



FOREST SCHOOL

Entrance Assessment Day Guidance for Parents (FAQs)

This guidance only concerns the Entrance Assessment Test sat on Saturday 5th January, which prospective pupils will sit as part of their Entrance Assessment Day at Forest. For more information regarding the interview and the collaborative task please see the 11+ Entry Guidelines.

Why is a new assessment test being introduced at Forest?

Forest wants to provide the best education possible to prospective pupils that would most benefit from it. Forest is a highly academic school but offers so much else as well. What makes Forest distinct is our focus on a genuinely holistic education in which development in the academic, co-curricular, pastoral, and personal spheres are integrated, genuinely appreciated, and treated as equally valuable learning opportunities.

We also recognise the importance of giving every pupil a clear sense of their progress in developing the measurable skills and characteristics which are proven to be the best indicator of young people's readiness to live useful, fulfilling, and happy lives as adults. To best do this, we recognise the need to broaden our definition of intellect and potential beyond traditional, typical measurements and to move beyond what we believe to be stale 'Maths and English 11+ papers' that have so defined selectivity for decades. To this end, we have worked in collaboration with Atom Assessment, a market leader in admissions testing and a trusted partner of several other leading independent schools.

The new assessment test focus will, of course, assess academic aptitude but equally it seeks to evaluate a candidate's problem solving, creative and critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, collaboration and communication abilities and it will give prospective pupils more opportunity to contextualise their personal development to date through interview. The new assessment test is designed to discourage excessive tutoring and instead find a way to measure children's genuine intellectual curiosity, passion, and enjoyment for learning. With this forward-thinking approach, we aim to create a fair and holistic assessment process that engages a wide range of learners.

As outlined in the Forest School Admissions Policy, the new assessment test, the interview, the School reference and the new group activity will all provide assessment information on which Forest will make its offers to applicants.

How do the assessments work and what will be tested?

The assessment is **online** and can be taken on any modern device (e.g. computer, laptop or tablet) – Forest will be providing iPads for all candidates. It will cover the following subject components:

Part 1 (adaptive assessment of 60 minutes)

This section is a digital test and is adaptive, so the questions will get easier or more challenging dependent on how the candidate is answering them. This section of the assessment is one hour in length. Part one includes:

- Mathematics (non-calculator - 25 minutes)
- English, (15 minutes)
- Verbal reasoning (10 minutes). This section assesses candidates' ability to reason and solve problems with written information
- Non-verbal reasoning (10 minutes) assesses the candidates' ability to identify patterns and think logically

Part 2 (non-adaptive assessment of 60 minutes)

This test section is non-adaptive, so the difficulty level of each question is not based on the candidate's previous responses. It assesses aptitude and provides insight into learning behaviours. Candidates who are intrinsically motivated learners and have the resilience to persevere or consider a problem for a sustained period will likely perform well in this section.

Part two includes:

- Puzzles and problem solving (10 minutes)
- Creative Comprehension (20 minutes)
- A written, paper-based, assessment of written English (30 minutes)

How long will the assessments take and how will candidates manage their time?

The Entrance Assessment itself will be 120 minutes (2 hours) long - see the previous section for a breakdown. During the digital parts of the assessment, candidates will see a clock on their screen that will count down in minutes showing them how long they have left for each section. It will be visible but not so large as to distract them from their work.

Candidates will have a break in between parts 1 and 2 of the assessment.

How will the test work?

The majority of questions will be multiple choice with only a few questions requiring a student to type one word or number at most.

Part 1 of the assessment will be adaptive: this means questions will get harder or easier as a child moves through the assessment to ensure they are the right level for each individual. Therefore, students won't be able to skip or go back and change their answers to questions. Adaptive assessment is a tried and tested method that yields reliable results.

Part 2 of the assessment will be non-adaptive: this means all candidates will see exactly the same questions, they will have the ability to move backwards and forwards and be able to change their answers.

Candidates will be permitted a blank scrap paper and pencil in all subjects for any working out. All results will be age-standardised to ensure parity between candidates.

What about candidates eligible for extra time?

Candidates eligible for extra time will be asked to indicate their entitlement at the point of application to Forest School. This additional time will automatically be added to the timer visible on their screen for each section of their assessments.

I would like to know more about the assessments. What can you tell me?

We recommend viewing the short familiarisation exercise to get a feel for the online format of the assessment: www.forest.org.uk/admissions-overview/11-entry/

We hope the information below is helpful to learn a little more:

PART 1:

Part 1 assesses attainment against the taught English and Maths curriculum (up to the end of Year 5 for 11+), but with opportunities to appropriately stretch and challenge through the style and depth of the questions asked. This is to make things fair as different schools will teach the curriculum in different orders. Part 1 also assesses potential ability through reasoning. These sections are adaptive - please see further above for an explanation.

Maths

Covers:

- Number and place value
- Addition and subtraction
- Multiplication and division
- Fractions, including decimals and percentages
- Properties of shape
- Measurement
- Statistics and data

In the first section of the maths paper, candidates will answer questions that assess their understanding of the concepts set out in the National Curriculum (as above). In the second section of the maths paper, candidates will answer 'Maths Challenge Style' questions. These questions assess their ability to reason and problem solve with curriculum concepts. They are more playful and capture a candidates' ability to adapt to the unexpected.

English

Covers:

- Comprehension
- Spelling, punctuation and grammar

Aligned with the National Curriculum, questions in the comprehension assessment focus on skills such as retrieval, drawing inferences and understanding the meaning of words in context. Candidates will see a piece of text and be asked to answer questions about it. Candidates should not be thrown by vocabulary they do not know as one of the things we are assessing is the ability to infer meaning from context.

The Spelling, Punctuation, Grammar and Vocabulary questions assess a candidate's use and control of English, as outlined by the National Curriculum.

Non-Verbal Reasoning assesses the candidates ability to identify patterns and think logically. This section is adaptive and will cover:

- Analysing visual information in order to problem solve
- Identifying and continuing patterns
- Visualising changes in 2D and 3D space

Verbal Reasoning assesses the candidates ability to reason and solve problems with written information. This section is adaptive and will cover:

- Advanced vocabulary and use of language
- Pattern spotting & making connections in order to identify rules
- Thinking critically and using logic to make high-level deductions

PART 2:

Part 2 assesses aptitude and also provides insight into attitude. Those candidates who are intrinsically motivated learners and have the resilience to persevere or consider a problem for a sustained period will enjoy and excel in this section. These sections are non-adaptive - please see further above for an explanation.

Creative Comprehension: Candidates will need to use information from a variety of different sources to answer questions about a bespoke and stimulating context. The information will be given to them in a range of engaging formats so no prior knowledge is needed and they may have to look at several different sources at the same time to answer questions.

Skills assessed:

- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Puzzles and Problem Solving: this section tests the candidates ability to use words and numbers to solve multi-step problems. They will be provided with interactive resources to aid them during their problem-solving.

Skills assessed:

- Strategy
- Use of resources
- Trial and error
- Logical thinking

Written English Paper There will be one question giving candidates the opportunity to write creatively, either in a short piece of fiction or non-fiction. Here, we are looking for original and accurate writing. Candidates who do well write in an imaginative and engaging manner.

Why is the entry assessment going to be online? Will this not put candidates not used to typing at a disadvantage? What type of device will candidates use?

Many selective independent schools like Forest are now running online assessments, which is becoming common practice. There is no extended typing exercise required so typing ability will not impact on results. Putting the assessment online significantly reduces the risk of human error, leading to results we can trust.

The entry assessment can be taken on many different types of devices and we will be providing iPads for all candidates during our Entrance Assessment Day. The device used will not make any difference to a candidate's performance.

My child is an overseas applicant. Where will they take the assessment?

Your child is welcome to travel to sit the assessment at our school. If you would prefer your child to sit the assessment overseas, please contact our Admissions team to find out how to proceed. Candidates who are living overseas may take the assessment under exam conditions at their current school or at a test centre.

How much preparation does my child have to do for the entry assessment?

Candidates look at the familiarisation materials provided further above. Beyond that, our assessments will test knowledge based on the National Curriculum and candidates will need to know how to read an extended comprehension passage to answer questions on it. These are all skills that your child will be developing in school, so they will not need any special tuition or intensive practice. Instead, they are encouraged to read widely and engage in activities that inspire curiosity for the wider world.



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