# 

**Summary of CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS) V1.1**

**The CIRCLE inclusive classroom scale should only be used in conjunction with the accompanying information in the module ‘Inclusion in Practice: The CIRCLE Framework (Primary).**

**The CIRCLE inclusive classroom scale should not be used in isolation from this guidance.**

# **The CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS)**

# An inclusive classroom is dependent on the *physical environment* (objects and spaces), the *social environment* (people and how they interact) and *structures and routines* that are in that environment. All of these impact on the *motivation, organisation* and *participation* of learners. Because of the multiple dimensions of the classroom environment, it can impact in various ways: either positively supporting learners or negatively interfering with their participation.

# The CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS) provides a rating of how different aspects of the environment impact on learners in the following areas:

# The physical environment

# The social environment

# Structures and routines

# Each of these areas has been further divided into five constituent parts. The CICS enables you to assign a rating to each of these so that strengths and weaknesses within the environment can be easily identified.

# The CICS comprises 3 ratings tables (one each for the physical environment, the social environment, and structures and routines) and a summary page. You will also find a set of reflective questions adjacent to each of the ratings tables which will help you when considering the different aspects of your classroom environment.

# **The CICS Rating Scale**

# The CICS uses the same 4-point rating scale for all the items to be rated. The 4-point rating scale functions as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **4** | Environment **strongly supports** learners’ participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements & structures |
| **3** | Environment **supports** learners’ participation by providing appropriate opportunities, resources, requirements & structures |
| **2** | Environment **interferes** with learners’ participation by providing limited opportunities, resources, requirements & structures |
| **1** | Environment **strongly interferes** with learners’ participation by not providing opportunities, resources, requirements & structures |

# For each of the items in the CICS you should assign one of the above ratings (1, 2, 3, or 4) as an indication of how the environment supports participation. It is important to bear in mind that the CICS is designed to measure a broad range of environmental impact with a wide range of learners (although it could also be used to assess the environment in relation to an individual learner).

# Assigning these ratings requires judgements to be made that are complex. To make this process easier criteria statements are provided which refer to the item being rated. These relate directly to the CICS rating scale and will assist you to narrow down which rating to use. Additionally, you can refer to the reflective questions which will further support you when considering what is required in an inclusive classroom.

# **Completing the CIRCLE CICS**

* Work through each of the three ratings pages identifying which of the criterion statements best describes that aspect of the environment.

# Please note that “4” does not represent “good” environmental support but is indicative of “exceptional” environmental support.

# If it is not clear which of two ratings to use, choose the lower of the two possible.

# Use your professional judgement to decide on the rating for each item.

# It is not anticipated that you will spend a great deal of time selecting the appropriate rating.

# Use your ratings from these pages to complete the CICS summary page.

# The CICS can be completed individually or with a colleague/colleagues. It can be stored as evidence of your own professional learning; used to share information with colleagues about your classroom; or utilised as a framework to support discussions with student teachers and probationers about setting up an inclusive classroom.

# You may also wish to ask a group of learners to rate the classroom environment from their perspective.

# The CICS can be repeated as often as required to demonstrate changes or improvements. This together with the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Planning Page can be used as evidence of reflective practice and your development towards an inclusive classroom.

# **Interpreting and using the results of the CICS**

# The results of the CICS will help to identify the areas of strength and areas to develop that will make your classroom more inclusive.

# It is likely that an average classroom which is operating effectively will receive mainly “3s” with an occasional “2” rating. This environment would not be expected to make significant change, although would need to focus on the “2s” to facilitate improvement.

# However, if an environment received “1s” for most items, with only a few “2s” or “3s”, this would indicate that improvements were needed, and an action plan warranted.

# It is essential to focus any efforts for improvement on things which are under your control. For example, if you have rated “Adequacy of Space” (an item within the Physical Environment) as “1” due to building constraints, this would be outside your control. You could raise your concerns with management, but then focus on other areas requiring improvement which are under your control.

# If you identify areas requiring development from the CICS, you can make a plan using the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Planning Page. This provides a structure for you to document and evidence how you are developing the principles of an inclusive classroom.

# It can be photocopied and completed individually as evidence of reflection and self-evaluation or could be completed as part of a joint reflection with a colleague, or group of colleagues, where ideas for setting up an inclusive environment can be discussed and shared.

**The CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS)** **The Physical Environment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Items and descriptor** | **Rating** | **Criteria Statements**  **Select the statement that best describes the Physical Environment** |  |
| **Accessibility of Space**  Barrier free  Ease of access | **4** | Accessibility exemplary, exceptional placing of furniture, barrier free |  |
| **3** | Good accessibility to spaces, barrier free |  |
| **2** | Some barriers accessing spaces, some areas inaccessible |  |
| **1** | Barriers including clutter, significant challenges accessing spaces |  |
| **Adequacy of Space**  Availability of spaces  Tailored to needs  Set up of spaces including seating | **4** | Exemplary availability of different areas and seating for meeting needs |  |
| **3** | Variety of areas and seating available when needed, available spaces match requirements |  |
| **2** | Constraints of available space, some needs not met by spaces or seating |  |
| **1** | Spaces not matching needs, overcrowded, required spaces or seating not available |  |
| **Sensory Space**  Temperature/noise  /lighting/odour  Adjustability  Self-calming | **4** | Excellent sensory conditions, temperature pleasant lighting and/or noise levels optimised for sensory preferences |  |
| **3** | Comfortable sensory conditions e.g. temperature, light and/or noise levels adjustable |  |
| **2** | Some challenges with sensory conditions, variable ability to adjust these e.g. unwanted noise |  |
| **1** | Hot/stifling or too cold, noisy, poor lighting, distracting odours - sensory conditions not adjustable/adjusted |  |
| **Visual supports**  Signs  Labels  Visual timetables  Posters/displays | **4** | Excellent use of visual supports meeting individual needs, consistently used and applied |  |
| **3** | Effective use of visual supports meeting needs, mostly consistent |  |
| **2** | Challenges in the number and variety of visual supports, difficult to read/understand, some needs not met, some inconsistency |  |
| **1** | Visual supports are limited/ambiguous/inconsistent, learners cannot understand, needs not met |  |
| **Availability of Objects**  Objects accessible  Objects suitable  Adaptive devices | **4** | Availability of objects exemplary, storage in close proximity, objects matched to characteristics/needs/cultures of learners, independently accessible, well maintained |  |
| **3** | Ease of access to all needed objects when desired, storage adequate, matched to personal characteristics/needs of learners, well maintained |  |
| **2** | Challenges accessing objects, variable storage, some objects not matched to personal characteristics/needs of learners |  |
| **1** | Some objects not available, objects not accessible, objects not adequate for personal characteristics/needs of learners, poorly maintained |  |

**Physical Environment Reflective Questions**

**The following reflective questions may help you when considering how to rate the physical environment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Accessibility of Space**   * Are there any hazards in the physical space? * Can learners move around the classroom/teaching space easily? * Can learners access other areas of the school with ease? * Is the space adapted to meet physical needs? * Is the space organised and uncluttered? | **Visual supports**   * What visual supports are used in the classroom? * Is a consistent format for visuals used across the school? * Are visual cues and supports in place? * Are signs and displays multilingual and multicultural? * Is clear and consistent labelling used to identify resources and resource cupboards? * Is a visual timetable used? * Are any of the visual supports over-stimulating or distracting? |
| **Adequacy of Space**   * Do you think the space suits learners’ needs? * Can you alter your classroom to suit the needs of learners? * Is the class set up to promote good interaction? * Does the space facilitate learning opportunities? * Does the seating plan optimise learning? * Does the seating plan meet specific needs? * Is there space to set up an individual workstation or quiet area/safe space if required? | **Availability of Objects**   * Do learners have easy access to the equipment or resources they need? Are the available objects suited to the needs of learners (e.g. consider seat and table height, types of pencils, pens, scissors etc.)? * Is technology available and fully utilised (e.g. Interactive whiteboard / ICT)? * Are materials/resources prepared/selected in advance? * Are objects/resources positioned consistently and appropriately? * Can learners independently access resources so that they can develop responsibility for these? |
| **Sensory Space**   * Do you have concerns about the sensory environment (e.g. lighting, noise, temperature, odour etc.)? * Can the sensory environment be altered easily? * How do you know the sensory environment is suitable for all learners? * Are agreed sensory supports available and in place? * Is the environment adapted to meet sensory needs (e.g. consider lighting and noise levels)? |

**The CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS)** **The Social Environment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Items and descriptor** | **Rating** | **Criteria Statements**  **Select the statement that best describes the Social Environment** |  |
| **Attitudes**  Empathy  Understanding  Non-judgemental  Respecting others | **4** | Staff and peers in environment display, reinforce and value exceptional attitudes, and are highly empathic and non-judgemental |  |
| **3** | Staff and peers in environment are actively developing and modelling empathy and inclusiveness and are non-judgemental |  |
| **2** | Some challenges with negative attitudes and how these are addressed |  |
| **1** | Staff or peers are dismissive/judgemental/exclusionary/condescending/bullying |  |
| **Support and Facilitation**  Verbal support  Non-verbal support  Physical support Appropriate communication | **4** | Expert support using variety of prompts/encouragement/demonstration, adapted to individual needs, and promotes independence over time |  |
| **3** | Appropriate support using prompts/encouragement/demonstration, takes account of different needs, and builds confidence in learners |  |
| **2** | Limited support and/or one form of support only/support not personalised to reflect needs/support leads to increased dependence |  |
| **1** | Minimal or ineffective support and/or support does not reflect needs |  |
| **Relationships**  Staff and peers  Accepting atmosphere  Sense of belonging Opportunities for relationshipbuilding | **4** | Exemplary, with diverse opportunities for positive social interaction and relationship building within class, school & wider community |  |
| **3** | Good relationships and opportunities for social interaction, strong class identity |  |
| **2** | Some challenges with relationship building and/or conflict |  |
| **1** | Some learners are isolated, conflict, and/or opportunities for relationship building are poor |  |
| **Information** Accessible  Clear  Variety of formats Parents/carers and learners | **4** | Proactive provision of information, several formats, shared and easily accessible |  |
| **3** | Information provided in a variety of formats |  |
| **2** | Challenges with sharing information, information not always clear |  |
| **1** | Minimal information and/or mixed messages, complexity or quantity inappropriate |  |
| **Empowerment**  Support for autonomy  Learner centred Responding to needs and views | **4** | Excellent promotion of appropriate self-direction, proactive seeking of learners’ views/choices |  |
| **3** | Learners actively involved in class ethos/target setting/self-assessment; learners’ desires/views sought |  |
| **2** | Learners inconsistently asked for views, limited follow-through or trust in utility of learners’ views/choices |  |
| **1** | Learners views/choices not sought or considered, over protectiveness, learners’ preference not considered |  |

**Social Environment Reflective Questions**

**The following reflective questions may help you when considering how to rate the social environment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Attitudes**   * Is a learner-centred approach used consistently? * Are individual differences respected and diversity normalised and valued? * Are learners made to feel that their views are valued? * Is constructive feedback given? * Is support offered sensitively and timely? * Are approaches to teaching well-being embedded (e.g. social skills, emotions, mental wellbeing)? * Is sensitivity used when asking learners to ‘perform’ in front of their peers e.g. reading aloud? * Do adults model enthusiasm for tasks? | **Information**   * How is information shared with learners and parents/carers? * Is information (for learners and parents/carers) easily available in a variety of formats? * Are “communication postcards” or a home-school diary used? * Are interpreting and translation services used to make information accessible? * Is there regular collaboration with parents/ carers? * How do staff know that information has been received and understood by all relevant parties (e.g. parents/carers, learners)? |
| **Support and Facilitation**   * Are the staff responsive to the learners needs, do they anticipate needs?   What kind of support is given to learners (physical, verbal, visual cues)?   * Is the complexity of general language used considered? * Is the pace and quantity of information giving considered? * Are complex instructions broken into clear steps? * Are whole class checklists used (e.g. to work through tasks)? * Is teaching adapted for different learning styles? * Is demonstration and/or modelling used? * Is verbal information supported with non-verbal information (e.g. gesture, pictures or written words)? * Are templates used to support structure of work? * Are worksheets clear and organised? * Is feedback provided and effort acknowledged? * Does support lead to increased independence and autonomy over time? | **Empowerment**   * How do staff assist learners in identifying and solving problems and building autonomy? * How do staff encourage learners to express their needs, take responsibility or be autonomous? * How is reflection and sense of self nurtured? * Are learners encouraged to take responsibility for their learning? * Are learners supported to reflect on their learning? * Are learners involved in target setting? * Do learners see progress through personal learning plans? * Are learners given valued class/school roles and responsibilities? * Is the use of first language encouraged? * Do learners see adults responding to their views and ideas? |
| **Relationships**   * How would you describe the relationship of (a) learners with staff (b) between the learners? * Are small group activities utilised? * Are working relationships between learners considered? * Are peer supports used? | * Are facilitated playground activities used? * Are groupings for different tasks carefully considered? * Are activities regularly included to build relationships? * Do learners feel valued and secure? * Do staff support one another to address difficult relationships between adults or adults and learners? |

**The CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS)** **The Structures and Routines**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Items and descriptor** | **Rating** | **Criteria Statements**  **Select the statement that best describes the Structures and Routines** | **✓** |
| **Activity Demands** Too easy/too hard Enjoyment/ satisfaction Just right challenge Matched to ability | **4** | Activities promote exceptionally appropriate and creative challenge and enjoyment with excellent engagement |  |
| **3** | Activities appropriate to allow for “just right challenge”, almost all learners engaged most of the time |  |
| **2** | Activity demands are somewhat high/low, some boredom/stress |  |
| **1** | Activity demands too high/too low, causing boredom/stress |  |
| **Rules and boundaries**  Clarity  Consistency  Effect on learners | **4** | Exceptionally clear expectations usually communicated consistently by all adults in the school, and shared verbally, visually and through modelling |  |
| **3** | Clear expectations usually communicated consistently by all adults in the school, and shared verbally, visually and through modelling |  |
| **2** | Expectations, sometimes communicated consistently by adults in the school, some learner disengagement or anxiety |  |
| **1** | Unclear and/or inconsistent expectations learners, disengaged or anxious |  |
| **Appeal of Activities**  Value  Attraction  Interest | **4** | Very positive perception and understanding of the value of activities offered to learners, variety evident, tailored to interests/cultures |  |
| **3** | Attraction to the type of task offered, variety, some tasks tailored to learners’ interests/cultures |  |
| **2** | Challenge in how activities are structured which limits their appeal, learners’ interests/cultures not reflected |  |
| **1** | Activities are not appealing, learners disinterested, little or no understanding of purpose |  |
| **Routines**  Structure  Preferences  Consistency | **4** | Structured routines all exemplary, accommodates for individual preferences, high levels of consistency, promote sense of belonging |  |
| **3** | Appropriate structured routine, offers consistency, good preparation for change |  |
| **2** | Challenges with how routine is structured, variable consistency, some unpredictability |  |
| **1** | Little or no routine or structure provided throughout the class/day/week, unpredictability |  |
| **Decision-making**  Participation in decision-making  Encouragement for collaborative decision making e.g. class rules | **4** | Exemplary encouragement for learners to meaningfully participate in decisions |  |
| **3** | Encouragement for learners to meaningfully participate in decisions |  |
| **2** | Inconsistency of opportunities being afforded to learners to participate in decisions, participation not always meaningful |  |
| **1** | Minimal information and/or mixed messages, complexity or quantity inappropriate |  |

**Structures and Routines Reflective Questions**

**The following reflective questions may help you when considering how to rate the Structures and Routines**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity demands**   * How do you make sure the level of the activity matches the ability of the learners? * Does work provide challenge and enjoyment for all? * Is work differentiated to ensure achievable goals? * Is success celebrated or displayed? * Is there a focus on praising process as well as product? * Are different thinking styles addressed during lessons? * Do learners engage with all activities? | **Decision-making**   * Are learners involved in decision-making about class rules, class ethos, activities, and routines? * How do you support learners to be involved in decision making? * How do you ensure that everyone’s voice is heard in the decision-making process? * Are class rules set in collaboration with learners? * Are learners encouraged to share their views about the class layout? * Are learners encouraged to share their views about activities? * How do learners know that their views are respected and have been meaningfully considered as part of the decision-making process? |
| **Rules and boundaries**   * How do you agree expectations? * How are expectations communicated to learners? * Are expectations developmentally relevant for all learners? * Are class rules clear and specific? * Are class rules displayed and referred to regularly? * Is your classroom environment set up to support expectations to be met? * Are class expectations displayed and referred to regularly? * Do all adults in the learning environment value and model agreed expectations? * Do you regularly reflect on and review expectations? * Are roles and routines used to promote learner responsibility? | **Appeal of Activities**   * How do you provide activities that are well matched to the interests of the learners? * Are learners’ interests and cultures utilised when designing lessons? * Do good things just happen – are motivating activities timetabled across the week? * Are multisensory approaches used? * Is technology used to engage interest? * Do learners understand the value and purpose of the activities? |
| **Routines**   * How do you help learners with their daily and weekly routine? * Is structure and routine used throughout the lesson/week e.g., set times for P.E? * How do you support learners to understand routines and to understand changes to routines? * How do you prepare learners for any change to routine? * How do you support learners to practice and prepare for new experiences? * Are lessons planned to follow a consistent format? * Are the learning intentions made clear at the start? * Are learning outcomes reviewed and summarised? * Are there routine opportunities for active learning and multisensory learning? * Are there opportunities for practice and repetition? * Are there routine opportunities for movement breaks? * Are consistent /predictable seating plans in place? | |

**Summary of the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS)**

Using the information from the completed summary sheet below will give you a record of how inclusive your classroom environment is at any given time of the school year. This can be used to quickly audit any areas requiring attention and can help you to develop a plan for any improvement required. You can use the Circle Inclusive Scale (CICS) planning page to document your plan for improvement. The CICS provides a score which can be used as a baseline and then repeated to show the effect of any change made to your classroom environment.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | |  | **Completed by:** |  |
| **Classroom** | |  | | |
| **Date for review** | |  | | |
| **4** | Environment **strongly supports** learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures | | | |
| **3** | Environment **supports** learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures | | | |
| **2** | Environment **interferes** learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures | | | |
| **1** | Environment **strongly interferes** learner(s) participation by providing exceptional opportunities, resources, requirements and structures | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Structures & Routines** | **Decision Making** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Routines** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Appeal of Activities** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Rules and Boundaries** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Activity Demands** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Social Environment** | **Empowerment** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Provision of Information** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Relationships** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Support and Facilitation** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Attitudes** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Physical Environment** | **Availability of Objects** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Visual Supports** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Sensory Space** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Adequacy of Space** | **4 3 2 1** |
| **Accessibility of Space** | **4 3 2 1** |

**CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Planning Page**

**You could make a plan by writing down which areas to target based in information from the CIRCLE Inclusive classroom Scale (CICS)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** |  | **Completed by:** | |  |
| **Classroom** |  | | | |
| **Date for review** |  | | | |
| **From your completed CICS what the key areas are you have chosen to develop.**  **(Consider those with a score of two or less).** | | | | |
| **Write down key strategies that could be introduced or used more consistently to help you develop this area.** | | | | |
| **How will it be achieved?** | | | | |
| **Things to implement/ change/develop** | | | **Resources/training needed** | |
|  | | |  | |
| **Who will be involved?** | | |
|  | | |
| **Review** | | | | |
| **Outcome** | | | **Next Steps** | |
| The CICS score in this area has increased/ decreased/ remained the same (delete as required) | | |  | |
| **Date review completed:** | | | | |

**Discussion Point**

**Reflective Questions**

* Having completed the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS), how inclusive do you think your practice is?
* Which whole school approaches are in place within your school? How do these impact on setting up an inclusive classroom?
* Which supports and strategies do you currently use to ensure your practice is learner-centred?
* What steps do you take in the preparation and planning process to ensure that you understand the needs of individual learners within your class?
* How do you evidence the supports and strategies that you use?
* Which strategies would you like to add to or develop in your current practice? How might you do this?
* Considering learners who already have individual supports or strategies in place, how could you adapt these to make them suitable for the whole class?
* Where do you evidence your planning for individual learners?
* Who do you (could you) use as a critical friend to reflect on your practice with?
* How does the implementation of supports and strategies by your critical friend/peer support (or another colleague) differ from your own practice?

**Complete an ABCD around how an inclusive classroom strategy could be used to overcome a particular challenge relating to a learner or group of learners.**

An ABC Chart is an observation tool used to collect information about the events that are occurring within a learner’s environment. “A” refers to the antecedent, or the event or activity that immediately precedes the behaviour. The “B” refers to observed behaviour, and “C” refers to the consequence, or the event that immediately follows a response. An ABC Chart is used to record and reflect on patterns of behaviour over time. This allows supporting adults to identify and minimise potential triggers.