

Interpreting teacher judgements

A teacher's professional judgement is central to the process of identifying and reporting children's progress in learning. This information sheet was prepared to support ...

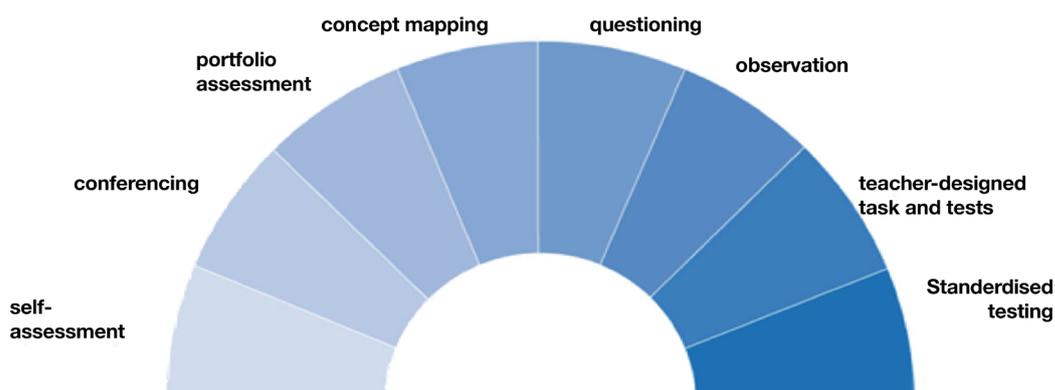
- **primary teachers** to make and express judgements about children's learning.
- **post-primary teachers** to interpret teacher judgements in the 6th class end-of-year report card.

Here are the three steps typically taken by a primary teacher to make and share judgements about children's learning.

Step 1: Gathering evidence of learning

Content objectives in the Primary School Curriculum (1999) provide the reference point for teachers to monitor and report on children's learning and development in primary school. Teachers use **evidence of learning** from a variety of sources, using a range of **assessment methods** over time, to make judgements about children's learning and development. For example, the teacher may make an initial judgement about a child's learning based on observation and questioning and confirm this by referring to work samples. The assessment methods commonly used in the primary school are presented on a continuum in Figure 1.

Figure 1: A continuum of assessment methods



Source: *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007)*

Methods positioned towards the left are those in which the child plays a leading role in assessing his/her own work; towards the right of the continuum the teacher plays a greater role in leading the assessment.

Step 2: Arriving at holistic judgements

Evidence gathered over time about **how** a child learns as well as **what** a child learns supports the teacher in arriving at an overall or a **holistic judgement**. The teacher's holistic judgement recorded in the end-of-year report card identifies and celebrates the child's current learning, and indicates next steps for future learning.

Step 3: Sharing judgements

Teachers record children's learning progress using four reporting areas in the end-of-year report card:

1. Your child as a learner
2. Your child's social and personal development
3. Your child's learning
4. Next steps to support your child's learning

Teacher judgements are shared in the report card using a combination of **rating descriptors** and **qualitative comments**.

INFORMATION FOR PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS

→ Primary → Assessment → Report Cards

Interpreting teacher judgements

Rating descriptors

The teacher allocates a rating descriptor to **summarise** each judgement on the quality of the child's learning e.g. Capable and competent. The rating descriptors used in the end-of-year report card vary according to the reporting area.

Qualitative comment

Teachers complement the rating descriptors with a general comment. Usually the teacher will comment on the child's learning in some or all of the four reporting areas in plain and clear language. The comment provides an overall **reason** for the chosen rating descriptors and offers some insights into strengths or challenges in the child's learning progress.

Interpreting standardised test scores

Children's standardised test scores are shared as either a STen score or standard score in the end-of-year 6th class report card. Table 1 provides an overview of the concepts associated with standardised test scores.

Table 1: Overview of the concepts associated with standardised test scores

Name of score	What the score means
Raw score	This is a simple count of the number of items for which the child has supplied correct answers. It is of little use in reporting on a child's performance.
Percentile score	The percentile ranks indicates the percentage of the relevant class or age group which has scored equal to or lower than this child's score. It does not mean the percentage of test items the child answered correctly.
Standard score	Standard scores are transformations of raw scores, and usually range between 55 and 145, with an average of 100.
STen score	STen scores are a ten-point scale with 1 representing the lowest category and 10 the highest. These are derived from standard scores. The term STen is derived from Standard TEN.

Table 2 supports the comparison of both the STen scores and standard scores by equating both types of scores. Descriptors and coverage levels applicable to both score types are also provided.

Table 2: Equating the STen scores and standard scores

Standard Score Range	STen Score Range	Descriptor	Coverage
115 and above	8 -10	Well above average	Top 1/6
108 - 114	7	High average	1/6
93 - 107	5 - 6	Average	Middle 1/3
85 - 92	4	Low average	1/6
84 and below	1 - 3	Well below average	Bottom 1/6

Source: Table 1 and Table 2 - Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools (NCCA, 2007)