Academic performance statement 2026-27

EMBLEY'S MISSION & VALUES

Embley is an academically selective school which is purposefully suited to the challenges of the modern world – the deliberate purposeful formation of young people is our aim, helping them become the best versions of themselves. Our core values of ambition, belief and compassion, underpin all that we do.

Ambition

Embley dares to want more for its children. The world is challenging and changing, and our task is to ensure that every young person leaves Embley with the tools to make progress a reality.

Belief

We are humble and hungry: humble enough to pause and reflect, hungry enough to act ambitiously to make a difference, while having an appropriate and authentic sense of self.

Compassion

We are a community that cares. The world needs more compassion at its heart, and that begins at schools like ours where we help children appreciate that the world does not stop at the end of our own experiences; where they don't think less of themselves but think of themselves less.

ACADEMIC APPROACH

Great teachers are the heartbeat of Embley. No grandeur of place or sophistication of facility can replace meaningful relationships in the classroom where our teachers spark interest and intrigue.

We have a constant desire for improvement. Our aim is to 'be better', using the latest research and resources with a commitment to the core principles of learning. The highest levels of achievement are regularly and impressively hit, but they are the result of progress, not the better of it. Progress *is* achievement. But if children get everything right in life, they are often in the wrong place. So, we get into the trenches with the children when the going gets tough.

We have all the rigour, all the achievement, but none of that particular brand of unnecessary pressure that blights a childhood without merit. Some pressure is a necessary part of life - it is healthy, it drives us on - but it must be used with consideration. We will know every child's progress to the smallest detail without ever letting it loom over them.

Embley uses a variety of internal and external assessments to inform teaching and learning. These assessments are intended to facilitate student progress and the evaluation of that progress against national norms.

TRACKING PROGRESS

From Year 1 through to Year 13, we operate a rigorous back-office function that tracks each child's progress against their potential. In Early Years Foundation Stage, we track progress against the EYFS Framework. Statutory summative assessments take place: progress checks at aged two, Reception baseline assessment using formative teacher observation and judgement at the start of the year, working towards completion of the EYFS Profile at the end of the year.

Prep School

Our focus in Prep School is on purposeful and progress driven assessment. We achieve this by using cognitive data alongside attainment data to track potential as well as knowledge and understanding.

Year 3 and 5 pupils sit a cognitive ability test which measures underlying potential rather than what a child has been taught. Alongside this, we measure pupil attainment in English and Maths, term by term, across all year groups. We build a picture which allows us to plan for the individual and prioritise pupils reaching *their own* potential.

Year 1 to 6 take a baseline test in English and Maths at the start of the academic year and a test which measures progress against these benchmarks at the end of the year.

Our aim is for at least 20% of pupils to be working at greater depth in Key Stage 1 and at least 30% in Key Stage 2 by the end of the year. We also aim for all pupils to be at the expected standard for their chronological age by the end of the academic year.

Senior School & Sixth Form

As students join Embley Senior School in Year 7 to 9 they sit a 'MidYIS' test which measures underlying potential rather than what the students have been taught. These results are submitted to Durham University as part of a long-term project that processes over 481,000 MidYis assessments each year. Over the last 25 years, hundreds of thousands of students' test scores have been compared with their GCSE results which allows Durham to provide statistical predictions for each child, benchmarked against other children. Year 12 'ALIS' assessments operate in a similar way with the assessment providing an objective perspective of students' strengths and weaknesses and grades are calculated at the start of Year 12 and their two-year A Level programme.

We use our student data from Durham to create 'swarms' which are pictorial representations of a cohort's performance (gap analyses) plotting every pupil and their peers. Using our swarms, we monitor every student's progress at regular intervals against their predictions and against their peers. We then put in place targeted challenge or support mechanisms to improve performance.

GCSE and A Level public exam results are sent to Durham University and a 'value added' score is calculated which analyses the difference between the predicted and actual results. An 'average' score would gain an overall value added score of zero, while a good school might expect an average uplift of a significant proportion of a grade per student.

Over time value added measures have shown that students who attend Embley consistently gain up to a whole grade above that which they may have achieved had they studied elsewhere.

2025-26 NURSERY & PREP ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Maths Attainment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 6 Nationally
Working at greater depth	42%	78%	16%	41%	59%	31%	26%
Working at expected standard or above	100%	89%	74%	82%	91%	94%	74%

Reading Attainment	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 6 Nationally
Working at greater depth	42%	44%	29%	41%	30%	58%	33%
Working at expected standard or above	100%	100%	81%	94%	88%	94%	75%

2025-26 GCSE & A LEVEL RESULTS – HIGHLIGHTS

GCSE

- Many students gained at least one and some gaining two grades above their baseline GCSE predictions.
- Drama, Geography, Mathematics, Music and Physical Education showed significant value added, showing the teaching added significantly to student outcomes.
- 52% of students in Mathematics achieved a grade 9 to 7.
- 92% of students achieved grade 4 and above in English and Maths.

A Level

- Value added puts us in the top 1% of schools in England.
- Biology, Business, Geography and Physical Education were in the top 5% of value added in the country.
- 100% of Students achieving A*-B in Art, Business and Geography

GCSE & A LEVEL RESULTS – SIX-YEAR SUMMARY

GCSE grade (%)	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
9-7 (A*-A equivalent)	34	42	25.3	45	60	52	31.1
9-4 (A*-C equivalent)	95	97	90	98	99	99.6	91

A Level grade (%)	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
A*-A	36	27.8	16.3	41	56	56	25.2
A*-C	86	76	80	79	99	98	75.5
A*-E	100	98	98.4	100	100	100	97.5

2020-21: A Level and GCSE exams were cancelled in the summers of 2020 and 2021 due to Covid and grades were based on teacher and centre assessed grades. For these years, Embley followed a robust and evidence-based process and submitted grades to the exam regulator, Ofqual, for statistical standardisation and modelling.

2022: Public exams returned. To recognise the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic, Ofqual put in place a package of measures to support students. This includes some changes to coursework, a choice of content in some subjects, formulae and equation sheets in Maths and Science and the publication of advance information about some of the topics that would be in the exams.

2023: The Government brought back public exam grading in line with pre-pandemic levels of 2019. Nationally, there was a steep drop in top grades compared to 2022 and the proportion of students achieving top marks for GCSE at independent schools across the country fell from 2019. This was also the first time that the cohort of A Level students would have sat public exams (with GCSE exams in 2021 being cancelled) while a large proportion of the Senior School foundation years in Key Stage 3 for the 2023 GCSE cohort were affected.

2024 onwards: Sees a return to normal assessment, continued growth, and improvement, with grades and achievement surpassing those from 2019, the last year before the pandemic.

A LEVEL LEAVER DESTINATIONS

Over 90% of students have gained entry to their UK universities of choice (remaining 10% of leavers are on gap year apprenticeships or in full time employment); 50% of those have places to study at Russell Group universities including the University of Cambridge, University of Southampton, University of Bath, University of Exeter, Manchester University, Loughborough University and Queens University Belfast.

Reflecting their individual aims and ambitions, they go on to read a wide range of subjects including Marine Biology with Oceanography, Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Biology, Computer Science, Relations and Conflict Studies, Fine Art, Accounting and Finance.

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