

Borrisokane Community College Diagnostic Testing Policy.

Why test?

- 1) Standardized testing gives teachers guidance to help them determine what and how to teach students.
- 2) They give parents a good idea of how their children are doing as compared to students across the country.
- 3) They allow students' progress to be tracked over the years. When students take the same type of test on more than one occasion (adjusted for age level) it is easy to see if a student is improving, losing ground academically, or staying about the same. (For example, if a child is taking a norm-referenced test and scores in the 75th percentile in first year and the 80th percentile in the third year, you can see that the child is gaining ground in school.)
- 4) The Standard Age Score and Reading Age are important for tracking individual pupils' progress.
- 5) Identify those pupils who may benefit from being tested individually, informing target setting and intervention.
- 6) Can be used to evaluate intervention strategies and teaching methods.

School Based Tests

CAT4 test

WRAT test

DAT test

PASS test

Group Reading Test.

From time to time other tests may be carried out both formal and informal as necessary/appropriate when required such as writing samples, reading samples, handwriting samples etc.

What is the CAT4 test?

CAT4 is the new edition of GL Assessment's well established Cognitive Abilities Test, Ireland's most widely used test of reasoning abilities for pupils aged 7 to 17+ years. CAT4 Irish Edition has been fully standardised for Ireland from ages 10:06 to 17+ years on a sample of 6,500 pupils, providing accurate, up-to-date data.

Reasons for using the CAT4 Test.

- Identify gifted and talented pupils and those that may be coasting in class.
- Pinpoint underachieving pupils and help in setting targets for future attainment.
- Identify a pupil's strengths, weaknesses and learning preferences, providing accurate and reliable information that is essential for personalised learning and goal setting.
- Identifies children with special educational needs
- Easily highlights any inconsistencies between attainment and ability.

Feedback

- Parent Report aids better understanding of their child's preferred learning style and includes recommendations which empower parents to support their child's study at home.
- Teachers also receive a group report of all first year students.

The WRAT Test

The **Wide Range Achievement Test 4 (WRAT4)** is an achievement **test** which measures an individual's ability to read words, comprehend sentences, spell, and compute solutions to math problems.

Student who score below the 10th percentile in the CAT4 may be required to complete the WRAT test.

DAT - Differential Aptitude Test

The Differential Aptitude Tests (DATs) were developed in the US, but have been standardised for use in Irish schools. The DATs are designed for use in educational and vocational guidance and are used by school counsellors, personnel officers, psychologists and all persons concerned with assessing the intellectual characteristics and educational or vocational aptitudes of adolescents. The tests are suitable for pre-Junior Certificate to Leaving Certificate students.

They are group-administered tests of cognitive skills, divided into eight subtests. The subtests are **Verbal Reasoning, Numerical Ability, Clerical Speed and Accuracy, Abstract Reasoning, Mechanical Reasoning, Space Relations, Spelling, and Language Usage**.

The DAT was standardised on over 10,000 students attending Irish post-primary schools. A combined Verbal Reasoning and Numerical Ability score can be used as an index of scholastic ability.

Feedback of results: DAT test is explained in TY Guidance classes and students receive a copy of individual results.

PASS Test

Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) is an all-age attitudinal survey that provides a measurement of a pupil's attitudes towards themselves as learners and their attitudes towards school, suitable for pupils aged 4 to 18+.

When will tests be administered:

First Years

CAT4 E All first year students take the CAT test in September/October of first year. Mainstream teachers and SEN team review the scores. Some students may be identified for further assessment, WRAT test or a NEPS assessment. Students with scores below the 10th percentile who haven't had a Psychological assessment may require further testing/ support.

DATs TY or Fifth

All TY students take the DAT test, students who go directly in 5th year also complete the DAT test in October of 5th year. The test is explained to students in class and to parents at parent/teacher meetings. The DAT test is a useful resource for students when choosing subjects/college courses.

PASS test

Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) is a unique online survey that provides a reliable, standardised measure of a pupil's attitudes. Authored by a team of educational psychologists, *PASS* helps to identify any hidden barriers to learning and can help support broader intervention strategies. All students in Borrisokane Community College will complete the test during the school year 2016/2017

Group Reading Test

The *New Group Reading Test (NGRT)* is used in groups to assess and monitor reading and comprehension - and if necessary, phonemic awareness. This can help identify, for instance, competent readers with weak comprehension skills who would benefit from a follow-up individual assessment and learning support. In 2016/2017 all First year students will sit this group reading test.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Related Assessment

TTAP TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile (Post-Primary)

Description

The TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile (TTAP)—Second Edition is an assessment for older children, adolescents and adults with ASD with special emphasis on transitional needs. Teachers can use this tool to assist individuals with ASD to prepare for a successful adult life (i.e. personal development, recreational living, adult integration into employment and residential arrangements, etc.). It includes both an initial formal assessment instrument and an ongoing informal assessment instrument.

The formal assessment will help teachers identify the individual's initial transition goals, his/her strengths and weaknesses, and can be used to facilitate educational and transitional planning. Emphasis is on evaluating the six major functional skill areas within three different contexts, direct observation, home and school/work

The Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS)

The AFLS is comprised of The AFLS Guide and assessment protocols that assess functional, practical, and essential skills of everyday life. The key areas assessed using this test are basic living skills, home skills, vocational skills, school skills and community participation skills.

ABLLS-R

The revised assessment of basic language and learning skills (**ABLLS-R**) is an assessment tool, curriculum guide, and skills-tracking system used to help guide the instruction of language and critical learner skills for children with autism or other developmental disabilities.

VB-MAPP

This set contains 1 individual child scoring protocol and 1 Instructor's Manual and Placement Guide. **The VB-MAPP Instructors Manual and Placement Guide** The VB-MAPP Instructor's Manual and Placement Guide contains a description of how to use Skinner's analysis of verbal behaviour for language assessment, the assessment instructions, and the specific scoring criteria for each of the 170 milestones. In addition, the Manual contains a placement guide that offers specific suggestions for programming and direction for each of the 170 milestones achieved, as well as suggestions for IEP goals for each skill presented in the three levels of the VB-MAPP. **The VB-MAPP Individual Child Protocol.** The VB-MAPP Individual Child Protocol contains scoring forms and charts for each of the 170 milestones, the 24 language and learning barriers, the transition to less restrictive settings assessment, and the over 900 tasks contained in the task analysis of each skill area.

Observation profiles

An observation profile is built up on a student to identify their areas of strength and weakness. A template which focused on the areas of social interaction, social communication, social imagination and flexible thinking, motor and organizational skills, taken from Asperger Syndrome: A Practical Guide for Teachers.

Checklists:

Social Skills checklists are used to compliment the other assessments a variety of templates are used such as the DATA social skills template from the University of Washington, a template from The Autistic Spectrum: A Guide for Parents and Professionals and templates from the Talkabout program.

Basic Skills checklist are used to check and observe skills templates are used from the Basic Life Skills Menu and the Life Skills program planner.

Language and Communication checklists

Motor Skills checklists

Speech and Language checklists

Maths Assessment:

Folens Maths assessment:

A traffic light system enables each child to evaluate their learning

Activity Book revision sections reflect standardised tests

Textbook Check Up pages revise topics in a variety of ways

Four seasonal assessments are available in the Teacher's Resource Books

Literacy Assessment:

Dolch

SNIP

Toe by Toe

Schonell Graded spelling tests

Referral System

Mainstream teachers can refer students to the SEN team see attached referral form. Students may be referred to NEPS for an assessment parental permission is sought in such cases. Students may also be referred to CAMHS and before a referral parental permission is sought. Referrals may also be made to other professionals such as Occupational therapists and Speech and Language therapists with the consent of parents.

Sharing of Results with teachers

- CAT4 test results are available on Sharepoint for all staff to access. They are also available on Eportal.
- A meeting is held yearly where mainstream teachers meet SEN teachers. Feedback is provided to staff in relation to testing at this meeting.
- Teachers can speak to SEN team and Guidance Counsellor in relation to individual students informally.

Reasonable Accommodations in the State Exams (RACE)

Students who are eligible to apply for RACE in the state exams will complete the WRAT test before the RACE application if necessary.

Confidentiality.

All test results are dealt with in a confidential and sensitive manner. All test results are available to parents on request.

When appropriate this information may be shared with appropriate personnel, such as School Psychologist or SENO or relevant teachers.

Storage

Paperwork relating to SEN testing is kept in the SEN office other test results are kept by the Guidance Department or in the ASD Centre. The CAT4 tests are available on Eportal.

This policy was developed during the school year 2015/2016 and was ratified by the Board of Management on June 16th 2016.

