

## Call-out to join the DOTS (Drumcondra Online Testing System)

The Educational Research Centre (ERC) is a Statutory Body, and our core functions include supporting good assessment practices in Irish schools and providing suitable assessment instruments to schools. The Centre is currently standardising new primary school reading and maths tests. We are looking for some extra **PRIMARY schools** to help us stress-test the DOTS in primary schools. Tests must be taken before the end of this (2017/18) school year.

Schools who sign up can try the following tests, which are available on a first come, first served basis:

- English reading (Second to Sixth classes).
- Mathematics (Second to Sixth classes)

All test content is new and is based on current primary school curricula. As this call-out is run in parallel with test standardisation, results will not be available until September (when the tests are available for sale, reports will be immediately available).

To access the free tests, you must complete the application form and **email** it to [dots@erc.ie](mailto:dots@erc.ie). Scanned images or posted forms are not accepted. Use the form to indicate how many of each type of test you would like. Tests are allocated on a first come, first served basis. If your application is successful, we will register you on our system and email you the relevant instructions and login details.

### More information about the DOTS

To access the tests, pupils can use any of the following web browsers: Safari, Chrome, Firefox, or Internet Explorer. Access does not require any specialist software or a separate keyboard or soundcard. Tests can be taken on any device with a passable connection to the internet – e.g., tablet, iPad, desktop, laptop. If you want to check the suitability of your devices for administering the tests, see <https://takethetest.erc.ie/>

The DOTS was developed in Ireland, specifically for use in Irish schools, and is cloud-based, fully integrated, and secure. It draws on the latest developments in technology but the **technology does not overshadow** what is being assessed. Pupils require only minimal IT skills, and they are brought through a set of simple instructions and sample questions, with hints, before they start any test. During testing, pupils see a built-in timer and question tracker so they know exactly how much progress they have made and how much time is left.

Data are **secure**, pupil answers are secure, and access is restricted so that only teachers who have registered with the ERC can see test content and results. Pupils' answers are saved as they are made, meaning that test data are never lost, even if there is a power outage.

The DOTS deliberately targets **pupil engagement** through high quality and interesting test content and an appealing test interface. Good levels of engagement make it more likely that tests provide accurate measures of what they are intended to assess. Each test is available in multiple, parallel versions that are randomly assigned by the DOTS to pupils in a test session. In addition, only one question at a time is displayed on-screen. These features mean that pupils have very **limited opportunities to copy!**

If you would like more information or advice on how to use the DOTS, please email us at [dots@erc.ie](mailto:dots@erc.ie)