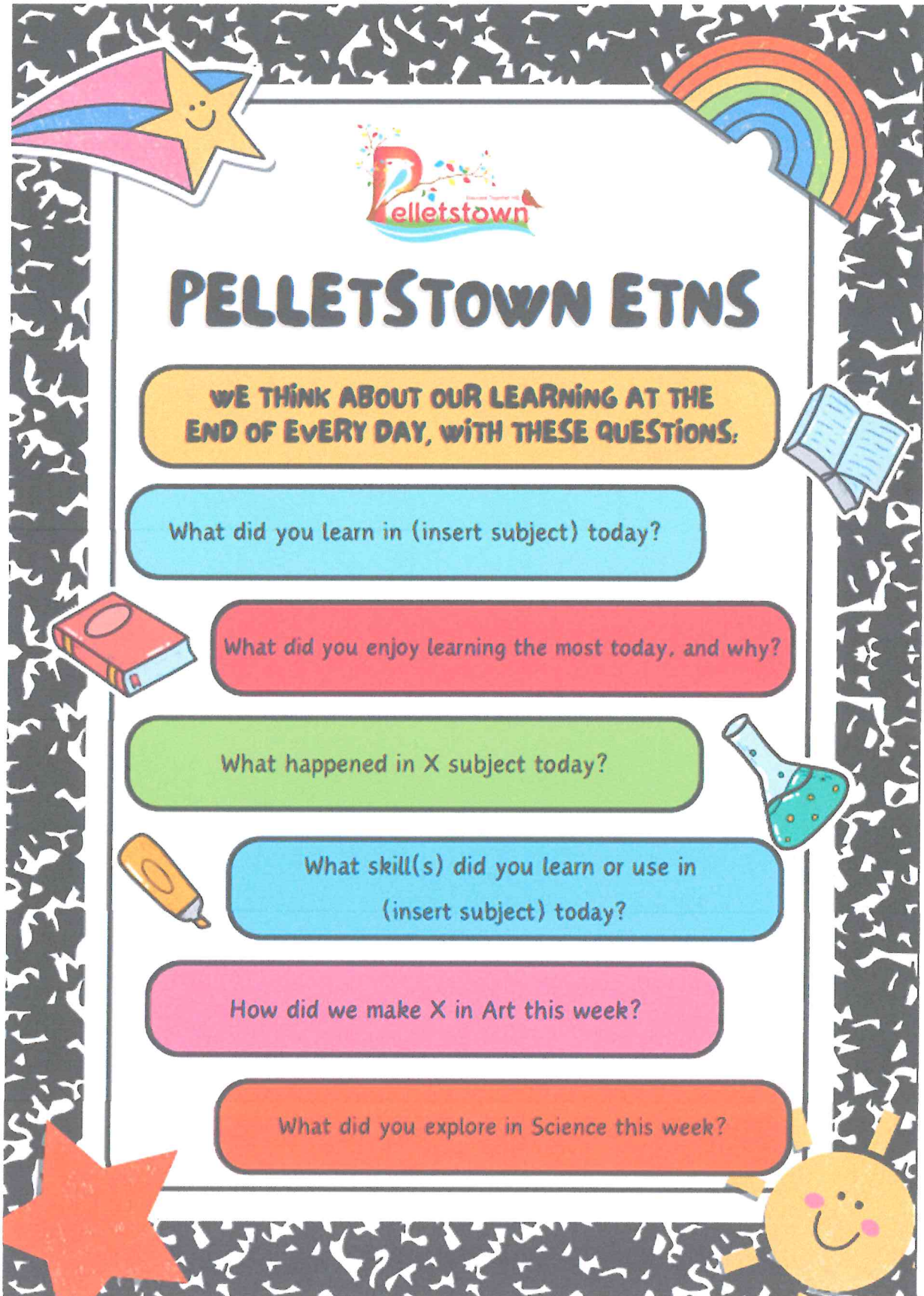
Date of next review: September 2027

Appendix 1: *List of standardised tests/formal assessments administered per class level*

List of formal assessments administered per class level	
Autism classes	PEP-3, VBMAPP, ABLSS, AFLSS (as required)
Junior Infants	BIAP
Senior Infants	Drumcondra Test of Early Literacy Drumcondra Test of Early Numeracy (Screening for all) (Diagnostic test for those falling below the threshold within screening test)
1st class	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test Drumcondra Primary Maths Test
2nd class	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test Drumcondra Primary Maths Test Verbal Reasoning Test Non Verbal Reasoning Test (for those below 30th percentile)
3rd class	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test Drumcondra Primary Maths Test
4th class	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test Drumcondra Primary Maths Test
5th class	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test Drumcondra Primary Maths Test Verbal Reasoning Test Non Verbal Reasoning Test (for those below 30th percentile)
6th class	Drumcondra Primary Reading Test Drumcondra Primary Maths Test

Appendix 2: *Eight assessment types from Assessment in Primary School Guidelines*

Assessment type	Example
Self-assessment	Rubric Thumbs up/thumbs down Colour fan Learning journal (e.g. Maths) Questions KWL grid Traffic lights Plus, Minus and Interesting (PMI) diagrams Talk partners/buddies Ladders Self-editing / drafting / redrafting
Conferencing	Teacher/child Conferencing Teacher/Teacher Conferencing Teacher/parent Conferencing
Portfolio assessment	Writing portfolio E-portfolio Work samples Projects
Concept mapping	Concept maps Brain maps
Teacher observation	Event samples e.g. ABC Time samples Target child observation Anecdotal observation A Shadow study Intuitive assessment
Teacher questioning	Types of questions
Teacher designed test & task	Planning for a classroom-based task Types of test questions Checklists Comments - good / needs improvement
Standardised testing	See above



Appendix 4: Understanding standardised test scores for parents/carers



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

STen SCORE

What do my child's test scores mean?

The teacher used **STen scores** to tell you how your child did in the tests. STen scores go from 1 to 10. The table below describes what the different STen scores tell you about your child's achievement in the tests.

STen score	What does the STen score mean?	Proportion of children with this score
8 - 10	Well above average	1/6 or almost 17%
7	High average	1/6 or almost 17%
5 - 6	Average	1/3 or almost 34%
4	Low average	1/6 or almost 17%
1 - 3	Well below average	1/6 or almost 17%

If your child's STen score is between 5 and 6 for example, you will know that his/her performance on the test is average. The table shows that about one in every three children in Ireland have STen scores in this range. You can also see that some children have STen scores above and below the average.

Scores for children with English as an additional language may not always reflect progress being made in class. Similar care is needed when interpreting scores for children with special educational needs.

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 one of the areas tested. Other assessments may be used to determine if this is the case. Information about your child's learning and development at home e.g. homework, may also be helpful to the teacher. Teachers at your child's school may decide that your child would benefit from extra support. If so, your child's teacher will talk to you about this.

If my child's score is high, what does this tell me?

A STen score of 8, 9 or 10 **may** suggest that your child is a high achiever in the area tested. 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 maths, English reading or Irish reading. The teacher may talk to you about extra learning opportunities that you and the school can provide for your child.

What can affect my child's test score?

As with other tests your child does in school, the score 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 score is an **indication** of your child's achievement. Remember that you play an important role in encouraging and supporting your child regardless of test results. You may like to arrange to meet with your child's teacher if you have any concerns about his/her scores.

How can I help my child?

The NCCA has developed some online resources to help you to support your child's learning in primary school. Many of these are available in various languages and new resources are regularly added to the parents' page at www.ncca.ie/parents. Take a look at the resources for your child's class.

