Brannoxtown CNS
Assessment and Reporting Policy

Brannoxtown Community National School (CNS) is a primary school under Patronage of the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). Brannoxtown CNS opened in September 2018 with a new Principal, Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick. Brannoxtown CNS operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and follows the Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999) which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The Principal and the Board of Management fully subscribe to the principles of partnership, accountability, inclusion, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality, in developing and implementing all school policies.

1. Introduction and Rationale
This policy has been developed to provide information and guidelines to teaching staff, parents and the wider school community about procedures for assessment and reporting at Brannoxtown CNS. At the outset, it is important to note that:

- We place assessment at the heart of teaching and learning at our school. Assessment enables staff to make important decisions about the teaching and learning process in the classroom.
- We recognise the importance of encouraging children to take ownership of their own learning and to actively participate in their own learning journey. This is facilitated through a safe and positive learning environment in Brannoxtown CNS, where everyone has the ability to improve and develop.
- We work closely with parents to ensure that they are informed about their child(ren)'s learning journey. We are obligated to "regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents" (Education Act, 1998, Section 22 (2)).
- We define assessment as "the process of gathering, recording, interpreting, using and reporting information about a child's progress and achievement in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes" (NCCA, 2007, p. 7) and Figure 1.
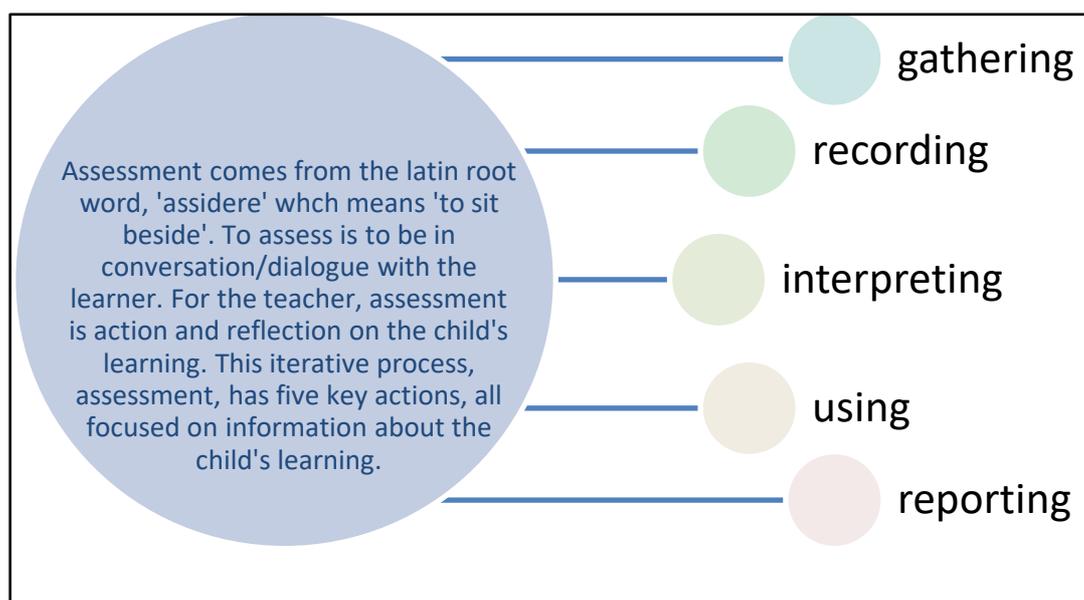

Assessment comes from the latin root word, 'assidere' whch means 'to sit beside'. To assess is to be in conversation/dialogue with the learner. For the teacher, assessment is action and reflection on the child's learning. This iterative process, assessment, has five key actions, all focused on information about the child's learning.

gathering

recording

interpreting

using

reporting

Figure 1: The meaning of Assessment at Brannoxtown CNS.

2. School Ethos

At Brannoxtown CNS, staff take a holistic approach to the education and development of each child. We aim to support each child to develop his/her potential in a caring and secure environment. This aim is achieved where there is strong communication between staff, parents, children and the whole-school community. We believe that this policy will support and enhance our approaches to Assessment and Reporting, whilst supporting all children to experience success in Brannoxtown CNS.

3. Policy Objectives

This policy aims to:
- Outline the purposes of assessment for teaching and learning.
- Identify how Assessment for Learning (AFL) and Assessment of Learning (AOL) guides teacher short-term and long-term planning.
- Communicate how assessment information is interpreted, recorded, used and reported to parents and outside agencies, where applicable.
- Outline staff roles and responsibilities for assessment and reporting.
- Outline a whole-school assessment process.
- Identify effective, research-based methodologies that are used to assess children's learning in Brannoxtown CNS.
- Outline storage procedures and timelines for assessment data.

4. Purposes of Assessment

In Brannoxtown CNS, the purposes of assessment are to:
- Identify the learning needs of children/groups of children.
- Monitor each child's progress and attainment.
- Enable teachers to modify their planning to ensure that the learning needs of individual children/groups are being addressed.
- Compile records of children's progress and attainment.
- Facilitate communication between parents, teacher, and other professionals about children's development, progress and learning needs.
- Enable teachers to monitor and continually improve their own teaching approaches and methodologies.

5. Assessment in the Primary School

Assessment is about building a picture over time of a child's progress and/or achievement in learning across the Primary School Curriculum. Assessment in Brannoxtown CNS involves gathering information to understand better how each child is progressing at school and using that information to further each child's learning. Assessment has four main functions- formative, summative, evaluative and diagnostic. Two principal approaches to assessment are outlined in this policy. These are Assessment for Learning (AfL) and Assessment of Learning (AoL).

These interrelated and complementary approaches emphasise two aspects of assessment that are central to each teacher's work in Brannoxtown CNS:
- Each teacher uses evidence on an ongoing basis to inform teaching and learning (AfL).
- Each teacher periodically records children's progress and achievement for the purpose of reporting to parents, teachers and other relevant persons (AoL).

A continuum of assessment demonstrates the variety of assessment methods suitable for use in the primary school. In Brannoxtown CNS, we adopt a balanced approach when selecting and using child-led and teacher-led assessments.
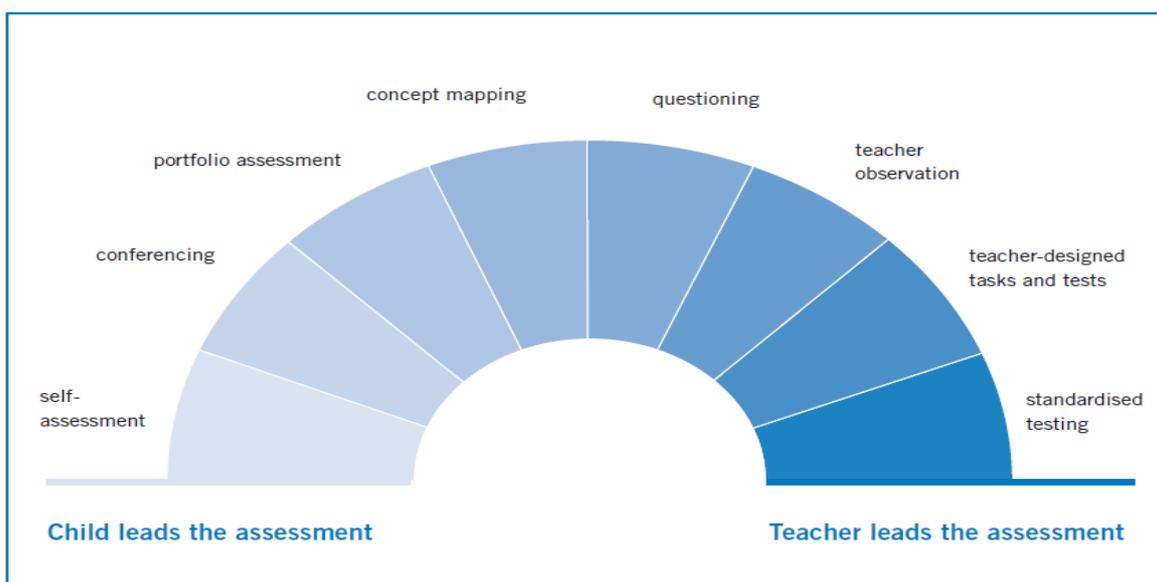
Figure 2: Continuum of Assessment Methods (NCCA, 2007).

6. Assessment for Learning (AfL)

Assessment for Learning (AfL) emphasises each child's active role in his her/own learning. In Brannoxtown CNS, the teacher and children agree what the outcomes of learning should be and the criteria for judging to what extent the outcomes have been achieved. Teachers use three key questions to support AfL:

- Where are children now in their learning?
- Where are children going in their learning?
- How will children get to the next point of their learning?

The provision of feedback in central to AfL. This feedback can help children identify and celebrate their progress and achievements, pinpoint challenges, and decide what the next steps should be. AfL takes place in Brannoxtown CNS during day-to-day minute-by-minute interactions between teachers and children. These interactions provide the teachers and the children themselves with information about what they do and do not understand and what they can and cannot do. Teachers in our school interpret this information, use it to support children in their work and plan ahead. In Brannoxtown CNS, these teacher-child interactions are a natural part of how children learn in our school. Information from AfL also provides teachers with the opportunity to evaluate their own teaching. Changes to planning, organisational strategies and teacher methodologies can be led by effective information gathering.

AfL Approaches in Brannoxtown CNS

A range of AfL approaches are in use in Brannoxtown CNS. These include but are not limited to:

- Sharing of learning intentions with children (WALT-We Are Learning To).
- Helping children to know and to recognise the success criteria they are aiming for (WILF-What I'm Looking For).
- Using a variety of questioning frameworks.
- Providing regular clear and motivating feedback that leads children to identify where they have succeeded and what they should do next to improve.
- Self- assessment and peer-assessment.
- Adjusting planning and teaching to take result of assessments into account.

7. Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Assessment of Learning (AoL) focuses on medium and long-term assessment on the child's learning journey. In Brannoxtown CNS, teachers will assess learning at the end of a given period, such as the end of a unit of work, a term or a year. AoL places an emphasis on measuring the child's cumulative progress toward learning outcomes. A grade or score may be applied to these assessments. While these results are useful to the teacher, we recognise that they can be of limited value to the child. In Brannoxtown CNS, AoL supports each teacher in planning, target-setting and in the provision of feedback. Information from AoL is used for reporting, particularly to parents and other teachers. Assessment records may be accessed by the Department of Education and Science (DES) inspector to ascertain literacy and numeracy standards or progress in curricular implementation. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) psychologist may also access information gathered through AoL to work with staff in meeting the learning needs of individual children.

AoL Approaches in Brannoxtown CNS

In Brannoxtown CNS, a range of tools are used for AoL. These include teacher designed tasks and tests, end of term assessments, standardised tests and diagnostic tests. Further information on standardised tests are included in section 9 and information on both standardised and diagnostic testing are included in our school's Special Educational Needs Policy.

8. Self-Assessment

Children in Brannoxtown CNS are encouraged and supported to look at their own work in a reflective way. Children are regularly encouraged to identify aspects that are good and aspects for improvement. Children are encouraged to set personal learning targets for themselves. Self-assessment skills are promoted and scaffolded in Brannoxtown CNS. These include effective questioning, reflection, problem solving and the ability to share thoughts in a variety of ways using a range of dialogic frameworks. We acknowledge that self- assessment can be used by children of all ability levels, at all stage levels and in all areas of learning. Whole-class discussions, group situations or one-to-one conferencing are all platforms for self-assessment in Brannoxtown CNS. These everyday activities place assessment at the very heart of teaching and learning. Children are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning. A learning log and/or reflective report card can be used to document children's self-assessment and reflection on work samples.

Teachers in Brannoxtown CNS also use self-assessment to evaluate their own teaching by reflecting on how a unit of work was delivered. This reflective practice, coupled with the AfL and AoL mentioned earlier, help to inform teachers as to what was successful and if any adjustments may improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. In Brannoxtown CNS, we use a variety of self-assessment approaches including but not limited to:

- Questioning
- Feedback-individual and/or group feedback
- Dialogue and discussion
- Focused correction of work samples
- Visual Aids in junior classes
- Traffic light systems (Figure 3)
- Learning logs
- Reflective report cards
- Conferencing.

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Figure 3: One example of a Traffic Light System used at Brannoxtown CNS[1].

9. Standardised Assessment

Standardised Assessments are conducted by class teachers in Brannoxtown CNS during the months of May or June in accordance with Circular 0056/2011. It may, on occasion, be deemed appropriate by the school to administer alternative standardised tests at the beginning of the school year, to help gain a clearer picture as to any learning needs of a particular child/class. The results of standardised tests are analysed by the class teacher, the Special Education Teacher and the Principal. In line with Circular 0056/2011, results are communicated to parents. These results are accompanied by a standard explanatory note from school. These results are also reported to the Board of Management (BOM). Results for Second, Fourth and Sixth Class are reported to the DES in aggregated form. In Brannoxtown CNS, we communicate the STEN score to parents. The parents of children in the school, whose results give cause for concern, are invited to discuss their child's progress and attainment with the class teacher. Parents are invited to contact the class teacher if they have any concerns or questions. Results are communicated at least two weeks prior to school closure for the summer break in the end of year report card. Hard-copy standardised test booklets are kept until the following year when the new test results are collated. Thereafter, only the results section is stored. The records are stored in a secure filling cabinet. The results are also stored in electronic copy form on the Aladdin. These records are kept until the child has reached twenty-one years of age.

10. Educational Psychology Assessments

In Brannoxtown CNS, psychological assessments may be provided by the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) or the DES 'Scheme for the Commissioning of Psychological Assessments' (SCPA). These are based on the greatest need at that time. Approval for assessment is at the discretion of the Principal and Board of Management in line with the evidence of need available. When a child is identified for

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[1] Thumbs Feedback System, Teachers Pay Teachers (2020). Available at:
https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Thumbs-Check-for-Understanding-268414?st=63b5acda2df83289be30f0d0711f5885

an educational psychology assessment, a meeting will be held with the parents to discuss this process. The Principal will organise the assessment in collaboration with the SET. Parents may wish to engage with services privately. Staff in Brannoxtown CNS will engage with external agencies and services upon receipt of written parental consent. All reports and communication relating to assessments (including referral documents) are stored securely as detailed in our Special Educational Needs Policy.

11. Record keeping in Brannoxtown CNS

In Brannoxtown CNS, we acknowledge the importance of effective and organised record keeping. SET record keeping is outlined in detail in the Special Educational Needs Policy. Each class teacher uses an assessment folder with an individualised section for each child. Each child's section includes but is not limited to:

- Dated work-samples across a range of subjects
- Checklists and rubrics
- Photographs of work or displays
- Teacher comment or observation records
- Test scores (including the tracking of scores)
- Test analysis
- Standardised or diagnostic test results
- AFL samples
- Samples demonstrating children's self-assessment, where appropriate
- Rating scales
- Report cards
- Template used for mid-year Parent Teacher Meeting.

12. Report Cards

The report may include information on:

Your child as a learner
- how your child likes learning in school
- how your child works with other children, or on his/her own
- how your child keeps trying at work, even when it is hard
- how well your child works in school or at home

Your child's social and personal development
- if your child appears happy in school
- how he/she behaves
- how he/she gets on with other children in the classroom and in the playground

Your child's learning across the curriculum
- how he/she is getting on in English, Gaeilge, mathematics, and in the other subject areas
- whether he/she needs a little or a lot of help with school work
- whether your child needs a little or a lot of help with homework
You can watch a DVD on children's learning in primary schools at **www.ncca.ie**

How you can further support your child's learning
- how you might be able to help your child to do better in school
- things you can do at home to help with your child's learning
For tip sheets on ways you can help your child to learn, visit **www.ncca.ie**

Standardised test results
- the result of a standardised test which will appear as a number. Schools must share the standardised test result with you when your child is in 2nd, 4th and 6th class.
- your child's teacher should provide you with a leaflet explaining standardised testing and test scores
For leaflets for parents on standardised testing, visit **www.ncca.ie**

Comments
- how your child is doing from his/her teachers point of view
- a comment on some aspect of the report or perhaps drawing your attention to something (s)he would like to talk to you about
- specific praise for your child on a special achievement or quality

Figure 4: Your child's report (Information for Parents: Your child's school report, NCCA)[2].

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[2] Information for Parents: Your child's school report (NCCA). Available:
https://ncca.ie/media/1432/your_childs_school_report_parents.pdf

Report cards provide teachers with an opportunity to share information in writing about children's progress and achievement in learning. They are a key part of communications between school and home. Written report cards are shared annually with parents, via Aladdin, mid-June. Parents may contact teachers with any queries they may have about their child's report during the last two weeks of the school year. Figure 4 shows the contents of the child's end-of-year report card. Further information on end-of-year report cards is provided in Appendix 1.

A special report card, the Education Passport, is prepared for children in 6th class, in line with NCCA guidelines and DES advice. The Education Passport supports the child's transition from primary to post-primary school. The Education Passport includes the 6th class report card completed by the class teacher, parental input ('My child's profile') and the child's input on his/her learning ('My Profile'). For children with Special Educational Needs, the Passport also includes the 'Continuum of Support, Student File' and 'SEN Summary of Needs/NEPS Transfer Form'. It may also include the child's 'Certificate of Exemption for learning Irish'. These documents are prepared by Brannoxtown CNS and are shared with each child's post-primary school upon receipt of a written request from the post-primary principal.

Phases of Transfer

	Role/Responsibility Who?	Action What?	Timeframe When?
1	Post-primary principal or designated person	Forward **Information Request Form** to the primary school(s)	Any time after Parent(s)/guardian(s) confirms enrolment
2	*For children in need of additional support* Primary principal or designated person	Forward **NEPS Student Transfer Form** to parent(s)/guardian(s) and then to the post-primary school	It is recommended that this form transfers in a timely manner For children in need of additional supports such as special needs assistants, assistive technology or school transport, NCSE application deadlines should be considered
	Primary principal or designated person	Forward **Information letter 6th Class Report Card My Profile Form: copy My Child's Profile Form** to Parent(s)/guardian(s)	By the end of the second week of June
	Parent(s)/guardian(s)	Complete and return **My Child's Profile form** to the primary school within five working days	By the end of the third week of June
	Primary principal or designated person	Forward Copy of Education Passports: **6th Class Report Card My Profile Form My Child's Profile Form** to the post-primary school(s)	By early September

Figure 5: Outline of transfer process from primary to post-primary – phases 1 & 2 (NCCA, 2021)

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13. Storage of Assessment Information
As per the NCCA guidelines for assessment policy formation, information regarding the storge of assessment information is outlined under five key questions:

a. How is assessment information recorded?
Assessment information in Brannoxtown CNS is recorded through marks, grades, checklists and narrative comment, both oral and written. Comments are phrased in a positive manner and, if appropriate, with recommendations for improvement in specific areas of learning.

b. Where is assessment information stored?
All assessment records are stored in locked filing cabinets in classrooms. SEN data storage is outlined in the Special Educational Needs Policy.

c. With whom is information shared?
Parents/guardians of all primary school children are entitled to have access to all personal data relating to their children, whether stored in electronic form or hard copy. Brannoxtown CNS complies with all data protection and GDPR legislation.
Where appropriate, we share information with other teachers, other primary schools and post-primary schools when children transfer, and with children themselves. Assessment information on an individual child will be provided to another school, primary or post-primary, to which a child is transferring, upon receipt of written enrolment confirmation. If a school requests our school to forward an assessment report from our files, this request will be conveyed to the parent and completed upon receipt of consent. Brannoxtown CNS also shares information with other relevant individuals and agencies such as the Inspectorate of the DES, Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs), Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs), Túsla and other professionals such as Speech and Language and Occupational Therapists. Where assessment information is shared, confidentiality is maintained between the school and the receiver of the information. All requests from outside agencies for assessment information on individual pupils must be made through the Principal in written format.

d. How is assessment information shared with parents/guardians?
As detailed in this policy, assessment information is formally shared with parents twice a year. Parent/Teacher Meetings take place once a year during the first term, usually in November. Parental input is requested prior to this meeting on a standard template. A comprehensive written report is given to parents at the end of the school year. This report covers both academic and social progress. This report includes the results of standardised tests and a short explanation of the results.

e. For how long is assessment information held?
Assessment records will be kept until the child has reached 21 years of age.

14. Assessment and Reporting Policy: Monitoring and Reviewing
a. Success Criteria
The effectiveness of this school policy in its present form is measured by the following criteria:
- A range of informal and formal assessments are used and these are an integral part of teaching and learning at Brannoxtown CNS.
- Each child experiences a range of assessments in line with the Assessment Methods outlined in Figure 2.
- Each child develops an assessment and learning language/vocabulary and can use this in a conversation about learning progress with his/her teacher.

- Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for the different aspects of assessment.
- Teacher planning is continually informed by assessment practices.
- Assessment outcomes inform whole school planning and teaching, particularly in language and maths.

b. Implementation and Timetable for Review
Following approval by the Board of Management, this policy will apply with immediate effect at Brannoxtown CNS. This policy will be reviewed annually or in line with a change in Department legislation.

c. Ratification and Communication
Following feedback from members of the Brannoxtown CNS Board of Management, this Class Progression Policy will be finalised and posted on the school's website. Hardcopies of the policy are available to parents on request. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Brannoxtown CNS in June, 2021.

Signed: _____   Date: 15 June 2021

Ms. Deirdre O'Donovan
Chairperson

Signed: Date: 15 June 2021

Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick
Principal

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Appendix 1. End of Year Reports

1. Report Card Templates
- Four end-of-year Reporting Templates are created each year for:
  - Junior and Senior Infants
  - First to 5th Class
  - First to 5th Class – Gaeilge Exempt
  - Sixth Class Passport.
- Reports are assigned to all classes on Aladdin. These are completed and shared with parents by mid-June to allow time for parents to contact teachers, if they wish, before the end of June.

2. Report Cards: Common Sections Across Stages
Report Card Templates for children at all four primary stages include:
- A first section with two parts:
  - Part 1: Learning Dispositions (behaviour – frequency likert).
  - Part 2: Personal and Social Development (behaviour – frequency likert).
- A second section focused on children's progress toward curriculum outcomes, with several parts for curriculum areas and subjects. This section is titled:
  - Your child's learning during the year
- A third section for parents, titled:
  - How you can further support your child's learning.
- A fourth section to report on the child's overall progress during the past year.
- A final section to include attendance (out of a total number of school days).

3. Report Cards: Differences Across Stages
- Section 2 (Curriculum Progress) for Stage 1 does not use likert scales; this section is text only.
- An additional section for 'Standardised Test Results' is included after Section 3 (Parents) for all children from Stage 2 onwards.
- The 6th Class Report Card follows a specified template which allows minor modifications.
  - In Sections 1 and 2, an additional column 'P' (Plan) is checked for each child who receive SET support.
  - Standardised test scores are included for 2nd, 4th and 6th class.
  - The completed Passport is forwarded to the transferring school along with the following, for *all* children:
    - Child Profile (completed by the child)
    - Parent Child Profile (completed by parents)

    The following additional documents are forwarded for *some* children, as applicable:
    - Student Support File
    - SEN Summary Transfer Form
    - Gaeilge Exemption Certificate.

4. Report Cards: Purpose
- Overall, Report Cards should provide parents with personalised, clear, precise, and meaningful feedback on their child's progress during the past year, using language they can understand.

- The focus is on what the child has learned using clear evidence of strengths and achievements during the past year.
- Comment boxes should note:
  - the child's progress toward **curriculum expectations**, i.e., development of concepts, skills and dispositions.
  - **examples** of what the child has done to demonstrate his/her strengths using information gathered from observations, conversations, and learning processes/products.
- Report Cards should help parents understand how they can support their child by identifying the next steps for improvement and suggesting achievable actions at home.

5. Completing Report Cards:
General
- Report cards should include relevant information about a child's progress and achievement, including:
  - information about how a child learns as well as what a child learns.
  - information about a child's achievement, areas for development and actions the school and parent/ guardians might take to support next steps.
  - information that is accurate and based on evidence gathered over time using a range of assessment methods.
  - information that reflects the trend in the child's learning over the year and is consistent with feedback shared with children and parents/ guardians throughout the year.
- Further information is provided in the NCCA's guide for teachers on completing report cards, available at: https://ncca.ie/media/1374/general_report_card_p_3of3eng.pdf.

Tense
- The child's report is prepared at the end of a period of learning; the report is based on his/her achievements during the past year. Describing what the child has achieved/demonstrated (using the past tense) avoids the pitfall of casting a judgment about the child's character, without providing evidence, e.g., *She is a X child*. The **past tense** is used to refer to specific examples of what the child has achieved during the past year:
  - has adjusted well
  - has set goals/made gains/achieved
  - has continued to/completed
  - has demonstrated/shown/developed/made/maintained
  - has contributed/participated/communicated
  - has worked well independently/with others
  - has followed (e.g., routines independently)
  - has had some difficulty
  - has needed reminders/support/accommodations to
- The **present tense** is used judiciously – to provide clear examples of what the child knows/can do, but not to provide a general judgement on the child's character, e.g., *X is a lovely student*. Instead, the present tense is used for specific examples of progress demonstrated by the child, e.g.,
  - X understands/knows/can/is able to
- The **future tense** is used to communicate proposed 'next steps' in the child's learning at home/during the next school year.

Qualifiers
- In simple terms, the child is *working toward*, *achieving/in line with* or *exceeding* expectations, based on curriculum outcomes for his/her stage/class. Qualifiers show the level of achievement relative to expectations for his/her Stage/class.

6. Report Cards: Support for Parents
- Along with each child's report card, parents receive information on:
    - Standardised Tests - FAQ, 'What do my child's standardised test scores mean?', available at: https://ncca.ie/media/1400/english_tip_sheet_sten.pdf
    - An overview of your child's report, '*Your child's school report*', available at: https://ncca.ie/media/1432/your_childs_school_report_parents.pdf