

# PiRA and PUMA Case Study

Termly maths and reading tests that allow you to reliably benchmark performance and track progress against national averages.

The International School at Park City,  
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## Key Outcomes

1. British curriculum centres agree that the standardised tests help to benchmark progress with schools in the United Kingdom.
2. Staff members feel that the tests are flexible and can be used at multiple points throughout the year.
3. International schools find that interpreting the data has helped develop the wider school curriculum.

The school is a large four form entry British International School on the outskirts of the city, teaching early years through to Sixth Form. The school was founded in 2011.

*“It gives us a rigorous benchmark, and it’s very quick and easy. As soon as you’ve got that data into MARK you can interpret it in so many different ways. It’s ideal for any school that wants to have really relevant data to use to improve teaching and learning to raise standards.”*

Rebecca Findlay, Head of Primary



## How are you using this resource?

The way we use PiRA and PUMA has changed since the lockdown due to Covid, as we weren't able to administer our summer tests at the normal time due to school closures. Instead, we used them to establish a baseline when the children returned to school in August, because we hadn't seen them physically in nearly 6 months. We're using the tests to track attainment and progress between their autumn and summer tests. Currently, we use them with Years 2-6 but this year we are going to extend this to include the summer tests in Year 1.

## Why did you choose this resource?

I've used PiRA and PUMA in my previous school, and for us there's a certain level of rigour in PiRA and PUMA that we were looking for. As a British international school, we are also looking to benchmark ourselves against national standards in the UK. As you know, PiRA and PUMA give you that benchmark and the gap analysis allows us to look at where the children's gaps are and to measure progress between the two assessment points.

We opted for the paper versions rather than the interactive tests for several reasons, but mostly as our students are used to writing on paper. For teachers marking the paper tests it gives them an insight into where their students went wrong in the process. With that comes some manual input of the scores into MARK which can be time-consuming, but we have a good team who understand their role and part of the process. We took a lot of time before launching to go through PiRA and PUMA with our year leaders, class teachers and classroom assistants so that everyone understood why we were putting resources into this project. This isn't just a pencil and paper data exercise; it's a really useful tool and I was amazed at the positive reception we had from our team.



## Is the resource flexible? How?

Yes, we like that we can set our own dates for when we run the tests. Being out in Malaysia we had a delay in delivery when we first started, but the standardised scores still worked fine for us. When we came back to the new school year in August, we were able to use our summer tests as a baseline and we can use as much or as a little data as we want. It's not like the SATs where you get one week and you have to do all of your testing in that time. Although we're benchmarking, we're not being externally moderated, so we can do it as and when we feel is right.

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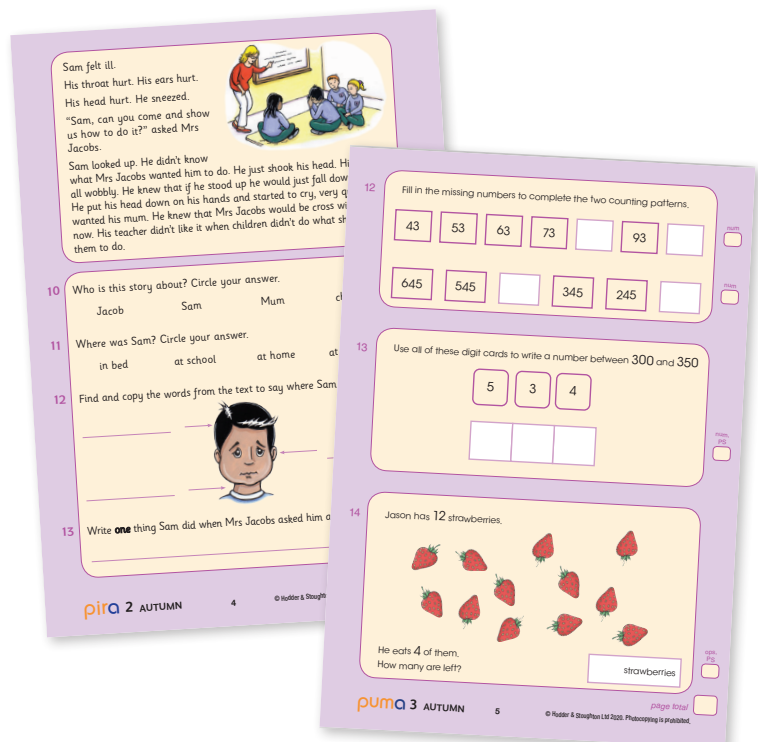
Rebecca Findlay, Head of Primary

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## How has it helped to direct your teaching plans?

First of all there's been a development of our curriculum needs, as the team has learned how to really interpret the data from the tests and analyse the gaps across the whole school, and that's had a real impact on how we're developing our curriculum. For example, in reading we've developed our teacher assessment based on a lot of what we've learned from PiRA. For maths, we're teaching a Mastery curriculum and we're using PUMA as a good overall checkpoint to see that we are covering all the areas and if there is one particular strand that is weaker than the others. We're then able to focus more on that strand in our overall curriculum approach. For example, we identified geometry as a weakness for us, and when you look at the mastery curriculum, geometry is often taught at the end of the term, and there is sometimes a risk of it being rushed at the end of the year. We've re-evaluated our curriculum maps as a result to make sure that doesn't happen anymore. Another thing that we really like about PiRA and PUMA is that they pick up on prior knowledge, so we're actually testing for retention of that knowledge as well as progress which is really important for us.



## What did you not like about it?

We like PiRA and PUMA a lot, the only issue is that it is sometimes anglicized. For example, PUMA refers to pounds and pence. It's a hundred pence to the pound and a hundred cents to the ringgit, which is similar enough for our teaching purposes, but it is a funny thing with British international schools where we teach UK money yet these children may never go the UK. With PiRA as well there are some colloquialisms that some ESL children won't have come across, but it doesn't mean that they're not good readers and have good comprehension. If we could have our perfect test it would be a little more generic and internationally focused.

## Would you recommend this resource to other schools?

I would! It gives us a rigorous benchmark, and it's very quick and easy. As soon as you've got that data into MARK you can interpret it in so many different ways. It's not just an exam or a test, it goes much deeper than that. It's ideal for any school that wants to have really relevant data to use to improve teaching and learning to raise standards.

## Any other comments?

RS Assessment has done really well at creating this resource, it's clear that a lot of thought and effort has gone into it. There are a few technical problems now and again but it works, and it does what we need it to do. We're hoping to build on this year on year and continue to use it successfully. We've just ordered the new editions and are keen to explore the new content.

## We're here to help

For more information on PiRA and PUMA, speak to our International Assessment Resource Manager,  
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