



Entry into Grammar School

A Guide for Parents

Taking the 11+ test

Those children whose parents want to be considered for grammar school entry take the 11+ tests in October. There are two test papers lasting 50 minutes each. There are 80 questions; each carries 1 mark. All the questions are verbal reasoning questions in multiple choice format and the answer sheet is 'read' by computer. They are not related to the National Curriculum.

How many children qualify?

For entry, the minimum qualifying score is 121. About 30% of those children who take the test gain a place at grammar school, with another 4% getting there on appeal. Gaining 121 does not guarantee a place because it depends upon the order of preferences on your application and if they are oversubscribed.

When will you know the test results?

You will be sent a letter (addressed to you, not your child!) at the end of November giving you the test scores and explaining whether this is a qualifying score for entry to grammar school. Be sensitive to your child when you receive it—it is confidential and should not be used as a comparison between children.

Allocating Places

The admission authorities tell the LEA who can be offered places. Where a school is oversubscribed, admission rules apply giving preference to those living in the catchment area and siblings of existing pupils. Since the introduction of the Slough unitary authority, our catchment area has decreased resulting in many of our pupils coming from outside of catchment. Where more than one of the schools you have listed can offer places, then only your highest preference will do so. Each parent is then informed of the offer which is then kept for you and the lower places are offered to someone else. This process is repeated until no more places can be offered. If you cannot be offered a place at any of the schools on your list then the home LEA will offer a place at the nearest available school.

What happens in the autumn term?

The 'parents' guide' is sent to parents who then attend open evenings at the secondary schools. Those children that are entered for the 11+ tests are tested and results are released at the end of November. Parents fill in ONE secondary application form with their preferences and return the form to their home LEA by the deadline (3rd week in October in Bucks).

What happens in the spring term?

The allocation process happens and the LEA tells you which school your child has been allocated at the beginning of March (offering each child only one place). You decide whether to accept the place and/or ask for an appeal and/or go on the waiting list for a higher preference.

What happens in the summer term?

In the summer term if the LEA can offer any late places they will do so, then children attend the induction day at their new secondary school. Parents can appeal for a place at their preferred school.

How to list your preferences

If you live in Bucks you complete the Bucks form, other LEAs have their own forms. On the Bucks form you can list up to 6 preferences. You rank your list in preference order putting your highest preference first. Include all of your preferences on the form (grammar, upper and comprehensive, but not independent) even those outside of your LEA.

You should put them in your real order of preference because each LEA will try to offer the highest preference possible in the process. If two schools on your preference list can offer a place then the LEA will use the order of this list to decide which school to offer (even if one is in a LEA outside Bucks).

The LEAs share information about which schools are listed (but not where you have ranked them). Each admissions authority will apply their own subscription rules to all children who have listed their school (all preferences). This means that each school you apply to will look at your application separately. The schools do not know about your preference order and will not be told before allocation. Putting a school further down your list of preferences does not reduce the likelihood of a place, except that you will not receive it if a higher preference has a place to offer. Put the schools in your real order of preference!

If your child is unwell and misses an 11+ test

Children should NOT sit the test if they are unwell (even if they want to!). Children will have an opportunity in school to take tests later, but the school and the LEA will want the tests to be taken as soon as possible. The Headteacher will give you notice of the new test date for your child.

How to appeal

You need to discuss your child's case with their Headteacher. The Independent Appeal Panel will usually expect a report from the Headteacher in a standard format. All Headteachers will complete the form for you and will give their professional judgement, which may be that your child would not be appropriately educated in a grammar school. If you want to go ahead with an appeal you should complete a parents' appeal application form.

Preparing for a selection Appeal

The selection appeal begins in January. The Independent Appeal Panel will want to know of any reasons why your child may not have performed as well as you expected and about other academic evidence to show a grammar school would be appropriate. You should include any social, medical or language reasons. You should think about any exceptional circumstances that may affect your child's performance.

Most important things to remember!

- ✓ Fill in your home LEA's application form
- ✓ Send it in by the national deadline
- ✓ Put your preferences in their real order!
- ✓ Be realistic about where your child will gain a place
- ✓ Visit the school and make up your own mind