



Learning in England ∞ Our Assessment Package

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What do we mean by Assessment?

Our assessment is rigorous, informative and fun. We want children to have confidence in themselves and enjoy the process of self-discovery. So even if they are not yet intellectually capable, we find their strengths so we can ensure they are well placed and enable them to be successful in an English school.

There is no need to revise or prepare for our Assessment.

So, time is given for

1. the child to read a story or poem to us, in his or her mother tongue
2. one to one discussion about a piece of prose or poetry of their choice; and then of our choice. Searching questions are also asked to draw out a philosophical slant
3. one-to-one discussion of a piece of music or art
4. reflective writing about his or her own life history. Even an eight-year-old will be proud of something that he or she has achieved or skills that have been demonstrated – caring for animals, observing insects, supporting younger children, helping grandparents, making a model, managing a team of peers, belonging to a group or club, growing vegetables, writing a story or journal. These things will have happened unprompted, but so often point to future career paths
5. a questionnaire on communication styles may also be included.



How do we use the Assessment?

We submit the Parents' Questionnaire and our Assessment Report to the schools which we consider to be the best match for the child. The Assessment Report is useful to schools particularly if the child is not able to attend the schools for their own official Admissions Process. Often the children are assessed on set days between October and January in the year before the children enter the school. We provide these details to you in our Parents' Report.

The Assessment Report is an integral part of the Parents' Report. We make our recommendations to parents. We will advise which schools provide the challenge, opportunities and support to enable children to do their best. 'Achievement *with* wellbeing' are both at the heart of what we want for the children. It is for this reason that we are placing great emphasis on our Assessment.

Why do we, at Paths to Learning, assess all the children who want to study at an English school?

At Paths to Learning we have been concerned to see that international children are sometimes misplaced in a school, because of a lack of assessment or superficial understanding of their intelligence, achievements, skills and motivation:

- > their ability to speak English is not good enough for them to participate in lessons
- > they do not realise that they are expected to talk in lessons – English ways of learning are different from what the children have been used to
- > English culture is different from their own culture, so they do not adjust and settle into their new school;
- > they may not find understanding and celebration of their own culture
- > their families are unaware of the difficulties they are experiencing and unable to support them.

Our Assessment Report is submitted to the schools that we recommend to you, the parents. The schools will always want to meet the parents and the child who will join the school. Our Process ensures that you and the schools can make an informed and successful decision.

"Nathaniel was 10 when he undertook all the tasks in our Assessment Package. He had been home-schooled with three younger siblings, by his mother, in a rural part of Canada, some 30 miles from the nearest school. The family had moved to Oxford, so his father could complete his doctoral studies. Nathaniel was assessed in his Oxford home.

In the Process he described achievements that would not have been revealed in standard tests:



[1] As an 8-year-old his grandfather had given him five cows to care for. He would have to get up at 7.00am and feed them or take them out to graze. He could check their condition, and make sure they were back in the barn in the evening. This revealed a child with a keen sense of responsibility and discipline, recognising when he needed help and able to ask appropriate questions about the wellbeing of the cows. His grandfather was very pleased with the way he had demonstrated such care;

[2] with no reference to a guide sheet he made a crane with pulleys and levers from a box of random pieces of K'nex. This was not part of a kit, for which instructions were provided. His crane, and quick assembly of the parts, revealed a natural understanding of principles of engineering;

[3] as a voracious reader he chose an interesting fairy tale to read to us, and answer questions. Philosophical questions arising from the tale, were answered with a rich vocabulary and ability to reason.

The question arose: should Nathaniel continue to be home-schooled by his mother at their home in Oxford or go to a local maintained school from Year 6?

It was evident that Nathaniel had been very well taught by his mother. He was above the benchmark for his age. As the family had to return to Canada for harvest for two months it was thought best that he continued to be home-schooled for the rest of Year 6 and apply to a maintained school, to join in Year 7.”¹



¹ Nathaniel's mother



Ellie was 8 when she undertook all the tasks in our Assessment Package. We had been informed, by her parents, that she had remarkable skill in drawing. So, we asked her to illustrate a story that was read to her. There were 20 points that she could include in her illustration. The picture was well-proportioned and contained almost every point. It was evident that she had listened accurately and thought carefully as she drew. Her ability to answer philosophical questions arising out of the story and her reflective drawing revealed deep thought and an ability to capture her understanding, with accuracy.

We also saw how, on more than one occasion she went and had a quiet word with her mother, about the needs of one or other of her three brothers. Here was evidence of a young girl of sensitivity and awareness of others, with a compassionate heart.

It was evident that Ellie had had a good learning experience up to this point. Any routine assessment of numeracy and literacy would not have revealed these skills or attributes.

In going through the Assessment with Ellie she was greatly encouraged. Afterwards, she had a different perception of herself, which was not compared with her siblings. Her differences were strengths and she could have self-confidence.”²



Must my child undertake your complete Assessment?



No, but if he or she does, we have found that it is a highly effective and affirming tool to:

- * enable you and us to know your child
- * place your child in the best school
- * give your child a positive understanding of him or herself
- * help us to advise on what preparation needs to be made by you and your child for settling into an English school such as
 - > reading,
 - > writing,
 - > speaking and
 - > listening in English and
 - > cultural orientation.

Contact us at Paths to Learning by emailing felicitygunn@hotmail.com

² Ellie's mother
As at February 2022