



Droichead – Special Educational Needs (SEN) Informal Assessment Toolkit – Post-primary

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Basic Needs Checklist	3
Behaviour Checklist	4
Executive Function Checklist	5
Students' Strengths Checklist	6
Social Skills Checklist	7
Student Planning and Target Setting	8
Literacy Checklist	9
Numeracy Checklist	11
Algebra Checklist	12



Introduction

This comprehensive resource has been curated to provide assistance to newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in effectively identifying student educational needs and ultimately informing the development of tailored teaching and learning plans for their students. Central to this resource is the understanding that assessment plays a pivotal role in constructing a holistic picture of a student's learning progress across various subjects in the curriculum.

Assessment encompasses a multifaceted process that entails gathering, recording, interpreting, utilising, and reporting information about a student's growth and accomplishments in acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes. By employing a range of assessment techniques and strategies, teachers can ascertain the unique strengths, areas of need, and current attainment of their students, enabling them to design student targets that maximise student engagement and foster optimal educational outcomes (NCSE, n.d.).

Within this resource, certain assessments may include descriptors such as "emerging," "secure," and "advanced." While these descriptors are open to interpretation, one possible interpretation is as follows: "emerging" suggests that a student has limited or minimal independent application of the skill in question, "secure" indicates consistent application of the skill, and "advanced" signifies the ability to apply the skill across a range of curriculum areas without the need for explicit instruction. It is important to note that these interpretations serve as a general guide and that teachers should consider the broader context of each student's learning progression when using these descriptors.

It is worth highlighting that this resource is intentionally designed to be neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. Instead, it serves as a flexible guide, offering a variety of informal assessment options for NQTs to consider when seeking information on the diverse needs of their students.





Basic Needs Checklist

Name: _____

Headings under which to consider a student's basic needs:

- Physiological needs e.g., does the student have adequate food, warmth, housing etc?
- Safety needs e.g., does the student need physical or psychological protection?
- Medical needs e.g., does the student have known allergies?
- Belonging needs e.g., does the pupil have close family and friends, feel part of their
- Esteem needs e.g., does the pupil receive respect, positive feedback from others and respect others and self?

Possible actions on the basis of the headings above:

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers (NEPS, 2010) p.65





Behaviour Checklist		
Student's Name:	Class:	Year Group:
Completed by:		
Behaviours in school:	M = Mostly S = Sometimes N = Never	
Arrives on time for school		
Enters the classroom in an orderly and appropriate manner		
Follows initial routines at the start of lessons e.g., sits at desk, takes out required materials		
Can repeat instructions		
Follows two/three-part verbal instructions (e.g., stop what you are doing, put your pen down and close your book)		
Organises equipment needed for a task		
Begins a task at the same time as other students		
Stays on task for the time set by the teacher		
Completes a task within a given time		
Can value and take care of completed work		
Gains the attention of the teacher appropriately e.g., by putting up their hand		
Takes part appropriately in discussion activities		
Understands classroom rules		
Follows classroom rules and routines		
Works well in a group		
Interacts appropriately with peers		

Adapted from *Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers* (NEPS, 2010) p.67





Executive Function Checklist

Please read the following statements and use the number scale (1,2,3,4 or 5) that applies to you based on the scale provided below.

1=Never 2=Seldom 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5=Always

Organisation

I remember to bring home items needed to complete my homework

I can find my completed homework

I keep my schoolbag, locker, desk clean and orderly

I can find needed items on a regular basis without difficulty

Time Management

I start work/tasks on time

I can accurately estimate how long something will take to complete

I submit work on time

I can fit new events into my regular activities

Working Memory

I can remember a verbal list of three or more things to do

I remember to submit all my homework/assignments

I do not need to have instructions repeated

I answer all parts of a question





Metacognition

I understand the goal of a given task	
I know the information and strategies that I need to use to complete a task	
I think about what I already know to help me understand new material	
I think of different ways to solve a problem and then choose the best one	





Student's Strengths Checklist

Tick all the boxes that you think describe the things that you do well.

Attendance and Timekeeping

I enjoy coming to school

I come to school every day unless I am ill

I am on time for school and lessons unless there is a valid reason

I am mostly organised for school each day, e.g., books, lunch,
P.E.gear etc

Social Skills

I am comfortable greeting people first and say "hello" or "good morning"

I usually greet people when they greet me first

I get on well with my friends

I am usually kind and helpful to other students

I often volunteer to help willingly

I am pleased to help if I am asked

I am comfortable talking to adults in school

I am honest and always tell the truth

I treat other people and their property with respect





Speaking and Listening	
I enjoy taking part in class discussions	
I am willing to take part in class discussions when asked	
I put my hand up and wait to be asked when I have something to say	
I am good at listening to my teacher	
I am good at listening when other students are talking	
I am good at following my teacher's instructions	
I am happy to wait my turn during group discussions and tasks	
Attitude	
I am good at sitting down and getting on with my work	
I always do my best and try to do what I have been asked to do	
I take pride in my work and try to improve it	
My work is presented neatly most of the time	
I usually find work interesting	
I am interested in what my teacher thinks of my work	
I think working hard for exams is important	
I mostly remember to bring my homework to school	

(SESS, n.d.)





Social Skills Checklist

Descriptor: E = Emerging S = Secure A = Advanced

Student:

Communication Skills

Uses appropriate volume and tone of voice when speaking

Makes eye contact when speaking with others

Listens actively to others and shows interest in what they are saying

Asks questions to show interest and engages in conversation

Uses appropriate nonverbal cues such as nodding or smiling to show understanding and agreement

Emotional Regulation Skills

Recognises and labels their own emotions accurately

Uses appropriate coping strategies when feeling overwhelmed or upset

Respects the boundaries and feelings of others

Takes responsibility for their own actions and words

Responds appropriately and sensitively to others' emotions

Asserts themselves in a respectful and appropriate way





Interpersonal Skills

Maintains positive relationships with peers	
Respects the differences and similarities of others	
Participates in group activities and contributes to the group's goals	
Understands the importance of teamwork and collaboration	
Waits for their turn	
Demonstrates a willingness to help others when needed	
Demonstrates good sportsmanship in competitive situations	
Recognises and understands the feelings and perspectives of others	
Stands up for their own rights and needs while respecting the rights of others	
Understands and respects the cultural and individual differences of others	





Student Planning and Target Setting										
	Poor					Perfect				
Punctuality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attendance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Getting on with others (social skills)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attitude towards self (self-esteem/confidence)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attitude towards school	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Behaviour towards other students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attitudes towards home life/ situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How do you think your behaviour compares to others in your year group?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10





Literacy Checklist

Descriptor: **E** = Emerging **S** = Secure **A** = Advanced

Student:

Oral Language

Participates in conversation using appropriate eye-contact, tone of voice and gestures	
Attends to verbal and non-verbal communication	
Attends to non-verbal communication	
Listens carefully to others	
When conversing with others, interjects with appropriate questions, insights and opinions when appropriate	
Initiates conversations with others and sustains conversations on topics of personal interest	
Takes turns in conversations with peers	
Speaks audibly and coherently and at an appropriate volume	
Greets and responds appropriately to greetings and discussion topics	
Uses complete sentences using a range of sentence types; simple, compound and complex	
Uses a wide range of vocabulary and phrases including subject-specific language	
Can infer meanings which are not explicitly stated	
Can follow multi-step instructions	
Can recount experiences using appropriate sequencing, tense and vocabulary	





Can discuss their own and other students' work	
Can listen actively to determine the main idea/key points of an account/presentation	
Can deliver a short oral text alone and/or in collaboration with others	
Uses appropriate language for specific audiences and chosen purposes e.g., describing a process, persuading, informing	
Expresses personal needs, feelings, opinions and preferences	
Asks a variety of questions to seek assistance, find information or for clarification	
Reading	
Uses illustrations and text to share predictions	
Reads text with appropriate pace, accuracy and expression	
Can self-correct independently	
Can retrieve relevant information from texts	
Recognises synonyms, homonyms, antonyms, prefixes, suffixes and root words	
Uses a range of comprehension strategies to make meaning from the text. Strategies include predicting, visualising, making connections, questioning, using prior knowledge, determining importance, inferring, and synthesising	
Uses lists and diagrams to gather information	
Decodes groups of words/phrases using syllables in new words to blend	
Uses word identification strategies such as graphic features/spelling patterns, root words, prefixes and suffixes etc to identify and understand words in texts	





Uses dictionaries and thesauruses to find word meanings	
Listens to new words and phrases modelled by another and can discuss their meaning	
Summarises and identifies main messages/key moments in texts	
Uses evidence from the text to support their views	
Can infer meanings from texts which are not explicitly stated	
Discusses and explains the purpose of texts	
Explains their understanding and interpretation of a text	
Can understand the link between different registers and their use in written context	





Writing	
Writes left to right, top to bottom, page by page	
Writes legibly and accurately with cursive script	
Uses appropriate punctuation such as commas, possessive apostrophes, contractions, quotation marks, exclamation marks etc.	
Uses paragraphs appropriately	
Uses topic sentences to identify the main idea of the paragraph	
Uses transitions to connect ideas e.g., however, furthermore, besides	
Uses a wide range of vocabulary including subject-specific vocabulary	
Can spell accurately using a range of strategies to spell unfamiliar words	
Plans, composes, drafts and re-drafts their writing as appropriate	
Writes in a structured and organised manner	
Can develop ideas in creative and imaginative ways	
Provides evidence or examples to support their argument	
Uses complex sentence structures	
Can select the correct genre for audience and purpose	

(NCCA, 2019)





Numeracy Checklist

Descriptor: **E** = Emerging **S** = Secure **A** = Advanced

Student:

Number

Can count forwards and backwards by multiples of 1, 10, 100 and 1000

Can perform addition, subtraction, multiplication and division with whole numbers and decimals

Understands place value up to millions, including decimals

Can compare and order numbers using '<', '>', and '=':

Understands the relative size of fractions, decimals and percentages

Can solve problems involving fractions, ratios, and percentages

Measurement

Understands units of measurement for length, mass, capacity, and time

Can convert between different units of measurement within a system (e.g., metres to centimetres)

Can estimate and measure lengths, mass, capacity, and time accurately

Can solve problems involving perimeter, area, volume, and time





Geometry	
Can identify and classify 2D and 3D shapes based on their properties	
Can identify and use lines of symmetry	
Can understand angles and their properties (e.g., acute, obtuse, right angles)	
Can solve problems involving geometric concepts (e.g., area, perimeter, volume)	
Symmetry	
Can collect and organise data using tables, charts, and graphs	
Can interpret and analyse data using measures of central tendency (e.g., mean, median, mode)	
Can calculate probability using fractions, decimals, and percentages	
Can use probability to make predictions and solve problems	
Can recognise bias	
Problem Solving and Reasoning	
Can identify and define a problem and its constraints	
Can analyse a problem by breaking it down into smaller parts	
Can use different strategies to solve problems (e.g., guess and check, work backwards, make a table)	
Can explain their reasoning and justify their answers	





Algebra Checklist

Descriptor: N/A=Not Applicable E=Emerging S=Secure A=Advanced

Student:

Algebraic Expressions

Can write algebraic expressions to represent situations and relationships

Can simplify algebraic expressions using the order of operations

Can evaluate algebraic expressions by substituting values for variables

Can identify like terms and combine them

Linear Equations

Can solve linear equations with one variable using inverse operations

Can write and solve one-step and two-step linear equations

Can use linear equations to solve problems

Can graph linear equations on a coordinate plane and interpret their meaning

Graphing

Can plot points on a coordinate plane and identify their coordinates

Can graph linear equations and interpret their meaning

Can identify slope and y-intercept from a linear equation and use them to graph the equation

Can use graphs to solve problems involving rate, distance, and time





Functions	
Can understand the concept of a function and identify the domain and range	
Can identify and graph linear functions	
Can understand and use function notation	
Can solve problems involving functions	
Polynomials	
Can identify and classify polynomials	
Can add, subtract, and multiply polynomials	
Can factor polynomials	
Can solve problems and equations involving polynomials	

