***For NPFoS Reps - Please read the prompts to the parent and record their responses. Do not attempt to further explain the prompts as this may impact on the validity of the response.***

Prompt No1 : What is Assessment

Assessment is carried out in schools to see what children and young people know, understand and are able to do.  Assessment is very important to tracking progress, planning next steps, reporting and involving parents, children and young people in learning.

Question 1

What has been your experience of assessment for your child(ren) (distinguish between primary and secondary if necessary)

Prompt No2 : The Purpose of Assessment

One of the purposes of assessment is to provide an overview of the learner’s progress over time and to share the information with parents to promote improved learning.

Question 2

Are there any actions you feel could be taken to ensure that, as a parent, you can be more involved during the assessment process.

***Question 1***

***What has been your experience of assessment for your child(ren)?(distinguish between primary and secondary if necessary?)***

1. Being told by my daughter that she has moved up a level Primary
2. Part of a pilot being updated every week Primary
3. Only told about it at parents evening Academy
4. Meet the teachers once a year Primary
5. Go to yearly parents meeting Academy
6. Our School is participating in a trial giving feedback to parents Primary
7. Seemed to be tick box
8. Lack of early engagement.
9. Reactive (which has to be the case up to a point)?
10. Sometimes lack of context in assessing academic progress
11. Not personalised in general, although some teachers better
12. Indicated academic progress
13. Tended to be too much tick box but in their experience OK our children were pretty secure and ‘clever’ but wondered if the process would have been effective with children less able and motivated.
14. Did doubt whether the ‘average’ child would be identified and helped through this process.
15. Definitely a place for more personal insight both from education and social perspective, but doubted if teachers had the time.
16. Worked for some parents, but they think they were lucky with their children
17. Good indication of academic progress and social progress
18. Good ongoing engagement between written assessment process.
19. School worked well with parents.
20. Since moving to CfE assessment and reporting more difficult to relate to.
21. Tended to be tick box and wee bit too much jargon.
22. Ongoing communication sometimes lacking, i.e between written assessments.
23. Parents evenings too rushed and set piece, needs to more time given to this and ongoing dialogue.
24. Big issue for parents who had children going through pre CfE and now facing new assessment.
25. Teachers still learning.
26. Big challenge is the move to CfE and new exam and curriculum structure.
27. Some of the tracking tick box is not particularly helpful unless there are real problems.
28. Accepting that time is a real issue for parents, but often lack real personal insight.
29. School making good efforts to give an ongoing progress report, throughout the year from September onwards, which is to be commended.
30. Schools have a system that fits with time restrictions.
31. Probably too much tick box and maybe jargonistic
32. Suits the obviously able and those who struggle, but less insightful for children who fall in between.
33. CfE assessment at primary and secondary still finding its feet.
34. Needs to cover more than academic, must have context re academic (want a handle on what they are capable of how best to achieve/help).
35. Parents are interested in how their children are doing both academically and how well they are fitting in at school.
36. All the parents I spoke to felt teachers did not have the time (some maybe the inclination ) to engage with parents more than already did, which is restricted by contracts and time pressures.
37. At my secondary there is certainly a process in third year to track progress across the year, but time will tell if the process actually delivers. Having a good system is only half the equation, as the actions based on the process must be effective. Reporting alone will not resolve issues without good proactive follow up, which is the challenge.
38. Parents evening/engagement more of a priority and should be more flexible. At my secondary they have introduced year heads and more tutor time, which is a good start to developing a more consistent personalised approach to children and hopefully! their parents. Personally I think some teachers are not overly keen to become too involved with parents (I can sympathize to an extent) but this does place an emphasis on good tutor and year head engagement with parent and subject teacher. This type of interaction is very important in my view to get the best out of children and teachers.
39. Pupils at all stages in the school experience something called Assessment Week. One of our children was absent and on return to school was required to sit all tests in one day.
40. P4 and P7 pupils have all recently done a literacy assessment that lasted most of the day. We were given no notice of this.
41. In primary they sit exams for levels.
42. Only awareness through our child telling us it is happening. No formal consultation has taken place. It has caused some tension and worry.
43. I have been unaware when it is taking place. General letter has been sent telling me assessments are taking place but not aware of when. Updates take place during parent evenings.
44. Disastrous, emotional rollercoaster. Lack of information. A letter arrived the day before announcing it was happening next day. Child was anxious, terrified and so upset with the whole process that it was detrimental.
45. I can't say I'm aware of much formal assessment so far. I'm not concerned about this, as I can see their reading and numeracy improving steadily over time, and they love going to school and are clearly stimulated and engaged. I don't like the idea of formal assessment at this stage.
46. My only experience of assessment is  informal feedback at Parents Evenings.
47. My kids came home yesterday to announce that this week is assessment week. We weren't told!
48. Don’t know what assessment my daughter got in Primary. Don’t ever remember what outcome was achieved other than to be told that she was in the top reading group, top maths group etc. Secondary school is completely the opposite to the point of excess, testing all the time.
49. The system appears to be a state secret, very one sided and you feel that asking a question is wrong and staff do not appear to like it when you question or even discuss the assessments
50. Tick box exercise
51. Its interesting when you don’t just read the one yearly assessment but instead read all of them from previous years and see the disjoints in the process
52. Why is so secret when we can support our children in the process and help the school
53. It’s a sausage machine, our children get assessed and the results are held in a system and rarely shared
54. Just giving us numbers and scores without explaining them particularly against the rest of the class just isn’t helpful
55. Can see why it has to happen but don’t know how helpful it is
56. Our school has a good handle on assessment
57. Assessment at primary school was fine. I felt involved due to twice yearly consultations and the greater ease with which contact can be made with the class teacher who is with a child for most of the time.
58. I have experienced no involvement with assessment at secondary school. My son is now in S4. I think that the once yearly consultation is inadequate and is often poorly timed eg I only get to speak to teachers for the first time in Feb of 2014 which I think is far too late in an exam year.
59. My child is in P4. My experience of assessment has been the PLP and twice a year 10 minute parent/teacher consultations. Each term, there are 3 or 4 personal targets for my son under each curricular area – some quite specific (always in numeracy and literacy) like ‘learn to tell the time using the 24hr and 12hr clock’, others more general. At the end of each term there is a small written contribution from his teacher, and I think my son colours in green, amber, red to indicate whether or not he thinks he has achieved them. The PLP now gives us an outline of what kind of things the children will be learning during the coming year. I’ve always thought the PLPs are ok, but the further my son moves on the more I feel as though the PLP really just scratches the surface, and I wonder if it is actually more of a symbol/token gesture than THE key document for communicating with parents about their child’s learning. The personal targets, for example, are just so narrow when you consider all of the learning experiences the child has during a day, week, let alone a whole term. And the fact that he colours in green, amber, or red to indicate whether he has achieved them or not does NOT mean he’s involved in his learning, does it??? What does ‘involved in his learning’ *mean* anyway?? At the end of the term the teacher writes a comment in a small section. All very nice, he’s always doing fine. It’s ok. But again, the further he goes on in school I’m feeling as though I want more. I get that Curriculum for Excellence is about developing the whole child, and that it’s about more than test results. However, I do feel that the teachers are terrified of giving any kind of black and white information to parents that might be interpreted as rating/ranking the child... can’t tell a parent he’s in the middle reading group, or the top maths group, or he got 60% in his spelling test..... I understand that this can be unhelpful or even damaging but what’s replaced it is not sufficient. It’s not been thought through.
60. From personal experience of my son (4th year), he is one of the many 'middle of the roaders' who drift along without ever causing any performance issues - and unfortunately I think this is where the assessment PERSONAL of many children falter. The assessment is based around the teacher meeting the needs of the annual report card - very obviously put together using 'cut and paste'. In terms of additional involvement, this should start at the beginning of the school term - perhaps from 3rd year on - when personal profiles should include, for example, homework and home support needs. This would be a highly labour intensive exercise for each child but my view is that the current format really isn't an assessment relative to my child relative to many other children in a similar situation to him - the exception being those whose behaviour or level of help  is such that they need additional support from the outset.
61. PRIMARY Quite like 5-14 style of telling me where I could reasonably expect my kids to be. Liked idea that kids could never fail a nation assessment since they should never be put forward unless teacher knew they'd pass. Only just beginning to see different format of CfE so still to assess if it achieves the same thing but in broader terms. Not sure how parents are supposed to understand/be informed when their child isn't progressing at the expect pace and hitting the targets. Child just left primary and one in P1 and another in P5 ALN School so different interpretation again. SECONDARY Children in S6, S4 & S1. Child in S4 has received 'Tracking Report' since S, approx 4/session. Found it useful and good way of keeping abreast of any issues of an academic nature instead of waiting until annual parents' night which can be any time up until June.
62. My children are in P4 & P7, they have both been assessed on more than one occasion.  The only reason I know that they have been assessed is because they have told me.  I have had no specific information from the school.  I imagine that parents of less forthcoming children may not be aware that assessments have taken place.
63. This has been mostly through interim and then end of year written reports from the school and parent’s night discussions. If particular concerns arise regarding progress the school would contact you to discuss
64. I have two children at High School and in both cases my experience is that the assessment process is well managed and that outcomes are used both for understanding current attainment levels and also for improvement planning. I am confident that the assessment process helps to ensure that pupils at High school maximise their potential
65. All positive. The (Primary) school appears to be on top of this and is good at reporting back to parents.
66. Performing an assessment on the first week of a summer term does not give a true reflection of ability as the child has had 6 weeks of not using their skills. Primary school
67. Primary InCAS which has replaced the old A,B,C,D system. Only knew assessment has happened when child told me she had done them. Results not volunteered and not sure what they meant when I did ask for them. Secondary
68. Very early stage as child just gone into 1st year but aware she had sat assessments but no feedback provided so unsure what is happening. Primary Had InCAS but not sure when and results not freely given. Pleased with parents night. Teacher very well prepared with targets and actions for child which was jointly agreed and I signed. Feel as if teacher, my child and I all know what we are aiming for. Secondary Had a detailed report card which I was happy with
69. One child had ASN and found the support excellent. Had an agreed learning plan which was reviewed and updated every two months. Was very well informed of son’s progress.  Other child not requiring additional support and whilst aware of a learning plan which is agreed at parents night not sure where she is at and the moment and not informed of any assessments or results taking place.
70. Primary - Aware of InCAS been carried out. Results not volunteered but freely given when asked for.  Feel that there can be huge differences in the way assessments are carried out within a school depending on the teachers. A lot of reporting given on what is happening in the class as a whole but not what it all means and how my child is actually doing. Secondary – Aware of assessments happening  often but relying on child telling us. Various class changes especially in English and maths.  Very detailed report cards but parents night too short to get into real detail. Sometimes making a dangerous assumption that all ok or I would hear about it. – A risky strategy!
71. Aware that testing is done periodically at both primary and secondary level as to what academic age they are in different subject areas. Therefore progress should be able to be tracked for the individual child as opposed to a group.  I have seen how this should work in theory by the HT but have yet to see any evidence of this. This could be due to poor communication with parents or it might not be happening at all.  In secondary aware of tests to set expectations for the child’s ability in future exams but not sure how useful this is .
72. I have three children, all have been assessed in primary school. The assessments seem to have been well carried out, however I have had to work hard with my children to ensure they do not get ‘stressed’ about the assessments as they have got older, and try to enable them to understand that the prupose of the assessments has been to see how they are doing, how the teacher is doing and what gaps if any they have in their understanding about the things they have been taught. I have three children – one has now left secondary school, one is in 4th year and the youngest is in primary 6. I have not had any concerns at primary level in relation to any of them. I have had a couple of concerns at secondary level – in maths in second year with the eldest and in English in third year for my middle son.
73. Quite complicated. I didn’t quite understand the results (primary) in the school report. I felt that it was difficult to understand.
74. We hear from some (but not all) teachers when an assessment has been done by way of a form being sent home to sign. This usually shows a heading and score and doesn’t usually give detail of strong/weak areas. We also get 1 parents night when we are advised by most teachers about assessments overall eg scores in each test that has been sat since the start of the session. A tracking report is issued once a year which doesn’t give any specific information about assessment. More thorough information is given in the fuller report provided once a year but not specific to individual assesments. Rarely do we get advance notice from the school about forthcoming assessments.
75. I have two children one is just started in P1 the other is in P6. Both had their assessments in P1 and on both occasions my wife and I were there, able to see what was going on and ask questions to their teacher. However when my son was in P4 we had no knowledge of his assessment or his results.
76. This is an area that the Parent Council have done a lot of work with the school to improve this area. It was a bit hit and miss. Now there is more parental involvement with parents given the option to attend.
77. Generally positive. Meeting class teachers is critical and very informative. Written reports are useful. In both cases it would be helpful to have a better ability to compare your child's performance against what is expected for that age/class, sometimes too scared to criticise.
78. School reports – standard phraseology but quite useful.

Parents evenings – better for getting more specific feedback.

Exam results (prelims and the real thing) – no feedback on areas for improvement from “real” exams but can't expect this.

1. My son was taught Spanish at primary for 2.5 years. But his priumary teachers assessment once at secondary school the majority of pupils were beginning in Spanish and this assessment was ignored by first years teachers. It was lets start again at the beginning. This happened in other subjects where the P7 transition to secondary doesn't seem to have be taken seriously by his secondary teachers.
2. Peer, Self an teacher assessment are being done with both teachers and pupils telling the parents and evidence being shown in jotters on parents evenings: Primary
3. Marking, comments in homework jotters and journals: both Primary and Secondary.
4. Newsletters and pupil post communications are also informing parents of specific assesments in some instances: Primary.
5. Homework journals and direct mail from the school teachers/departments about specific subject assesments: Secondary.
6. Homework logs/journals with direct communication to parents about specifics. Secondary
7. Direct communication from school with parents, particularly pre exam time: Secondary
8. Awards and activities, such as golden time, Skill time: Primary
9. Merits and demerits with rewards (KPI's)

***Question 2***

***Are there any actions you feel could be taken to ensure that, as a parent, you can be more involved during the assessment process.***

1. Place ongoing assessment in the learning journey Primary
2. Another electronic needs to be found as the current provider, has pulled the plug Primary
3. Something online to look at Academy
4. Some online tool we could view with our children Primary
5. More meetings during the year Academy
6. Sadly the trial is to cease, with no other plan in place, just when it was going well Primary
7. I work full time so being able to view online with my son would be ideal, with the ability to ask questions / feedback to teachers Academy
8. Schools /teachers should allow more time and priority to this more personal and reactive
9. Must cover more than academic
10. Must engage more with parents to allow parents to help/understand.
11. More teacher /parent engagement to benefit understanding of Childs needs.
12. More proactive and personalisation. Where tick boxes used , must also be text boxes.
13. Timing of assessment is important as there should be early indications of progress, either good or bad, and certainly early engagement where a parent may be able to shed light or help with issues.
14. Consistency across school and teachers.
15. More proactive and personalised.
16. Timing of assessment is important as there should be early indications of progress, either good or bad, and certainly early engagement where a parent may be able to shed light or help with issues.
17. I think that I could be involved but some parents might need support.
18. More time should be set aside for interaction between parent and teacher.
19. Often too polarised which is not sensible given common denominator is the child.
20. Written assessment should cover academic and social more time should be given to verbal communication, as written is limited.
21. Many problems/solutions will be progressed through constructive dialogue, while on the contrary written communication can often confuse.
22. To be told the purpose of the assessment.
23. Assessment designed purely to inform pupils/parent/ teachers of progress is one thing. Assessment designed to provide some sort of benchmark is quite another and increasingly I believe it being used for this purpose.
24. To know what is happening, what it entails, the levels, results. How you can help your child.
25. Information from school needs to be received early and well I advance
26. Information from Education Dept about the format and why it is being done
27. As a parent more information on what the assessment entails, how it is delivered and feedback on the outcome.
28. Communication from Education Department delivered directly to parents about what assessment is.
29. A letter the day before does not constitute involving parents. The assessment seems to take the form of exam conditions which is detrimental to any child's education.
30. I'm not looking to be any more involved in assessment as such, because as explained above, I am wary of formal assessment at this stage. I have twins and they are excessively competitive against each other so I'm sure there will be plenty of time for measuring their respective abilities. As it is, they have already decided between them that one of them is the "good reader"! I'm sure that gentle encouragement of the "non-reader" is going to be effective over time. I would like to be given tests and quizzes I could administer to the children at home.
31. Recognition that I can contribute, that I know my child and their strengths and concerns
32. Just to be informed, notified
33. You get the assessment and the paper asks for comments from me but the comments box is the smallest box possible
34. To know when the assessment is taking place
35. To see the whole process, from the assessment, the report leading through to the teachers comments and feedback from your child and their teachers and culminating with the parents evening. Just to have it all joined up
36. Would be helpful and reassuring to know that it meant something and was being used for something
37. It doesn’t work if the school does not have adequate systems in place to recognise the importance of parents with a headteacher and staff who want to have a professional relationship with parents
38. There should be parent consultations in secondary school in Oct/Nov. Teachers will have had a chance to assess pupils by then and be able to share learning plans with parents. There should be a further parent consultation later in the year to track progress.
39. If you’re clear that you don’t want give out information that will essentially rank where children sit in relation to others their age, then think about what kind of information parents need to have a better understanding of where their child’s strengths and weakness are. Help teachers feel free to talk freely to parents about their child. Some do it naturally, but many don’t.
40. Primary feels a bit woolly at the moment but most probably due to new CfE. P1 daughter parents' night imminent and not sure what type of reporting I can expect before report card next May. Bit concerning since no more national testing.
41. At parents night, I have asked how my children have got on with their assessments.  Mostly I have been told "fine", "good", "I haven't got the marks to hand" etc.   As a parent I want to know how my children are progressing, to really mean anything to me, I need to know how they have improved, and how they are benchmarked against their peers (be this in the classroom and on a national level).  Only once have I received their marks, only then with an explanation that 100 is normal and anything above is better. I can understand why schools do not want to publish marks; both to save peoples feelings in the classroom, and to avoid school league tables.  However, one mark in isolation is not always going to give the full picture.  Maybe we need to accept that if we give parents more information, then they are able to analyse and make a judgement for themselves?
42. It is not for the parent to be involved in the assessment process, this is for the professional teaching staff. I consider the current process works well. A balance has to be struck especially in the current times when resources are limited between time for professional teaching staff to be reporting on assessment rather than teaching and assessing pupils. I think schools or the education authority could however provide more information on how the assessment process works for those parents who are interested.
43. My experience is that where parents are actively engaged and motivated there is sufficient information available to them. The primary challenge is therefore engaging parents in this process. Responding to this questionnaire as a parent council chair is probably unrepresentative of the experience of the general parent community. Perhaps more frequent status reporting or some alerting system should the variance of actual vs. expected performance be significant.
44. No. The current level of involvement is satisfactory.
45. An explanation of the meanings of the status of what expected levels of attainment should be to allow you to clearly understand where your child sits.
46. If made aware that assessments happening and the results then could plan ahead for my children. If not aware of results until end of year it is often too late  especially for a child in secondary school. I feel that they are expecting the child to keep us informed and provide feedback . If this is the case it is not happening for us and feel very nervous about it all.
47. Primary – be made aware of assessments in advance  and then could track progression or problems more easily. Secondary – again to be made aware  of assessments and what outcomes are – i.e changing a class.
48. The school operates a good open door policy so feel welcome when I do ask for information. Would be good to get more regular updates. Not had any real problems to date so relying on the belief that if a problem I would be notified but not convinced this is always the case.
49. Would like some consistency in what teachers are telling me. Feel that I get told too often my child is where they should be ?? does this mean they’re  where they could be though?  Experiences and outcomes are great but sometimes it is all a bit woolly.
50. Make parents aware of the assessment process, what it is trying to achieve and then talk us through the results. This would enable a learning plan to be made ensuring each individual child reaches their potential.
51. Knowing when the assessments tend to take place in the year enabled me to understand when my children seemed to get more stressed, so I was able to talk through with them what was happening and why it was important.
52. I think that it would be helpful at primary level for parents to have a better understanding of the purpose of standardised testing and in particular how the results at primary level are carried through to secondary level. I think at secondary level a class average could be given to allow parents to assess where their child’s marks are in relation to that.
53. It would be great to have more information on the standardised tests – see examples maybe?
54. It would be much better if we could get advance notice of any assessments being given to allow us to get more involved. It would be ideal to be able to get this, and also scores and details of how our child performed, online. It is not ideal having to rely on our children telling us about assessments.
55. I think parents need to be told what the assessments are, when they are taking place, what the results are, what they mean and what steps the schools are taking to help our children.
56. Explain the process to parents/pupils and staff. This was what we felt made the difference.
57. Providing parents with the guidelines for a 'pupil profile' would help so we know more about the assessment process and how we can help.
58. The purpose above doesn't envisage parental involvements during the assessment process. Teachers have the expertise to make the assessment. Important that parents have the opportunity to consider the findings and ask how they can support their child where this would be helpful or to explain domestic circumstances if these have detrimental effect.
59. The teachers in secondary could supply more regular updates on your childs progress by ?? or email home to parents rather than waiting on a yearly parents night and you have 10 mins and a lot of teachers to see on the night. I do not mean to take up teachers valuable time but a short brief update especially mid term and end of term – then as a parent you could help your child if necessary in subjects where they are struggling. Also you would see this assessment level more frequently if the teachers supplied this info to parents.
60. All felt that work can be done to improve the communication between teachers and Parents, however it was agreed hat this would be extremely difficult due to workload and lack of time and recourses. Communication of the P& and S3 profiles and indeed perhaps involving parents, one parent had and S£ child and didn't even know they existed. It seems it is being left to the pupils to inform their parents and some choose not to. Parent input might be a good thing as a lot of children do not include out of school activities, such as sports, youth organisation activity, voluntary work for example. This activities all help to build a complete picture of the individual over and above what their academic achievements are. Personally I think more could be to include the parents in the profiles, if only to encourage their children to share more of their life experiences in them. For me it's like the building block of their CV for future transitions.