CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS & ASSESSMENT

Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring

Why do parents need data?

What are Cambridge CEM assessments?

Cambridge CEM data is not an assessment of teachers or leaders. It is an assessment for teachers and leaders to target support for learners to improve their outcomes. It is a reliable way of monitoring learner intake regardless of the learners' prior learning. Cambridge CEM measures the capability and potential of each learner; this type of data is called baseline data.

Note: these are not competitive assessments and learners should not revise for them, there is no curriculum, and there are no practice questions. The tests are adaptive so each learner takes a unique test with the computer selecting questions of relevant difficulty for each learner. Each learner is challenged in a supported way so that their cognitive abilities and broader skills and understanding are measured regardless of their self-confidence or previous learning experiences.

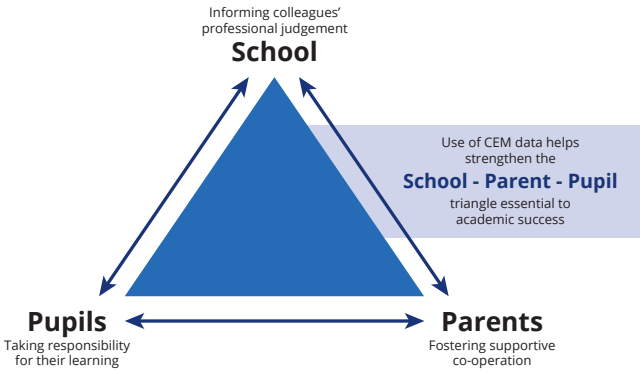
How can schools use Cambridge CEM assessments?

Cambridge CEM's baseline data provides information which schools can use in different ways. For example, they can identify high ability learners and their particular educational needs as they may underachieve unless those specific needs are met. Some high ability learners do not or cannot make the effort needed for high achievement, particularly in the early years of secondary school. Cambridge CEM data will show the difference between cognitive ability and achievement.

The baseline data creates a profile for each learner. This profile will inform teaching and support within the school. Also, this information will be used by teachers to ask deeper questions of learners' knowledge and skills, to make sure that any gaps are covered. The profile is like a photo of an ever-moving scene. All learners make progress, some more quickly than others. The photo (the data) is used by schools to ask questions; is this learner making progress? if not, why not? What resources are required to support this learner to make progress?

What has this got to do with me as a parent?

Research has shown that learners are most successful when School, Home and the Learner themselves work together. This is sometimes called the 'Golden Triangle'. All must play their part and communicate with each other regularly. However, this is not just about academic success but also about identifying and nurturing special interests and talents, and supporting health and wellbeing. This is called taking a holistic view of each learner. Academic achievement and other qualities such as leadership, curiosity, creativity, originality and resilience are all valuable.



Is my child on track?

Schools also use progression Cambridge CEM progression data over time to establish reasonable expectations of learners. This helps teachers to have more in depth and meaningful conversations with parents and learners and set targets.

Target-setting is a normal school activity but the more accurate and achievable the target, the more likely is that it will be reached. For example, a learner could be given a target of progressing from a level 3 to a level 4 in Maths. A teacher will be able to understand this target but a parent or learner will not know how to achieve this. A more understandable and achievable (SMART) target would be for the learner to get from a level 3 to a level 4 in fractions by demonstrating understanding of proper, improper and mixed fractions and being able to solve questions in each area. This would be part of the end of term assessment to check progress.

Teachers will be able to target specific knowledge or skills in their planning and homework tasks and communicate these to parents and learners. Parents who understand this information can in turn support their child's success. There are many ways parents can help and the school will make suggestions specific to each learner.

The progress information can also empower parents to support their child in making educational decisions. It helps with understanding strengths, interests, and goals, for example in order to make subject choices and college/university choices. Cambridge CEM has a specific report for parents that they can access securely online. It is best to find out how learners are doing and support them as early as possible in their school journey. The most effective teaching will lead to the highest achievement.