1. The Head of School is the Head of Centre and is fully responsible for the smooth running of the Benchmark Assessment in his/her school.

2. On each day of the Benchmark Assessment, schools will be receiving the relevant examination papers together with USBs which will be used during the Listening component of Maltese and English and for the Mental Mathematics paper. The audio files on the USB are to be copied on all the computers that will be used during the assessments. **Schools are to ensure beforehand that the necessary electronic apparatus for playing the audio files is fully functional in every classroom and that teachers are familiar with its operation.** If, on the day, the audio file or the equipment do not function properly, the school may use the transcript that will be provided by the Educational Assessment Unit. If the envelope containing this script is opened, a note should be written to inform the Educational Assessment Unit of the reason why this has been opened.

USBs will also be provided for the Reading Comprehension for those students requiring a Reader as part of their access arrangements.

Spare USBs are sent to each centre to ensure that there are enough spares for emergencies. All USBs will be checked before being sent to schools; however if a school finds a fault with a USB, the EAU is to be informed immediately.

3. The examination papers will be packed in envelopes containing the number of papers needed for each particular class. An envelope containing additional papers to replace any faulty ones will also be provided to the Head of School. At the end of the session, the scripts must be sorted **according to the Attendance List. All scripts, used and unused, must be put back in the appropriate envelope and sealed.**

4. Schools are to ensure that an authorised person is at the school from 7.00am onwards to receive the Benchmark Assessment material. At the end of the session, personnel should be available to hand over the envelopes containing the scripts, including the extra papers, to the authorised driver calling for their collection.

5. Once again, the paper used will be cream in colour and the font that will be used in the 2017 End of Primary Benchmark Assessment will be Andika size 13 version 1.004. It can
6. The Speaking component will be assessed by two teachers, preferably the class teachers, in case the number of classes is even. If the number of classes is odd, then the class teacher has to be accompanied by a Complementary or Literacy teacher or a teacher nominated by the Head of School. The teachers are to be given the Speaking Component pack a few minutes prior to the start of the assessments so that they have enough time to familiarise themselves with the tasks.

7. The Benchmark Assessment sessions will take place as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 26 May 2017</td>
<td>Maltese Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 29 May 2017</td>
<td>English Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 30 May 2017</td>
<td>Maltese Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maltese Reading Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 31 May 2017</td>
<td>English Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Reading Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 1 June 2017</td>
<td>Maltese Listening Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English Listening Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 2 June 2017</td>
<td>Mathematics Mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics Written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. During the Benchmark Assessment sessions, teachers are to ensure that students write in blue or black ink. However, work can be crossed out in pencil. The use of biros with erasable ink, correcting fluid and correcting rolls are not allowed.

9. Before each Benchmark Assessment session, teachers are to instruct students to check their scripts to ensure that they have all the pages and that all have been printed.

10. ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

- The duration of each component includes Extra Time. This implies that Extra Time is being provided to all candidates.
- The class teacher has to act as a Prompter in the classroom being invigilated, if and whenever required.
- For children with writing difficulties due to physical conditions (e.g. broken arm) the Amanuensis has to be provided by the school.
- Enlarged prints and other special examination requirements will be provided as per Letter Circular DCM 12/2017.
- Hearing impaired candidates may be assigned a Communicator as per Letter Circular DCM 12/2017. The Communicator will be provided by the Students’ Services Section.
• For students with reading difficulties, an electronic reader will be provided for the Reading Comprehension (in both Maltese and English). A USB will be provided by the Educational Assessment Unit but the school needs to provide the personnel to operate the equipment and invigilate the students (as per Letter Circular DCM 12/2017).

   It is important to note that for this access arrangement provision:
   - The texts will be read twice, electronically at a speed which is slightly slower than normal speed.
   - Questions will be read twice and there will be long pauses which will allow students to answer the questions.
   - The text will be projected on screen and highlighted as it is read. The background colour for the text that will appear on screen is cream.

• In the Maltese and English Writing components, a Scribe (to transcribe illegible words) may be provided as per Letter Circular DCM 12/2017. This Scribe, if needed, will have to be provided by the school.

   It is important to note that the procedure to be followed when a Scribe is provided is as follows:
   - The student must be allowed to complete the task first.
   - Then, the Scribe can ask the child to read out all the words which are totally illegible.
   - The Scribe writes, in a green pen, the word that the child intended to write, using the correct spelling.

• In the case of Mathematics, a Reader for the Written session may be provided as per Letter Circular DCM 12/2017. This Reader, if needed, will have to be provided by the school.

11. EXEMPTIONS

All children are expected to sit the Benchmark Assessment. However, children who fulfil certain requirements may be exempted from all or parts of the End of Primary Benchmark Assessment as per Letter Circular DCM 12/2017.
Class invigilators are to ensure that children who are exempted or absent from any component should be marked as such on the attendance sheet and the word ‘Absent’ or ‘Exempted’ written on the front cover page on both the top and bottom sections. The candidate’s full name and index number should be written on the top part of the front page. The script should be inserted in the envelope with the other scripts in Index Number order.

12. EXAMINATION SYLLABI

The Benchmark Assessment will be based on the State Primary Syllabi for Maltese, English and Mathematics. These syllabi may be retrieved from: http://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Curriculum/Year-1-to-6/Pages/default.aspx

In addition, the following guidelines regarding the format of the Benchmark Assessment papers are to be noted:

ENGLISH and MALTESE

The language papers will consist of four components, as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Duration of Examination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening / Smigh</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking / Tahdit</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading / Qari</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing / Kitba</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listening (20%)

There will be two listening tasks:

- The first task will consist of a short text or a small number of short texts of about 300 words such as: dialogues; conversations; announcements; monologues; instructions; directions; descriptions; and news bulletins, including weather reports.
- The second task will be about 500 words long and it will consist of a: monologue; dialogue; or conversation.
Students will be asked to: write words or numbers in gaps; mark a statement as True, False, or No Information Given; underline, circle, or tick the correct answer; match; complete grids with information; and label pictures or simple diagrams.

Students will listen twice to the recordings of both texts, including questions.

Students will be asked to:

1. listen to the text and they may begin to work out the task/s as they listen;
2. listen to the questions and answer as they listen;
3. listen to the text for a second time;
4. listen to the questions for a second time and complete the task/s as they listen.

Students will be allowed some time to check their answers.

**Speaking (20%)**

In the Speaking Component, in both Maltese and English, there will be eight for the first session and two new sets for the second session. This means that when there are more than 16 students in a class, the same task will be used with two pairs of students.

The two pairs should immediately follow one another.

Students will be assessed in pairs. Each student will work on four speaking tasks.

- The first is the Warmer / it-Thejjija which is not assessed.
- The second is an Interview / l-Intervista and each student will be asked questions on two topics. Some additional topics were introduced as from 2015. These include: Shopping, School Outings, House and Home Environment, Health and Body Care, and People Who Help Us.
- The third and fourth tasks will consist of two of the following: Compare and Contrast / Qabbel; Inverted Interview / Staqsini Inti; Single Picture / Stampa Wahda; Picture Story / Stampa Storja; or Thematic Picture / Stampa dwar Tema.

More information can be found on:

**Reading (30%)**

The reading component will comprise two parts:

- The first part will consist of one of the following texts: a diagram or picture or set of pictures with some text; simple timetables and schedules; short texts such as notices, signs, posters, instructions, directions, advertisements, blurbs, and messages.
Students will be asked to carry out any of the following tasks: write words or numbers in gaps, underline, circle, tick, match, complete grids with information, and label pictures or simple diagrams.

- The second part will consist of a text, fiction or non-fiction, of approximately 500 words. The text will be split up into sections with questions set on each section. Questions will also be set on the whole text.

Students will be asked to answer a range of comprehension questions requiring them to write words or numbers in gaps; underline, circle, or tick the correct answer; match; mark a statement as True, False, or No information given; complete a grid; and construct a response. Knowledge about language may also be assessed. For the constructed response questions, answers need not be in full but they have to be sufficient to show comprehension.

**Writing (30%)**

There will be a short writing task (10%) and a long writing task (20%). Conventions of spelling, punctuation, and grammar apply in both writing tasks and will be assessed accordingly. The pre-writing task (the plan) will not be assessed for accuracy.

- The short writing task will require students to write between 50 and 60 words on one of the following: a note / message; an informal email; an invitation; a notice; an advertisement; a short dialogue; instructions; directions; or a short paragraph about a topic.

Students will choose one of two writing tasks. Both writing tasks will be of the same text type (for example, a short dialogue) but will consist of two content areas (such as, a dialogue about a missed school outing or a dialogue about planning to meet for sport practice).

- The long writing task will require students to write between 140 and 200 words on one of the following: an informal letter; a write-up of an event; an article; or a short story for the school magazine or a similar publication intended for young students.
In the case of Maltese, in line with the current official primary syllabus, the long writing task may also include *a dialogue*.

Students will also choose from two writing tasks both representing the same text type but having a different content area. Students will be asked to plan their writing. The pre-writing task (the plan) is to allow students to use the range of strategies available to them to plan their work. As from 2016, the pre-writing task started carrying 2 marks out of a total of 20 marks allotted to the long writing task.

In English only, a change in format occurred in 2016 in the marking scheme of the writing component.

More information on the pre-writing task can be found on:  

**MATHEMATICS**

The Mathematics Benchmark Assessment is made up of two papers:

- a **Mental paper** which carries 20% of the marks and is 15 minutes long;
- a **Written paper** which carries 80% of the global mark and is 1 hour and 30 minutes long.

As from 2015, a Warmer was introduced in the Mental Paper. This is an extra question at the beginning of the test that is not awarded marks. This is to help students focus on the speaker’s voice and familiarise themselves with the test. Additional time is allocated for this question.

In the Written Paper, working space has been introduced in questions that require working. Candidates are encouraged to use this space for their working. However, the use of this space is not compulsory.

**The Mental Paper (20%)**

The Mental paper is made up of a warmer and twenty short questions which are read twice, in succession. The questions are graded and divided into three sections. There are some easy questions at the beginning and some harder ones at the end.
The time interval between one question and another for answering each question in each section is as follows:

- the first 5 questions .. 5 second intervals
- the next 10 questions .. 10 second intervals
- the remaining 5 questions .. 20 second intervals

Students will neither be penalised nor awarded extra marks if they jot down notes and do their working on the Mental paper.

**The Written Paper (80%)**

The written paper covers all the four strands of the mathematics curriculum, that is, Number and Algebra; Measures, Shape and Space; Data Handling and Problem Solving. The paper is made up of 16 questions. The first four questions carry a total of 16 marks and test simple basic skills. The following eight questions carry a total of 40 marks and test the pupils’ mathematical competences in the four strands of the syllabus. The last four questions have a total of 24 marks and are more demanding non-routine questions.

These questions require the application of mathematical knowledge and reasoning to solve more challenging problems.

13. **RETURN OF SCRIPTS**

A sample of scripts will be kept by the Educational Assessment Unit for archiving and research purposes. The rest of the scripts will be returned to schools in October 2017 to be used formatively by each school.

14. **REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE**

The school may request a review of performance if there is evidence of a discrepancy between the student's performance throughout the year and the performance in the Benchmark Assessment, (at least a 25% performance discrepancy). Such request for the review of the performance must be received by the Educational Assessment Unit within **five working days** after the school receives the result.
Changes for 2017

The minor changes that will take place in the 2017 Benchmark Assessment will all be in the Speaking Component of both Maltese and English. The changes are as follows:

- In the ‘Warmer’ the questions will not be prescribed and will allow the interlocutors to put the students at ease in the way they find most appropriate. However, there will be prompts to give guidance.
- In the Interview, each student will be asked questions on one topic only.
- The criteria for the final two marks awarded to the Task Specific section will be more detailed so as to guide better the assessor when giving marks.