



Carmelite House, 50 Victoria Embankment, London EC4Y 0DZ

## **Trials for *New GaPS***

## **Parent/Carer Information Sheet**

**13<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

Dear Parents/Carers,

Each year, your school conducts grammar, punctuation and spelling tests with their pupils to assess progress and to see whether their pupils are achieving at a similar level to other schools relevant to the pupils' ages. More importantly, these tests help teachers to see where there are gaps in their pupils' knowledge that need addressing in their teaching. During this school year, your school is taking part in a trial of the new edition of the assessments they use for this – the assessments are called 'GaPS'.

**What is the purpose of the trialling?** The Hodder Education Group is the business division of Hodder & Stoughton Limited, part of the Hachette UK Group of companies, and publishes the GaPS tests. At Hodder Education, we will use the test scores from pupils at schools taking part in the trial to create standardised scores that will be made available with the new assessment papers after the trial to help schools across the country to measure their pupils' progress. In order to create the standardised scores, age-standardised scores and GPS ages, we need a sample of at least 1000 pupils to sit every paper. Their results are aggregated (gathered together as a group) and anonymised (all names removed) and analysed to create these benchmarks. If we didn't trial the papers, we wouldn't be able to provide any of the standardisation data that schools use to measure progress.

**Why is my school being asked to take part?** Lots of schools across the country have been asked to take part so that we can be sure of a spread of schools that is representative of schools nationally.

**How frequently will pupils sit the papers?** Pupils will sit one GaPS paper each term in the academic year 2023-24.

**What about pupils with special needs who cannot access their year group's usual test papers?** We ask that schools make any necessary arrangements for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, as they would for any tests, at the school's discretion. Schools may choose for a child not to sit the test if they feel that it would discomfort the child in any way.

**What personal data will be required and for what purpose?** The school will provide their list of pupils who sit the tests, giving the pupils' forenames, surnames, their dates of birth, their year groups and sex. On the front of the test paper, pupils will fill in their forename and surname, date of birth and year group. This information is required in order for the markers to correctly allocate pupil scores and for us to report these back to your school. We then use the data to standardise and age-standardise the tests, and to provide aggregated male/female-specific data. Your school will also share with us the pupils' Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling National Test raw (ie total) scores at the end of the year in order for the scores from all the schools in the trials to be correlated with the GaPS test scores to provide performance indicators for schools when they use these tests going forward. This data collection and processing is in our legitimate interest of undertaking the analysis required to produce the standardised scores that will be available to schools using these tests in the future. Should you wish your school to withdraw your child's data from the study, please inform your child's teacher in writing within two weeks of receiving this letter.

**Who will be handling the data?** Hodder & Stoughton Limited (on behalf of its business division, *Hodder Education*) will process your child's data solely for the purposes of this project as outlined above. Our research partners are AlphaPlus (part of the AQA Group). AlphaPlus will provide us with services in respect of marking the test papers, collating the scores, data cleansing and question stats. We will share the data collected from your child with AlphaPlus for the purposes of this project, but we will not share the name of your child's school with AlphaPlus so your child will not be identifiable. The aggregated data from all the schools, with numeric codes instead of school names, will then be used by Hodder Education for statistical analysis and to produce the standardised measures and benchmarks. Following the finalised data analysis, AlphaPlus will delete all data and AlphaPlus will securely destroy the test papers. The data will not be used for any other purposes than those detailed here and we will not share the data with any other third parties. Hodder & Stoughton Limited will retain anonymised data (i.e. pupil names removed) – pupil numeric code, date of birth and sex – for administration purposes after the trial for as long as the new assessment papers are

published by us. The data will be deleted by Hodder & Stoughton Limited when the assessment papers are no longer available. We will ensure that all the data that is submitted to us remains secure.

**Will pupils' data/school data be published anywhere following the trial?** All data will be aggregated and anonymised so that when information is published about the standardisation process, no school or individual child will be identifiable. The information published will be charts of scores to help schools to measure their pupils' progress.

***We are very grateful to your school and its pupils for helping with this project.  
If you have any further questions, please discuss these with your child's teacher.***