



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Section 4

Teaching and Learning

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4.1 Personalised Learning

Introduction

In school settings such as these you can assume that the students have missed a period of time in school and for some students it may be a very significant period of time. The hope is that all students will arrive to our school with the relevant documentation from their previous school placement(s) but unfortunately this is not always the case. As mentioned in the Guidelines *'Personalised learning designs learning experiences to suit each student's strengths, interests and areas for support'*. Due to the setting of our schools our students' Education Plan is *'informed by, and contributes to, their overall care plan'*.

How it works in our school

The Principal or Deputy Principal meets with the student before they attend school to ask about their previous school placement(s) and what they hope to achieve in school with us. A challenge to planning for our new students is the limited amount of information that often travels with them. Often there is a delay between when the student starts school and when the paperwork arrives. In some cases the reports are outdated.

All students meet individually with the English teacher on their first day of school to complete the **Woodcock Johnson Assessment**. This is a standardised intelligence assessment tool designed to evaluate a wide range of cognitive abilities for all age groups. There are many assessments available, some examples include: WRAT5, WISC-V, WIAT III, PPAD-E... Testing gives the English teacher the opportunity to assess where the students are in their learning, what supports are needed and where they are best placed in our school. The teacher can speak to them as they are being assessed to find out more information about them. For example one word in the spelling test is 'only', the teacher will put this in a sentence saying 'I have only three sisters' and then can ask the student if they have sisters? There are many opportunities similar to this that can be utilized during the different assessments to learn more about the student.

[*See appendix one for an example of the Woodcock Johnson Spelling Test](#)

The student is given a double class period for this assessment. By the end of this, not alone is part of the assessment complete but you also have gained some personal information about the student. The assessment time varies for each student due to their ability. Some students may be finished the assessment in two class periods but others may need more time. In all of the assessments there are opportunities where you can speak to the students in an informal manner to gain more knowledge about them.

[*See appendix one for an example of the Woodcock Johnson Writing Samples](#)

At the next student-teacher meeting it is important to ask the student again what they would like to achieve while attending our school. Have they themselves set any targets that they would like to achieve? Are there areas that they feel they may need support with? It is explained that some students may like to learn to read the time on a clock, tie their shoelaces, improve their spelling, reading or Maths. We give the students lots of different ideas to support them with this decision and not all of these targets are academic. The My Thoughts About School document will help support the student with this.

***See Appendix 1A**

What we use

Due to the nature of our schools, each student requires an individual education plan/student support file. These can have varying names in the different schools but they all work towards providing an individual education plan for the students. This can take a significant period of time to complete due to the lack of attendance in schools previously, the nature of their placement in our setting and other outside factors. The National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) have many resources that will support the students and teachers with this process. Completing these resources benefits the students as it enables them to think about what it is that they need support with in school.

As the student spends more time with us we can see what adjustments need to be made in our setting to benefit them. The National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) Learning Environment Checklist (on pages seven to ten), found below will help the teachers to become more aware of their environment and how it may impact on a student's learning.

<https://assets.gov.ie/40645/20f442fa414940f894506ed717d7f635.pdf>

For all **Special Education Needs, Continuum of Support** information use the following link:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/dca316-special-education-needs-a-continuum-of-support/>

A Continuum of Support for Post Primary Schools, Resource Pack for Teachers can be found using the following link.

<https://www.sess.ie/special-education-teacher-allocation/post-primary/continuum-support-post-primary>

These resources have many ideas that may be adjusted to suit your school setting and students. We have found completing the **NEPS Basic Needs Checklist** (pages two and three) and **My Thoughts About School Checklist** from the **Special Education Needs Continuum of Support** very beneficial while getting to know our students and to support us in writing up our Individual Education Plans.

Relationship Building

When introduced to our setting the student attends at least one class alone for each subject. This gives each teacher an opportunity to work with the student on their education plan for their time with us. This also provides more time to get to know the student and for them to settle into school and to see which grouping they will work best with. Building positive relationships with our students is as important as completing the curriculum. We need to remember that the majority of students in these schools have had negative experiences in school and we are now provided with the opportunity to change this.

Relationships are very important in our settings and need to be utilised. Often students are aware of others who have attended our school. This can lead to interesting conversations and can help to develop a relationship with the student. Furthermore by spending a longer period of time with one teacher it gives them the opportunity to feel more of a connection on their return to school.

The Students then complete the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) '**My Thoughts about School**' with their Key Teacher. This can be found on page 11 of the link below.

<https://assets.gov.ie/40645/20f442fa414940f894506ed717d7f635.pdf>

This helps the student to realise how they feel about school and what they would like to work on. We can then complete the **Basic Needs Checklist & the Learning Environment Checklist**. All of these NEPS Checklists plus the **Woodcock Johnson Assessment** form the basis of getting to know our students. This information also forms the basis of the Student Support File.

The National Educational Psychological Service NEPS- Special Education Needs – A Continuum of Support:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/5ef45c-neps/>

Special Educational Needs – A Continuum of Support

https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/neps_special_needs_resource_pack.pdf

Outcome for Personalised Learning

When students become involved in planning their own learning it is most beneficial to them. This is when they learn the most. It also provides them with the opportunity to take ownership of their learning. Each subject teacher can involve the students in their subject plan and they can make agreements with the students so they are involved in their learning, for example in English class they can decide what days to study their Novel, Poetry or Drama. The Students when they take ownership for their learning will engage more positively when reminded that they actually made the decision. As mentioned in the Guidelines '*Students have 'voice and choice', in collaboration with their teachers, in deciding what, how, when and where the learning occurs.*'

Conclusion

Involving the students in their learning benefits the whole school community. Each school needs to find which resources will work for their students'; these can be from the Post Primary or the Special Education resources available. Our school has used the Woodcock Johnson as a means of assessment for a number of years. It covers a multitude of assessments and caters for all abilities. Our Educational Psychologist has worked with us to ensure this is suitable for our setting.

[See appendix 2 for an example of the Age Band Profile of the Woodcock Johnson Assessment.](#)

Student Reflection

When I arrived to school the English teacher sat with me while I did a test. We chatted while doing it. It was very long but I didn't mind because we were talking. We both knew some of the same people. The next day in school I had to fill out a form about what I thought of school and we chatted about what I wanted to do in my new school. I didn't really know but the teacher explained about different things others learned. I also decided what books I wanted to read for my exams. When I got the results of my test I knew I would have to do some extra work on my spellings. When the classes started I think this time with the teacher helped me in class as I had made the decisions what work to do and the test showed what I needed help with. Nobody had ever talked to me before in school about what I wanted to learn. I still find school hard but I know I can talk to the teachers about this.

Teacher Reflection

Spending some time with the students when they arrive to school and getting to know them is very important. Relationships and building positive relationships are what matter the most in our settings. The resources created by the National Educational Psychological Services and the National Council for Special Education are very helpful. I have used various ones for different students depending on their ages and abilities.

Outline for Personalised Learning

1. **Role/Responsibility:** Principal/Deputy Principal

Action: As soon as a new student arrives to our setting the Principal or Deputy Principal will meet the student to introduce themselves & to explain how our school operates to the student.

Timeframe: As soon as the student has settled in their new Unit, usually the morning after they arrive.

2. **Role/Responsibility:** English Teacher/Educational Psychologist

Action: On arrival to school the student is introduced to the English teacher who will administer the Woodcock Johnson Assessment.

Timeframe: On the Students first day in school the test is administered, usually 2 class periods are given for this. More periods may be necessary & will be facilitated the following days.

3. **Role/Responsibility:** English Teacher

Action: Once the Woodcock Johnson Assessment has been completed the English Teacher will correct the assessment & share the results with all the teaching staff. These results will determine the support needed for the student. The English teacher can also seek advice from the Educational Psychologist if deemed necessary.

Time Frame: The Woodcock Johnson Assessment will be scored within a day or two of administration. Both Age & Percentile Reports are shared with the teaching staff. This information can also be given to the relevant organisations involved with the student.

4. **Role/Responsibility:** Key Teacher

Action: The Key Teacher will meet with the student to complete the Checklist *My Thoughts About School*. They will also complete the *Learning Environment Checklist* & the *Basic Needs Checklist*. Information can also be gathered from the Students Key Worker or Parent/Guardian. Once all the information is gathered the Key Teacher will be able to start completing the Student Support File.

Time Frame: The Key Teacher can complete these checklists with the student during their first week in school.

5. **Role/Responsibility:** Key Teacher then Whole School Staff

Action: Once teachers have been given ample time to engage with the student the Student Support File will need to be completed. During a teacher meeting we will discuss the student, what supports are needed & how we are going to set achievable/realistic targets for them.

Time Frame: This will vary due to many circumstances such as reports received from other schools, Class/Year, Ability, attendance in school... Once all the above has been completed the file can be opened.

Appendix 1

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| 8. _____ | 26. Who ✓ | 44. Deceptive ✓ |
| 9. _____ | 27. forest ✓ | 45. scenery ✓ |
| 10. _____ | 28. eight ✓ | 46. enthusiastic |
| 11. Unnessa | 29. because ✓ | 47. Leisure |
| 12. nessecary | 30. young ✓ | 48. Sympathise |
| 13. neccasery | 31. handle ✓ | 49. Dissapointed |
| 14. Do ✓ | 32. Weather ✓ | 50. Coherance |
| 15. she ✓ | 33. energy ✓ | 51. abbreviation |
| 16. old ✓ | 34. unfair ✓ | 52. banquet |
| 17. am ✓ | 35. remember ✓ | 53. Seperate |
| 18. that ✓ | 36. manager ✓ | 54. Unnecessary |
| 19. from ✓ | 37. through ✓ | 55. repititious |
| 20. with ✓ | 38. electric ✓ | 56. treachovous |
| 21. jump ✓ | 39. sword ✓ | 57. Vengence |
| 22. saw ✓ | 40. reliable ✓ | 58. Coloquiem |
| 23. they ✓ | 41. subscription | 59. Comercome |
| 24. yellow ✓ | 42. whisper ✓ | 60. Sentilent |
| 25. Only ✓ | 43. Character ✓ | 61. _____ |

49



13.

I would like to live in
America. ✓

14.

car

bus

A car and a bus are
both vehicles. ✓

15.

On a sunny day I'd like to
go to the beach, have a
swim and build a sandcastle.

16.

There are seven colours in a
rainbow. ✓

17.

(1) I had always wanted to go on a camping trip. (2)

I love sitting at
the campfire. ✓

(3) I can't wait to go back to the mountains again.

18.

The ski lodge is popular because of its easy accessibility, because of its large swimming pool, and

Appendix 1 A

My Thoughts about School Checklist



My Thoughts About School...

NAME

CLASS

2nd year

DATE

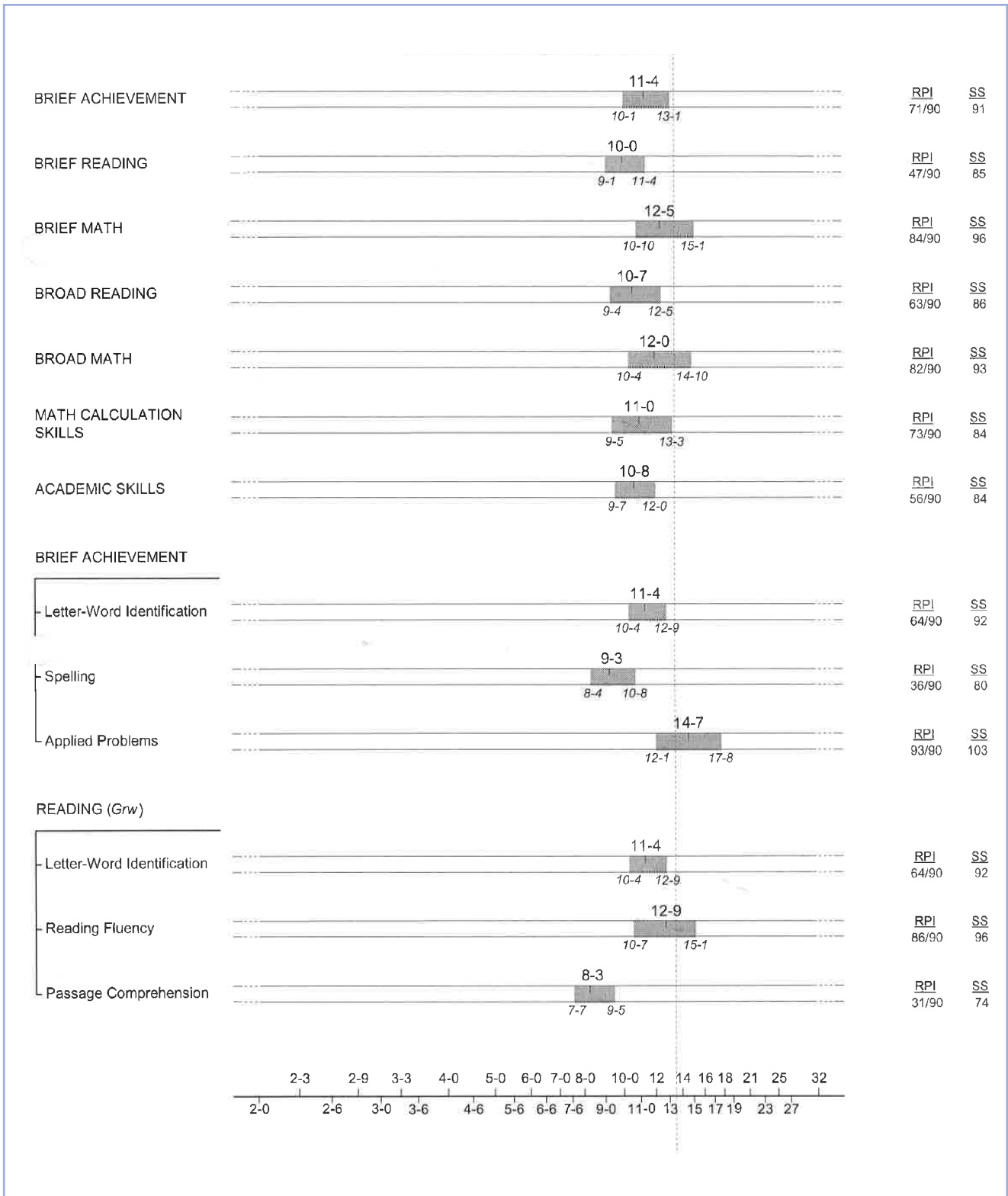
7/2/21

The things I like best at school are:	ART Classes and Woodwork
The things I don't like about school are:	Homework
The things that I am good at are:	annoying my teachers and ART.
The things I find hard are:	History
I am happy in class when:	I am by myself and have music on
I am happy during break and lunch times when:	I have a small amount of people around
My friends are:	Bob's. and Scarlett. o's.
I need help with:	My focus levels
Teachers in school can help me by:	giving me my space when I need it.
My teacher would describe me as:	Quiet and Sarcastic
My parents would describe me as:	Loud and cheeky
(My parents would describe me as:)	

The following questions can be asked if children have an emotional and behavioural difficulty in school.

Adults I get on best with in school are:	Charlie and Sharkene
I get into trouble in school when:	I use abusive language
The things I do that make my teacher feel unhappy are:	Calling them names
The things my teacher does that make me feel unhappy are:	giving out to me
I make my teacher happy when:	I focus in class
The things my teacher does that make me feel happy are:	Praising my good work
The class rules are:	No shouting. Be kind, Respect,
If someone breaks the rules:	they get in trouble
Rewards I like best are:	Walks and food
The things that I need to change are:	My attitude towards other people

Appendix 2



MATHEMATICS (Gq)

Calculation

11-1

10-0 12-9

RPI 67/90 SS 87

Math Fluency

10-8

8-2 14-1

RPI 78/90 SS 84

Applied Problems

14-7

12-1 17-8

RPI 93/90 SS 103

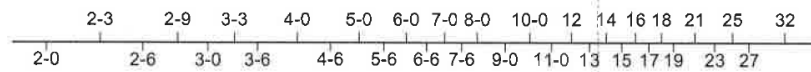
WRITTEN LANGUAGE (Grw)

Spelling

9-3

8-4 10-8

RPI 36/90 SS 30





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