

## What information will I be given about my child's InCAS assessments?

Your child's teacher will give you their **InCAS Reading** and **General Maths** Age for this year in writing.

The InCAS Reading and General Maths outcomes are not intended to be used to compare children with each other but to encourage you and your child's teacher to work together to support their learning as effectively as possible.

Remember that in addition to the areas assessed by InCAS, your child's other skills, experiences and even their attitude contributes to their overall reading and mathematical performance. You may find it useful to discuss these with your child's teacher as well.

You will have an opportunity to discuss your child's InCAS outcomes as well as all the other aspects of their progress with their teacher at a parent meeting, which will happen during the autumn term.

InCAS assessments are not for any purpose related to the transfer of pupils from primary to post-primary school.

## How to Get More Information

For more information about InCAS please go to [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk) and view the InCAS parent information page or visit [www.incasproject.org](http://www.incasproject.org) to learn how the software was developed.

## A Parents' Guide to InCAS - 2011 Assessing your child with InCAS in Year 4



As your child develops and moves up through primary school teachers regularly monitor their strengths, progress and areas for improvement to ensure that they learn as effectively as possible. This monitoring can take many forms, including teacher observation, marking class work and home work as well as a wide variety of more specific assessments.

Some of the assessments that pupils across Northern Ireland who are in Year 4 will be expected to complete this year are InCAS Reading and General Maths. InCAS stands for Interactive Computerised Assessment System and was designed by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University.

InCAS assessments are carried out in the autumn term (September to December). They focus on Reading and General Maths as good progress in these areas is key to helping your child make progress generally.

## How does InCAS work?

As the name suggests, children complete InCAS assessments at the computer. They wear headphones so that they can listen to the questions, as well as read them.

The assessments last no longer than 30 minutes each and are carried out during normal class time to fit in around your child's day-to-day learning.

InCAS assessments are not formal tests and are not designed to compare pupils with each other. They take a different approach to assessment as they treat every child as an individual by choosing the difficulty of each question depending on how well they have answered previous questions.

Most children will do these InCAS assessments but children with severe learning difficulties are exempt.

Children in Irish-medium schools and units can do the assessments through the medium of Irish.

## What exactly does InCAS assess?

**InCAS Reading** looks at your child's ability to recognise words, to break them into sounds and to choose the appropriate words to complete a passage.

**InCAS General Maths** will present questions from several topics such as number work, shape, measuring and reading graphs and charts.

As with any 'one-off' assessment InCAS focuses on your child's performance on one particular day.

## Tell me more

Before they sit the InCAS assessments the children are given instructions by the teacher and also provided with some sample questions within the computer programme. In addition, an animated character called Inky is available to explain what they need to do. If you would find it useful to view this for yourself you can do so by visiting [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

Below you can get an idea of how InCAS works by looking at how it might assess the General Maths of a girl called Marina who is 7 years and 3 months old when she does the assessment.

To give Marina a good chance of getting the first question correct InCAS chooses one which is suitable for a child who is younger than her actual age.

You can see that her first set of questions (shown in green) become gradually more difficult until the final one is appropriate for a child who is 10 years of age. At this point the number of Marina's wrong answers suggests that she has moved beyond her ability level.

InCAS repeats this process several more times (shown in blue, yellow and pink) until it identifies that her InCAS General Maths Age is 7 years and 9 months, compared to her actual age of 7 years and 3 months.

Offering a child more than one set of questions ensures that one careless mistake cannot give the wrong impression of their ability.

