

Trials for Access Mathematics Tests and Access Reading Tests**Parent/Carer/Learner Information Sheet**Monday 25th September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

The Hodder Education Group is the business division of Hodder & Stoughton Limited, part of the Hachette UK Group of companies. We are a major publisher of school resources. During this school year, your school is helping us to trial the *Access Reading Tests* so that we can publish new editions of these tests. If your child is aged 13+, please share this information with them.

What are Access Mathematics and Access Reading Tests? These tests measure progress and help teachers to see where learners need further help with particular maths and reading skills. After the test trials *Hodder Education* will publish the new *Access Mathematics Tests* and *Access Reading Tests*. Your school is helping by becoming one of our Partner Schools in these trials, and your child will be helping to set the nationally-representative benchmarks as well as benefitting educationally by their teacher being able to see their level of skills in these areas.

What is the purpose of the trialling? *Hodder Education* will use the test scores from learners at schools taking part in the trial to create standardised scores that will be made available with the assessment papers after the trial. The standardised scores, age-standardised scores and 'maths/reading ages' are measures that allow teachers to see the level a learner is working at compared with average scores across the country. They can also see scores in skills strands, indicating where the learner's strengths lie and where they may need help to improve. To determine these benchmark measures, we trial each test with a nationally-representative sample of more than 1000 learners. Their results are aggregated (gathered together as a group) and anonymised (all names and identifying data taken out) and analysed to determine these benchmark scores. If we didn't trial the papers, we wouldn't be able to provide any of the standardised measures that schools then use.

Why is our school being asked to take part? Lots of schools across the country have been asked to take part so that we can be sure of a spread of schools that is representative of schools nationally. Your school is helping to develop tests that will help hundreds of schools in future years.

How does this benefit our school and its learners? By taking part in these trials, schools will be able to see how their learners' skills in mathematics and reading sit in a national context and where any gaps lie, therefore giving the opportunity for focussed teaching to support learners in their learning. Schools also benefit from being provided with the published tests free of charge for a further year in recognition of their participation.

How frequently will learners take part in the assessments? Each learner will take one Reading test in Autumn 2023 and in Summer 2024. Some schools may opt to take two tests with a group of learners of varying abilities in reading which will enable us to ensure that two parallel tests are comparable.

How are the assessments taken? Some schools will give the tests in paper format and some schools will give the tests in interactive format.

How are learners with special needs included? We ask that schools make any necessary arrangements for learners with special educational needs or disabilities, as they would for any tests, at the school's discretion. Schools or parents may choose for a learner not to sit the test if they feel that it would discomfort the learner in any way.

What personal data will be required and for what purpose? We will require the learner's name, their date of birth, their year group and their sex. Please note that the school name will not be made known to our markers, data analysts or digital developers (see below) – each school will be allocated a unique school code in place of the school's name. The learners' names and dates of birth are required in order that the test markers can correctly collate each learner's scores for the two different tests and so that this information can be accurately returned to the relevant schools. Dates of birth are required in order to create 'age-standardised' benchmarks, and the learner's sex is required to provide aggregated male/female-specific data. In the case of the interactive versions of the tests, the learners' details will be uploaded into a secure test platform and the tests will be automatically marked. This is in the legitimate interest of providing your school with the results of the trial assessments and undertaking the analysis required to produce the standardised scores that will be available to schools using these tests in the future. Should you wish your school to withdraw your child's data from the study, please inform Mrs Brockman-Smith (p.brockman-smith@stclementshigh.org.uk) in writing within two weeks of receiving this letter.

Who will be handling the data?

- Hodder & Stoughton Limited (on behalf of its business division, *Hodder Education*) will collect the learner personal data from your school and allocate a unique school code in place of the school name to protect the identities of learners. The learner personal data, under the school code with no school name, will then be processed by our partners, AlphaPlus Limited and TalkThinkDo, for the purpose of the project as detailed below:
- AlphaPlus Limited will provide us with services in respect of marking the paper tests and analysing the test scores and personal data collected during the trial. AlphaPlus Limited use carefully selected markers to provide the marking services.
- TalkThinkDo are our digital developers of the interactive versions of the tests – they will load learner personal data into the platform so test scores can be recorded against each interactive test sitting, and then extract test scores with the learner personal data to pass to AlphaPlus Limited for analysis.
- Learnosity process the test scores but at no point do they have learner personal data – each learner sitting an interactive test is allocated a unique User ID number that is used by TalkThinkDo on behalf of Hodder & Stoughton Limited to extract the test scores.

The data will be used solely for the purposes of this project as outlined above and will not be shared with any other third parties.

After results are returned to the schools, all data will be pseudonymised (i.e. all school and learner names removed) and Hodder & Stoughton Limited and AlphaPlus Limited will retain the pseudonymised data – learner numeric code, date of birth and sex – for the purpose of any further statistical analyses until the product is no longer in publication. We will ensure that all the data that is submitted to us remains secure. You can see how Hodder Education handles personal data in our Privacy Notice at <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/privacynotice>.

Will learners' data/school data be published anywhere following the trial? All data will be aggregated and anonymised so that when information is published about the standardisation process, no school or individual learner will be identifiable. The information published will be charts of scores to help schools to measure their learners' progress.

We are very grateful to your school and its learners for helping with this project.

If you have any further questions, please discuss these with the assessment lead at your school, Mrs Brockman-Smith.