# CAMBRIDGE



InCAS has now evolved into

**Cambridge Primary Insight**

# Evidencing success
# at The British School in Tokyo

**The British School in Tokyo (BST) is an inclusive international school for students aged between 3 and 18.**

Established in 1989, it now has over 1000 students encompassing 60 different nationalities.

BST Primary provides a first-class, values-driven international education, based on the Early Years Foundation Stage and the English National Curriculum to more than 650 pupils.

Head of Primary, Kirsten O'Connor, explains here how BST Primary uses CEM's InCAS assessment to ensure pupils make good progress.

## Why did you choose to use InCAS?

When the new National Curriculum was introduced in the UK in 2014 and levels were removed, we strongly felt that we should not replace them with another set of levels of our own design. We wanted to take assessment right back to the drawing board and make a decision about what it is for and use it only for that.

To complement our teacher assessment of the curriculum, we were looking for externally validated assessment data that could offer a benchmark of our children's performance against a wider range of schools, including the independent sector and international schools. InCAS tests, taken by over 200,000 children in a range of these settings, offered this opportunity.

Also, the InCAS tests, rather than being National Curriculum based, are discipline based. We were looking for this kind of measure of how the children could employ and apply their learning more generally in English and maths.

**The British School in Tokyo**

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## When do you assess the pupils?

Using formative and summative strategies, our teachers assess against the National Curriculum end-of-year expectations throughout the year. Our children take the end of Key Stage One and Two SATs in May; we use this data to measure pupil progress over time and attainment, benchmarking our results against UK state schools.

We employ the InCAS tests at the beginning of each school year in September for Years 1 to 6. The results come back quickly, which is very helpful. The information we receive helps us to really drill down to specific focus areas for each child.

At the beginning of each year we set aspirational targets for every child and year group utilising our curriculum summative judgements as well as the InCAS data. Of course, curriculum assessment data is important (we have to know what they have attained in previous years to ensure the children are sustaining good progress) but it helps to also consider the CEM data when setting targets to make sure we are not missing anything.

## How compatible is InCAS for international pupils?

The InCAS assessment is very compatible with international education as it is not linked to a specific curriculum, but focusses on the key areas of reading and maths.

Although we follow the National Curriculum, we are an independent international school so the InCAS data is useful to get an extra measure that validates our wider assessments and refines our planning.

International schools often have transient communities, with significant numbers of new children joining at the beginning of each academic year. Being able to get a thorough profile of a child's strengths and areas of development within a couple of weeks of the start of term helps us to plan effectively and introduce any necessary support. The reading test is particularly useful for example in highlighting any children, particularly those joining upper Key Stage Two year groups, who need to work on phonic knowledge to decode or comprehension skills.

## How do you use the InCAS data?

We use InCAS data to inform planning, set aspirational targets and give parents a picture of how their children are performing amongst a large, diverse cohort, rather than just amongst a class or year group at BST. Reading, General Maths and Mental Arithmetic age standardised scores are shared with parents. Our teachers drill down into the data further to ensure they know their class and their pupils' individual needs right from the start of the year.

Most of the time the data reinforces what we already know. But when it does flag an issue it is extremely useful, helping us to make sure no one slips through the net!

## Do you use the InCAS data to adjust teaching or introduce interventions?

Yes, we use it in both of these areas. We were able, for example, to quickly identify a year group that had a particularly high number of children reaching the highest score in maths (>145). This immediately helped us tailor our planning and teaching, seeking ways to really challenge these pupils at a much deeper level.

InCAS data has enabled us as a middle and senior leadership team to get a clearer overall picture of the attainment of our pupils as a whole school. The data has given us a basis from which to work with staff on ensuring the pitch of teaching matches the potential of the children.

Now we have several years of InCAS data we know that our average pitch needs to be high, while still effectively differentiating. It's really worth schools scrutinizing the whole-school data to see a school-specific bell curve of attainment to truly ensure the pitch of planning, teaching and assessment judgments is right. We have certainly found this to be a powerful and impactful exercise.

## Which aspect of the feedback do you find most useful?

Each of the areas of feedback is useful in its own way. The standardised scores are very helpful in giving a clear overall picture. But for our teachers the subject area breakdowns are particularly fruitful.

We triangulate the InCAS information with our curriculum assessment data. This really helps to nourish the discussion at our termly Class Profile Meetings, when teachers and team leaders meet to discuss class and individual progress and attainment.

For us, this is the best use of the data. We want teachers to have as much information as they can to make sure they have a really clear steer on what the children need.

## What challenges does the school face at the moment?

Our biggest challenge currently is ensuring our curriculum assessments are accurate and have an impact on how and what we teach each child. Moderation is therefore a high priority. As a whole staff we are focusing on making sure we consistently recognise evidence of children reaching a 'mastering' standard in English and maths.

The InCAS data is helping us with this; when we see how many children are in the 'above' or 'very above average' range we feel more secure in making those curriculum 'mastering' judgements, particularly for those children we may consider on the cusp.

We are also working on getting a smoother vertical articulation of assessment across Key Stage Two and Three. Our secondary colleagues utilise the MidYIS tests and we hope in the future to find ways to collaborate on the use of these two systems to influence both the teaching and learning of pupils at BST.