



Standardised Testing: Information for Parents

St. Patrick's N.S

What is standardised testing?

- ▶ Standardised tests **require all pupils to answer the same questions in the same way**, and are scored in a consistent manner, which makes it possible to compare the relative performance of groups of pupils according to their class group or age group.
- ▶ Standardised test scores **compare an individual child's achievement to that of a 'reference group' of children nationally**. The reference groups for the *original* Drumcondra tests, were established 15 years ago.

Why to we use standardised tests?

- ▶ Helps us monitor the learning progress of pupils
- ▶ To apply interventions and plan for further learning
- ▶ Creates an overview of a child's progress to report to parents
- ▶ Helps to identify the needs of individual children so that appropriate supports can be put in place
- ▶ Department of Education use standardised tests scores as part of 'profiling' schools for level of **Special Education Teaching**

Standardised tests used in St. Patrick's

- ▶ Drumcondra Reading Test
- ▶ Drumcondra Maths Test
- ▶ Drumcondra Spelling Test

- ▶ Usually administered in May (not administered in 2020)
- ▶ From 1st to 6th class
- ▶ Scores advised to parents in the school report in June

This year we are using the updated 2018 tests for the first time.

Why have the tests been updated?

- ▶ Many tests become easier over time, as the content becomes more familiar.
- ▶ Recent International Studies have also shown that children in Ireland are performing increasingly well in reading and mathematics generally. That means the 'average' score is a higher level than it was in 2006.
- ▶ 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. A new test was developed and normed in in **2018** using a cross section of children throughout Ireland.

What to expect with the test results

- ▶ Due to the difference in achievement levels between the old and new reference groups, **some reductions in scores are expected nationally with the introduction of the new tests.** In the interpretation of results, teachers and parents should bear in mind the impact that the school closures may have on pupils' test scores.
- ▶ Whilst transitioning from older tests to new ones, **change is likely to occur** because it is now possible to compare the child's achievement to that of an up-to-date reference group.

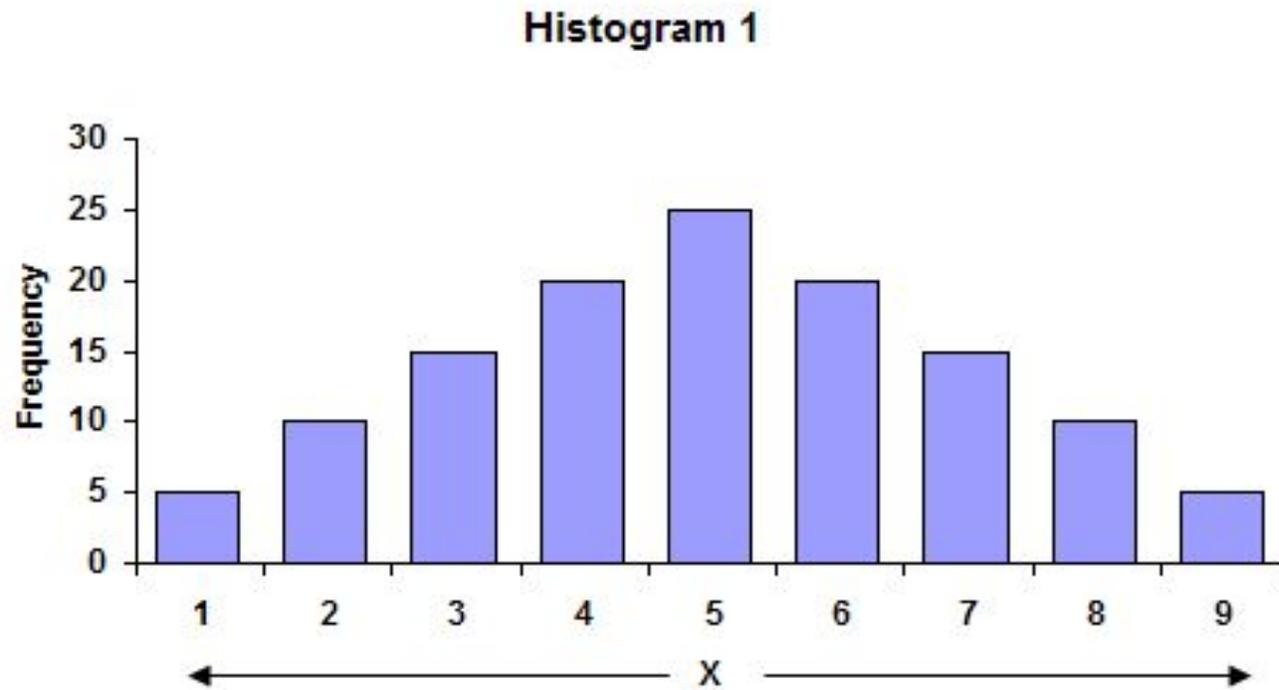
Important to note:

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ The average mean score in a Drumcondra test is 5.5.

Explanation of scores

STEN Score	What the Score Means	Proportion of Pupils who get the score
8 – 10	Well above average	1/6
7	Above average	1/6
5 - 6	Average	1/3
4	Below average	1/6
1 - 3	Well below average	1/6

Diagram of score distributions



Conclusion

- ▶ A test score is just one indication of your child's achievement.
- ▶ The Department of Education is aware that **some gaps in learning may have arisen/some content not yet covered during school closure and may contribute to a reduction in scores. This will be reflected across the country and not a reflection on teachers work or competence.**
- ▶ Over-emphasis on these tests and their results may create **additional stress** on your child. They should only be considered as a snapshot of their learning on a particular day. We do not advise sharing results with your child.

Further information on Standardised Testing

- ▶ <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/standardised-testing/>