



InCAS has now
evolved into
**Cambridge
Primary
Insight**



AGE 5-11

Using InCAS to support children with English as an additional language

Good practice for all EAL pupils

Talha is a self-confident, curious and creative 8 year old who attends an international school in Thailand, on the outskirts of Bangkok.

This well-established all-through school has a diverse community with students, parents and teachers coming from over 30 different nationalities. The school prides itself on its vibrant curriculum, meeting individual needs and its outstanding results.

Talha speaks Urdu and Punjabi at home with his family and friends. Before his family moved to Bangkok, Talha attended a bilingual school in Lahore. While he has been educated in English for 3 years, he is now following a British Curriculum

at school for the first time. The family's move to Thailand for his father's work is a three year posting, and it is likely that Talha will continue his education in English for the foreseeable future.

Urdu is Talha's first and most comfortable language. His school wants to ensure he develops the basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) in English that he uses in the playground, and acquire cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) to make good progress across all areas of the curriculum.

Establishing starting ability

Talha is not unique amongst his classmates in having a complex linguistic profile, and in order to meet individual needs, Talha's school has introduced the InCAS assessment in order to establish a baseline of ability.

Identifying Talha's strengths

We know that EAL pupils cover a wide spectrum of ability and it can take pupils between four and nine years to attain 'academic' English. The InCAS assessment can help by pinpointing both Talha's strengths and areas where he may need further support.

Reading fluency

Talha's teachers recognise that he is a motivated and conscientious student. When reading in English he is able to identify common words and sound out some unfamiliar words, although he does not always appear to understand the meaning of what he has read.

The InCAS Reading module assesses three key skills children need to understand the meaning of texts:

- Word recognition
- Word decoding
- Comprehension

InCAS provides age-equivalent scores for Reading and Spelling. These scores are useful for making comparisons against expected attainment, and between modules, to establish areas of strength and areas for improvement.

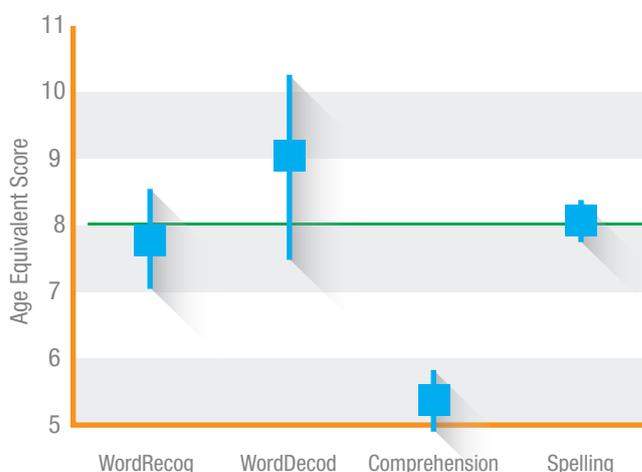
Talha's age-equivalent feedback shows that for each of the reading sections, his score is broadly in line with what you would expect to see in children of his age.

However, Talha's teacher was concerned to see that his Comprehension score is below his chronological age, although all of his other scores are on, or around it.

What is the likely cause of this type of score pattern?

Name	Age (Yrs:Mths)	Age Equivalent Scores (Yrs:Mths)			
		WordRecog	WordDecod	Comprehension	Spelling
Torsten	8:5	7:10	7:9	6:6	7:1
Yubing	8:0	5:3	7:5	6:1	5:6
Antonia	8:3	10:3	11:9	11:3	11:8
Talha	8:1	7:9	9:1	5:3	8:1
Alexander	7:8	7:8	7:3	5:2	6:10
Natalie	7:9	9:6	10:3	8:7	7:4

The age equivalent scores chart present the scores as ages in years and months at which a pupil is performing.



Delving deeper into the subsections of the Reading and Spelling modules enables a teacher to make direct comparisons between scores.

Reading comprehension

The Comprehension section of InCAS requires the pupil to read a passage and, when given a choice of three words, to select the word that fits into the sentence most appropriately.

Comprehension skills rely on a number of factors, such as an understanding of sentence structure and a wide vocabulary. However, one of the main factors is reading fluency. If a pupil spends a lot of time sounding out the letters of words in a sentence (word decoding), they can easily lose track of the sentence itself and find it difficult to comprehend the overall meaning of the text.

This is a common challenge for EAL students, where comprehension skills are dependent on a range of factors, including: first and second language proficiency, the structure and writing system of the first language, reading skills and strategies previously used and background knowledge.

Talha's scores indicate that he has the key building blocks (word recognition and word decoding) to develop his reading comprehension, but he may benefit from concentrated support, for example guided reading and discussions about the texts, to allow him to flourish in this area.

Next steps for Talha and his teachers

We know that problems with reading comprehension can impact on all areas of schoolwork. Talha's teachers can help him achieve his full potential by introducing specific learning interventions and reading fluency strategies, including:

- Using 'before reading', 'during reading', and 'after reading' strategies
- Activating pupils' background knowledge
- Conducting regular 'read alouds' to build crucial background knowledge, and foster reading comprehension and fluency
- Implementing peer-to-peer reading sessions

InCAS is a diagnostic, adaptive assessment, used by schools around the world to monitor progress in six key developmental areas:

- Reading
- General Mathematics
- Developed Ability
- Spelling
- Mental Arithmetic
- Attitudes

Each module of the assessment takes around 25 minutes to complete and while most schools find it useful to do the assessment at the beginning or end of the school year, it can be done at any time of the year, which is especially useful for late arrivals.

You can use InCAS to assess pupils at any time from the end of Year 1 through to the end of Year 6. You can assess a class, or whole cohort, at the same time or test in smaller groups if you wish. Each module of the test may be administered separately, and there is no teacher marking required.

