

New Drumcondra Primary Tests: Note for Parents and Guardians

New tests (Maths and English) The Irish test has not yet been re-standardized.

You may see differences between your child's results on the new tests and their results on older tests. Standardised test scores compare an individual child's achievement to that of a 'reference group' of children nationally. The reference groups for the older Drumcondra tests, as well as for other standardised tests used in Irish primary schools, were established more than 10 years ago. So, if a child gets an 'average' score on the older Drumcondra Primary Reading Test (normed in 2006), their score can be considered 'average' relative to the national sample of pupils who took that test in 2006. Many tests become easier over time, as the content becomes more familiar. Recent studies have also shown that children in Ireland are performing increasingly well in reading and mathematics generally. A combination of these factors means that it is no longer as useful to compare the achievement of children today with the reference groups used for older tests.

Due to the mismatch in achievement levels between the old and new reference groups, some changes in scores are expected nationally with the introduction of the new tests. Any change in scores for an individual child could arise because of a real change in their achievement, or changes in teaching practice. **However, at the point of transition from older tests to new ones, change is more likely to occur because it is now possible to compare the child's achievement to that of an up-to-date reference group.**

All test scores are only estimates of a child's true achievement level, based on a specific set of test questions administered on a particular day. This means that a child's 'true score' on any test may be a little higher or a little lower than the reported score.

It is particularly important to think of scores as broad estimates if you are interpreting STen scores (scores ranging from 1 to 10, where the average score is 5.5). Each STen score corresponds to a range of standard scores. Therefore, it is possible for two children to have standard scores just one or two points apart (unlikely to indicate a notable difference in their achievement), yet to have different STen scores.

When reflecting on your child's progress, it is important to consider other sources of evidence as well as standardised test scores. For example, you might think about feedback from your child and their class teacher, and performance on other tests during the year. If you need more specific information about your child's performance in reading and/or mathematics, you may wish to contact your child's teacher.

Further information is available on the following website:

<http://www.erc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Letter-for-parents-New-Drumcondra-tests.pdf>