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## **Standardised Testing: Information for Parents**

During your child's time in primary school he/she will complete standardised tests in English reading and in maths. Most primary schools in the Republic of Ireland have been using these tests for many years. All schools use the tests in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes and share the results with you. Our school also administers the test in 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. This explains what the tests are and how you can help your child's learning.

### **What is a standardised test?**

This test 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 main purposes of using standardised tests are to help the teacher plan your child's learning, and to inform you about how well your child is doing in English reading and maths. *The test scores are used alongside other information gathered by the teacher through observing your child at work, talking with him/her and looking at his/her work, they show how your child is getting on in English reading and maths, and help the teacher to identify your child's strengths and needs and plan for your child's learning.*

Standardised tests are not intelligence tests.

### **When are standardised tests carried out?**

Schools are required to use standardised tests at the end of second, fourth and sixth class.

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

Your child's class teacher will share the test results with you in their school report.

### **How will I know what the test scores mean?**

Your child's teacher will tell you how your child did in the test using a STen (standard ten) score, (see below).

### **Understanding STen scores?**

STen scores go from 1 to 10. The table below describes what the different STen scores tell you about your child's achievement in **English reading and Maths**

<b>STen score</b>	<b>What the score means</b>	<b>Proportion of children who get this score</b>
8-10	Well above average	Top one-sixth of pupils
7	High average	One-sixth of pupils
5-6	Average	One-third of pupils
4	Low average	One-sixth of pupils
1-3	Well below average	One-sixth of pupils

As with other tests your child does in school, his/her result 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 result is an indication of your child's achievement in English reading and maths. You play an important role in encouraging and supporting your child no matter what he/she scores on the test.

### **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 English reading and maths. One test score by itself does not give a complete picture of your child's learning. The teacher might decide to gather more information about your child from other tests as well as his/her observations in class. You too will have additional information from helping your child with homework and hearing him/her talking about schoolwork. The teacher may ask a learning support teacher in the school to look at your child's test scores and other assessment information.

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

A high score on the test may suggest that your child is a high achiever in English reading and/or maths. **As with low scores, one high score is not enough to confirm this.** Your child's teacher will use other information from other classroom assessments to understand more clearly how well your child is doing in English reading and maths.

### **How accurate are achievement test scores ?**

Unfortunately, there is error associated with all test scores. A child's test score is an estimate of his or her true score. If a child achieves a Standard Score of 115, it indicates that the child's true score is probably in a range or band of scores around 115. For example, we might say that there is a 95% chance that the child's 'true' score falls in the range 110 to 120. This means that your child's score on a test such as a Drumcondra Test is an estimate of his/her 'true' achievement rather than a precise measure of achievement.

Because of this error margin, if your child score drops a few percentile ranks, this should not necessarily be cause for alarm. Remember, these scores reflect how your child did at a certain time on a certain day of the year ! Perhaps the child wasn't feeling well, had other things on his mind, or just panicked on the day of the test. The scores given by the tests should be used as a guideline only.

