# FAQs: Changes to Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Progression Tests and Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Checkpoint reporting – Updated February 2024

**What has changed with the reporting of Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Progression Tests and Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Checkpoint since 2022?**

In January 2023, we introduced new performance bands for both Progression Tests and Cambridge Checkpoint. The new performance bands are as follows, with the lowest achievable performance band learners can attain being 'Basic' and the highest 'Outstanding'.

| Performance band |
| --- |
| Unclassified |
| Basic |
| Aspiring |
| Good |
| High |
| Outstanding |

From the May 2023 Cambridge Checkpoint series, in addition to the new performance bands, all primary and lower secondary reports show a score on a 0 to 50 scale (rather than a score on the legacy 0.0 to 6.0 scale). These changes apply to the curriculum codes shown below.

| Programme | Subject | 2023 syllabus code |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cambridge Primary | Mathematics | 0096 |
| | Science | 0097 |
| | English | 0058 |
| | English as a Second Language | 0057 |
| Cambridge Lower Secondary | Mathematics | 0862 |
| | Science | 0893 |
| | English | 0861 |
| | English as a Second Language | 0876 |

**Do these changes apply to Cambridge Primary Checkpoint and Lower Secondary Checkpoint Global Perspectives™?**

The performance bands and reporting scale changes do not apply to Cambridge Primary Global Perspectives Checkpoint (0838) or Cambridge Lower Secondary Global Perspectives Checkpoint (1129).

**What is in the Cambridge Checkpoint reports?**

Cambridge Checkpoint reports provide information at the following levels:

- subject, strand, sub-strand and question

- centre, teaching group and learner.

In the Cambridge Checkpoint result reports, we report scores using the 0 to 50 scale. The results at sub-strand and question level are reported as raw (unscaled) marks. We also report the new performance bands, at subject level, and these are shown on each learner's Statement of Achievement.

In the Cambridge Checkpoint results report section 'Cambridge Checkpoint scores over time', there are bar charts showing average Cambridge Checkpoint scores for your school by subject. The bar charts do not show results from Cambridge Checkpoint series prior to May 2023 because the May 2023 Cambridge Checkpoint series was the first time we assessed the new curriculum and the first time that we used the new Cambridge Checkpoint scale (0 to 50).

## Raw (unscaled) marks and standardised scores

Teacher and learners should be aware of the difference between raw (unscaled) marks and the standardised scores given in the Cambridge Checkpoint reports.

Raw marks are the marks achieved by the learner in the tests without any form of adjustments, e.g.:

- 27 marks out of a maximum of 40 marks on Cambridge Primary Checkpoint Science paper 1

- 15 marks out of a maximum of 40 marks on Cambridge Primary Checkpoint Science paper 2.

This learner has achieved a total subject raw mark of 42 marks out of a total of 80 marks. The Cambridge Checkpoint results reports show the raw marks achieved at test, strand, sub-strand and question level.

To determine a Cambridge Checkpoint score at subject level and strand level, we convert the raw marks achieved by the learner into standardised scores on the 0 to 50 scale using Rasch analysis. In this Cambridge Primary Checkpoint Science example, 42 raw marks are converted into a Cambridge Checkpoint score of around 33. The exact value depends on the difficulty of the test. The raw marks achieved in each strand are also converted into standardised Cambridge Checkpoint scores using Rasch analysis, e.g. Thinking and Working Scientifically 20; Biology 34; Chemistry 38; Physics 36; Earth and Space 30. The Cambridge Checkpoint subject score for a learner is not a simple average of their Checkpoint strand scores.

## Why do we have new performance bands for Cambridge Progression Tests and Cambridge Checkpoint?

Schools told us that using different approaches for Cambridge Checkpoint (0.0 to 6.0) and Progression Tests (Gold, Silver, Bronze) was confusing. We are now using the same set of performance bands for both tests.

Using the same performance bands for both tests means that schools can use their results from progression tests to help inform learners about their likely performance in Cambridge Checkpoint.

You will also be able to use the new performance bands to track the learners' progress more easily as they move from stage to stage on the Cambridge Pathway.

**When did these changes come into effect?**
The changes were introduced from January 2023 for the 2023 Cambridge Progression Tests and in June 2023 for Cambridge Checkpoint taken in May 2023.

# Cambridge Checkpoint

**How do the Cambridge Checkpoint scores relate to the performance bands?**
The table below shows the relationship between the Cambridge Checkpoint 0 to 50 scale and the performance bands. These changes apply from June 2023 for Cambridge Checkpoint tests taken in May 2023:

| Cambridge Checkpoint scores | Cambridge Checkpoint performance bands |
|---|---|
| 0 | Unclassified |
| 1 to 10 | Basic |
| 11 to 20 | Aspiring |
| 21 to 30 | Good |
| 31 to 40 | High |
| 41 to 50 | Outstanding |

On the 0 to 50 scale, the same score represents the same level of performance (skill, knowledge and understanding) in each subject. This means that learners who show similar levels of performance in each Cambridge Checkpoint subject can expect to achieve similar Cambridge Checkpoint scores and be classified in the same performance band for each subject.

**Is the score learners achieve on the 0 to 50 scale related to a percentage score?**
There is no simple relationship between the number of marks that learners achieve in their Cambridge Checkpoint tests and their Cambridge Checkpoint scores. The Cambridge Checkpoint score on the 0 to 50 scale does **not** represent half of the percentage raw score that the learner achieved in their Cambridge Checkpoint tests.

After the Cambridge Checkpoint papers have been marked, we use an established statistical technique called Rasch analysis to process the marks. This analysis produces a score on the Cambridge Checkpoint 0 to 50 scale which takes into account the difficulties of the questions. A learner's Cambridge Checkpoint score *is* related to the total number of marks they achieved, but the use of Rasch* means that the relationship is not a simple one.

A learner's percentage raw score increases in proportion to the number of raw marks they achieve in the test – a given change in raw marks (e.g. +3 marks) always corresponds to the same size of change in the percentage raw score (e.g. +2.7%). In contrast, a change of a given number of raw marks does not relate in a simple way to the change in the Cambridge Checkpoint score.

*Please ensure you're logged into the Cambridge Primary Support Site to view this link.

**How is a learner's raw mark related to their Cambridge Checkpoint score?**

Since there is no simple relationship between the number of marks that a learner achieves on their Cambridge Checkpoint tests and their Cambridge Checkpoint scores, it is not possible for schools to calculate Cambridge Checkpoint scores for their learners directly from the raw marks they achieved. To help schools relate learners' raw marks to their Cambridge Checkpoint scores, we have provided the thresholds (minimum raw marks) required to achieve each performance band in each subject on the Cambridge Checkpoint subject pages of the Cambridge Primary Support Site.

**Why do the performance bands correspond to different numbers of raw marks for different subjects?**

If you look at the thresholds (minimum raw marks) required to achieve each performance band provided on the Cambridge Primary Support Site, you will see that they are not the same for every subject – in some subjects more raw marks are needed to achieve a given performance band than in other subjects. They are also not the same for Cambridge Primary Checkpoint as they are for Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint.

Why is this? On the 0 to 50 Cambridge Checkpoint scale, the same Cambridge Checkpoint score represents the same level of performance (skill, knowledge and understanding) in each subject. Given how the different tests and mark schemes are designed, this means that demonstrating the attributes of, say, 'Good' may correspond to achieving more marks on the test in one subject than another.

An example showing this is the English as a Second Language tests. Learners need to achieve more raw marks to reach each performance band in English as a Second Language than they do in other subjects because the test includes some multiple-choice questions. More raw marks are needed to account for the fact that learners could achieve some marks just by guessing, rather than by showing the attributes of even the lowest 'Basic' performance band. In contrast, the Cambridge Checkpoint tests in English include testing productive writing. This is a challenging skill, especially for primary learners. As a result, it may be possible for learners to demonstrate the attributes associated with the 'Outstanding' performance band by achieving a much lower number of raw marks on the test.

**How are learners expected to progress along the Cambridge Pathway?**

We have designed the 0 to 50 scale so that learners who progress at the expected rate should achieve the same performance band at Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint as they achieved at Cambridge Primary Checkpoint. This can help teachers to monitor learners' progression through the Cambridge Pathway.

A further feature of the 0 to 50 scale relates to progression from Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint to Cambridge IGCSE™. In general learners who achieve:

- a 'Good' performance band at Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint would expect to achieve at Cambridge IGCSE grade C/4 standard

- an 'Outstanding' performance band at Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint would expect to achieve at Cambridge IGCSE grade A/7 standard.

This expected progression to Cambridge IGCSE is a progression 'on average' for all Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint learners. There will be some learners who make more progress than indicated by their Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint performance band and some learners who make less progress.

Many subjects are offered to learners at Cambridge IGCSE which are not assessed by Cambridge Checkpoint. Where the Cambridge IGCSE subject is less similar to a Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint subject, for example Cambridge IGCSE Art, there is much more uncertainty about expected progression from Cambridge Lower Secondary Checkpoint to Cambridge IGCSE.

At Cambridge we are continuing to research into how Cambridge Checkpoint can be used to predict performance at Cambridge IGCSE.

**How do I explain the Cambridge Checkpoint scores to parents?**
Schools can use this document provided by Cambridge* to help explain the Cambridge Checkpoint reporting to parents. Please ensure you're logged into the Cambridge Primary Support Site to view this link.

**What about Cambridge Checkpoint Global Perspectives?**
We assess Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Global Perspectives (0838 and 1129) by coursework which is marked internally by the school and moderated by Cambridge. The scheme of assessment is therefore very different from Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Checkpoints in Mathematics, Science, English and English as a Second Language.

Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Global Perspectives continues to be marked on the same 0 to 40 mark scale and continues to be reported against the same Gold, Silver and Bronze performance bands as in the past.

# Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Progression Tests

**How do marks on the Cambridge Progression Tests relate to the performance bands?**
The tables below show the minimum indicative percentage scores on the 2023 and 2024 Cambridge Progression Tests required to achieve each performance bands. The corresponding Cambridge Checkpoint scores for each performance band are included for reference.

**Cambridge Primary Progression Tests (2023 and 2024)**

| Performance band | Cambridge Checkpoint score (0 to 50) | Minimum percentage score on Cambridge Progression Tests | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Mathematics | Science | English | English as a Second Language |
| Basic | 1 to 10 | 10% | 15% | 10% | 20% |
| Aspiring | 11 to 20 | 15% | 25% | 20% | 40% |
| Good | 21 to 30 | 30% | 45% | 30% | 60% |
| High | 31 to 40 | 50% | 60% | 45% | 80% |
| Outstanding | 41 to 50 | 75% | 75% | 55% | 90% |

**Cambridge Lower Secondary Progression Tests (2023 and 2024)**

| Performance band | Cambridge Checkpoint score (0 to 50) | Minimum percentage score on Cambridge Progression Tests | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Mathematics | Science | English | English as a second language |
| Basic | 1 to 10 | 5% | 15% | 20% | 35% |
| Aspiring | 11 to 20 | 15% | 25% | 30% | 55% |
| Good | 21 to 30 | 25% | 40% | 40% | 75% |
| High | 31 to 40 | 45% | 55% | 50% | 85% |
| Outstanding | 41 to 50 | 70% | 70% | 60% | 95% |

The relationship between learners' percentage scores on the 2023 and 2024 Cambridge Progression Tests and performance bands is designed to align with the way the performance bands relate to achievement in Cambridge Checkpoint. This means that most learners who achieve a given band in their Cambridge Progression Tests are expected to achieve the same performance band in Cambridge Checkpoint.

For example, most learners achieving the performance band 'Good' in their Cambridge Progression Tests would expect to achieve the performance band 'Good' in Cambridge Checkpoint.

We therefore expect performance in Cambridge Progression tests to be indicative of learners' performance in Cambridge Checkpoint. However, not all learners will achieve the same performance band in Cambridge Checkpoint as they achieve in their progression tests. There are several reasons for this, such as:

- When the tests are taken – learners may perform better or worse depending on when in their learning journey the tests are taken and how well they have prepared for the tests.
- Test administration – Cambridge Progression Tests and Cambridge Checkpoint may be administered differently in your school.
- Approach to marking – Cambridge Progression Tests are marked by teachers, where there is no standardisation between schools, whereas Cambridge Checkpoint is marked by standardised Cambridge examiners,
- Variations in test difficulty at different stages – the minimum percentage scores are indications which can be broadly applied to all stages in a subject, whereas the specific tests at each stage may show some variations in difficulty.
- Approach to scoring – Cambridge Checkpoint scores are calculated using Rasch analysis. This is **not** the same as the percentage raw mark the learner achieves on the test which is used to convert the Cambridge Progression Test results into performance bands.

## Why do the performance bands correspond to different percentage scores for different subjects?

We have simplified our reporting by changing to a single set of performance bands. The performance bands apply both to Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary Progression Tests and to Cambridge Checkpoint and have the same meaning at both levels. The single set of performance bands helps teachers predict learners' likely performance in Cambridge Checkpoint based on their progression test results.

We have aligned the performance bands and 0 to 50 Cambridge Checkpoint scales between subjects so that the same 0 to 50 Cambridge Checkpoint score represents the same level of performance (skill, knowledge and understanding) in each subject at Cambridge Checkpoint. This is described above. The new alignment between subjects is reflected in the Cambridge Progression Tests too because the test results are linked to the same performance bands.

In summary, learners who show similar levels of performance (skill, knowledge and understanding) in Cambridge Progression Tests in each subject would expect to achieve the same performance band in each subject. This will not correspond to the same percentage mark in each set of subject tests because the same level of performance corresponds to different marks in the different subjects.

## Why might Cambridge Progression Test thresholds change in the future?

The minimum percentage scores ('thresholds') required to achieve each of the new performance bands for the Cambridge Progression Tests are based on the difficulty of the tests. Easier tests will have higher thresholds than harder tests. We review the thresholds each year to make sure that they are still appropriate and that the standard is maintained. We will publish new thresholds to schools if this review process shows that the existing thresholds are no longer appropriate.