VCM (VESPARCH Capability Measure) - School Guidance Manual - October 2019

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1. Introduction

This manual is intended for use by schools when delivering VCM (VESPARCH Capability Measure) to determine the verbal and spatial capabilities of children in Years 3 or 4 and 6 or 7, and to identify children who may be underachieving relative to their potential.

Further information and registration forms are available on the VCM website: https://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/vcm/

2. School registration

Schools can register by completing and submitting a Registration form, which is located in the "Related Links" section of the VCM website. The school will then be issued with a VCM username, password, and a template for providing pupil data.

3. Pupil data

The pupil data template will be password protected for security reasons. Once the school has completed the template, the file should be sent to the Vesparch team.

The quiz can be run without completing the Attainment Data section of the template. If this section is completed prior to administering the quiz, please follow the instructions below:

- For Years 3, 4, and 6, please contact the Vesparch team to discuss the most suitable data for comparison.

- For Year 7, please provide the children's Key Stage 2 SATS overall English scores.

The pupil data will then be uploaded on to the system and the school will receive confirmation that they can start using VCM.

4. VCM set-up in school: PCs, headphones, and internet access

VCM can be delivered to individual children or on a whole-class basis. The following checklist should be consulted in each school prior to administering the quiz:

- Ensure that each child is provided with a PC or laptop and a set of working headphones that are plugged in to each computer.

- Ensure that each PC or laptop has internet access as the quiz is accessed online using mainstream browsers. If the quiz does not work, try to open the quiz using Google Chrome.

- The school internet must be able to cope with the quantity of children that are taking VCM alongside other usage in the school. Check that the school internet firewall enables access

to VCM by viewing the "VCM demo", which is located in the "Related Links" section of the VCM website, and consult the school IT team if there are any issues.

How to login to the quiz:

- On each PC or laptop, open a web browser and type the following address: https://vesparch.org.uk . Login to VCM using the school's username and password.

- Select the appropriate quiz language.

- Click the speaker icon to check that sound is coming through the headphones.

- Click Select quiz and year group.

- There are two parts of the quiz: **Verbal** and **Spatial**. The children need to complete both parts. To minimise the risk of copying, alternate set-up on adjacent PCs to start with either the Verbal or the Spatial quiz.

- Select either Verbal or Spatial for the appropriate year group.

5. Briefing the children

VCM should be positioned as a fun "quiz" rather than a "test" to ensure the children are as relaxed as possible. The following introduction should be read to the children before starting the quiz:

- Instructions, questions, and answers in the quiz will be read to you through headphones.

- There is no advantage in finishing quickly and you can come back to finish the quiz at a later point if you run out of time.

- Listen carefully to the questions and answer options, which will be delivered in full before you are able to select an answer.

- Once an answer has been selected, you will be taken to the next question and will not be able to return to change a previous answer.

- You can click the speaker icon to have the questions or instructions repeated.

- There are two parts of the quiz: one involving words and another involving shapes.

- When you start each section of the quiz, you will be given 5 practice questions. If you do not get the right answer, you will receive feedback through the headphones so that you fully understand how the quiz works and the nature of the questions. You may find that the feedback is slow, but please be patient and listen carefully.

- You may raise your hand if you do not understand a word that is being used.

- You should not talk to each other during the quiz.

- When you are sure that you have finished, you should either read quietly or return to your classroom.

- You do not need to worry about the quiz as it is not testing what you know.

6. Taking the quiz

Once the children have understood the procedure, they will be asked to select their name from the drop-down menu. If they accidentally select the wrong name, they can press the back arrow to choose the correct one. They can then press Start to begin the quiz.

Children in Years 6 or 7 can take both the Verbal and Spatial sections of the quiz in succession. When they reach the end of the first part, they can press Take next quiz to proceed with the second section.

Children in Years 3 or 4 can take both parts of the quiz, but they should be provided with a short break in between the two sections. For example, the children could receive the Verbal section in the morning and the Spatial section in the afternoon.

If the children need to stop at any point during the quiz, the system will retain their previous answers and start from the question they were last working on.

7. Monitoring the children's progress

Each child's progress in the quiz can be checked for each part by logging into VCM, selecting Verbal or Spatial for the appropriate year group, and clicking the Select Candidate drop-down. If a child's name...

  … is no longer in the drop-down list, it means that they have completed that specific quiz.

  … has an * next to it, it means the child has started, but has not completed the quiz.

  … is on the list without an *, it means that they have not started the quiz.

It is important to check both the Verbal and Spatial sections as a child may have completed one part of the quiz, but still needs to complete the second.

8. Quiz results

Once all of the children have completed both parts of the quiz, a Results Report will be accessible to teachers for each year group at https://vesparch.org.uk/teacher . Login using the school's username and password for VCM.

9. Follow-up test

If schools provide a measure of the children's attainment, the Results Report will identify which children are underperforming relative to their potential.

For any children that are identified as achieving less than their potential, the school can request a brief follow-up test. This test can be delivered by the school or the researcher to identify possible causes of the children's underperformance, including reading, short-term memory, and comprehension of complex grammar.

There is a short video on the VCM website, which shows the follow-up test being delivered to a child.

10. Troubleshooting / Issues during testing

Child selects the wrong name

If a child accidentally selects the wrong name, they can press the back arrow. This will take them to the previous screen and they can re-select their name.

Word definitions

During the Verbal test, the children can ask for a word definition. Please use the "Word definitions" document in the "Related links" section of the VCM website. This should minimise the possibility that the definition provided reveals the correct answer.

Machine shuts down

If a PC or laptop shuts down due to insufficient battery or a failure in the power supply, switch the child to a different PC and login again. The system will retain their previous answers and allow them to start the quiz from the question they were on.

Sound

If a child says that the sound has stopped:

1. Check that the sound is working on the PC or laptop

2. Check that the sound is working on the headphone wire (if it has a separate volume control)

3. Check that the headphone wire is fully plugged into the machine

If there is still no sound, change the headphones or PC, as appropriate.

Note: Children often say that there is no sound during the Spatial quiz. In most cases this is because the actual quiz questions do not have sound unless requested by the child by clicking the speaker icon.

Frozen screen

If the screen freezes, select F5 to refresh and the question should start again. This can take a few minutes and the screen may turn white or black before refreshing. If this does not work, reload the website https://vesparch.org.uk and login again. The test will start at the point where they had stopped.

Lost internet / website

If the internet access or website fails, select F5 to refresh the page or reload the website https://vesparch.org.uk . If the internet strength is too low, switch the child to another computer and login again.

Questions skip

Occasionally a child may ask if they can return to the previous question because the test moved on before they could provide an answer. Reassure them that the quiz only moves on once an answer has been selected and remind them that they cannot return to change a previous answer.

The sound and screen are not synchronised

If the audio and visual timings of the quiz are out of sync, select F5 to refresh the page and start the question again.

All of the options are highlighted

In part two of the quiz, all four answer options are highlighted in grey to indicate that an answer has been selected. This confirms that an answer has been recorded and prevents other children from seeing the answer.

Children next to each other are on the same question

Alternate set-up on adjacent PCs to start with either the Verbal or Spatial quiz so that the children next to each other are completing different questions. As children work at different speeds, there is a chance that they could end up on the same question as their neighbour. If this happens, stand behind or next to the children to ensure they are not looking at each other's screen. If there is still a risk of copying, move one child to a different computer.