



FOREST SCHOOL

Entrance Assessment Day Guidance for Parents (FAQs)

This guidance only concerns the Entrance Assessment Test sat on Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 December, 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 was a new assessment test 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 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 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 assessment test, the interview, the School reference and the 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 a desktop computer for all candidates. It will cover the following subject components:

- **Part 1:** Maths, Non-Verbal Reasoning, Verbal Reasoning, English, Puzzles and Problem-Solving
- **Part 2:** Paper-based assessment of written English

What is covered in Part 1?

The **Maths and English** sections are based on the **National Curriculum**. They assess your child's ability to recall what they have been taught and apply this knowledge to solve problems.

The **Verbal and Non-Verbal** reasoning sections are designed to test your child's **academic potential**. They assess your child's ability to solve problems with written or visual information.

The **Puzzles and Problem-Solving** section encourages your child to think deeply about a scenario and apply mathematical techniques to solve a problem.

Part 1	Maths	Non-Verbal Reasoning	Verbal Reasoning	English	Puzzles and Problem-Solving
What is being assessed?	Arithmetic Mathematical reasoning	Spatial reasoning Visual reasoning	Vocabulary Pattern-spotting Logic	Reading comprehension	Multi-step problem solving Logical reasoning
Timings	20 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
Total					1 hour 10 minutes

What is covered in Part 2?

A written, **paper-based, assessment of written English**. There will be one question giving candidates the opportunity to write creatively, either in a short piece of fiction or non-fiction. Candidates will have 30 minutes for this section.

Is the assessment adaptive and what does this mean?

Adaptive

The **Maths, Non-Verbal Reasoning and Verbal Reasoning** sections of the assessment are **adaptive**. This means that questions will get harder or easier as a child moves through the assessment. This ensures that each question is at the right level of difficulty for each candidate.

Please note, candidates will not be able to skip or go back to any questions. They will also be unable to change any of their answers. Candidates should prioritise accuracy and work carefully to answer what they can. It is not expected for candidates to finish all the questions in each section.

Non-Adaptive

The **English and Puzzles and Problem-Solving sections** are **non-adaptive**. This means that all students will see the same questions, although some will progress further through the questions than others.

Please note, students will have the ability to move backwards and forwards through questions and will be able to change their answers.

How will the test work?

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

All results will be age-standardised to ensure parity between candidates.

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

The timings of each subject component are:

Part 1	
Maths	20 minutes
Non-Verbal Reasoning	10 minutes
Verbal Reasoning	10 minutes
English	15 minutes
Puzzles and Problem-Solving	15 minutes
<i>Candidates will have a short break between taking Part 1 and Part 2 of the Assessment.</i>	
Part 2	
Paper-based written English test	30 minutes

The Entrance Assessment itself will be 1 hour and 40 minutes long - see the previous section for a breakdown. During the digital parts of the assessment, candidates will see a timer on their screen 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.

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/

The assessment will test the knowledge and skills highlighted in the **Key Stage 2 National Curriculum**. Students will develop these skills as part of their school education, so they will not need any special tuition or intensive practice.

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.

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.

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

English

Covers:

- Comprehension

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.

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

PART 2:

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.

FAQS

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. Where extra time is approved for a candidate, the additional time will be automatically added to the timer visible on their screen for each section of their assessment.

What can my child use during the assessment?

Candidates will be permitted a blank scrap paper and pencil in all subjects for any working out. Candidates may not use any other additional materials during any stage of the assessment, e.g. dictionaries, thesauruses, calculators, rulers, mobile phones, etc.

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. The device used will not make any difference to a candidate's performance. Forest will provide a desktop computer for all candidates during our Entrance Assessment Day. Please ensure that your child is comfortable using a desktop computer, including familiarity with a mouse and keyboard.

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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