



The Mall School



Pre-tests – a Guide for Parents

What are pre-tests?

Pre-tests are set by some independent senior schools, ahead of the 13+ Common Entrance exam. These tests help determine a pupil's suitability for entry. Based on these scores, the schools make their offers, conditional on good performance at Common Entrance. A pre-test is a competition against all the other candidates who apply.

The purpose of the tests is to understand potential, rather than just pure academic ability. Because of this, pre-tests cannot strictly be revised for and no specific preparation is available or recommended. However, we try to obtain sample material for boys to get used to the format of the tests set by the school they are applying for.

For parents, pre-tests can help to guide more realistic expectations of their child's likelihood of gaining entry into their preferred school at 13+ and, if necessary, to widen the choice to include schools which are more suited to their ability.

What subjects are pupils tested on?

Primarily, these are: English, Mathematics, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning although this is dependent on each senior school. The Pre-tests can be taken as a paper based assessment or as a computer based adaptive test. Some schools choose to create their own tests but maintain the same selection of subjects. Many schools have signed up for the ISEB Common Pre-Test (written by CEM), these are online and adaptive tests for Verbal Reasoning, Non-Verbal Reasoning, English and Mathematics.

How long are the tests?

The duration of tests compiled solely for a senior school is determined by that senior school but they are generally 45minutes to an hour for each test.

The ISEB Common Pre-Tests are in a multiple-choice format and take about two-and-a-half hours to complete; the tests can be taken together or at separate times either at The Mall or at the senior school for which your son is entered.

How can pupils prepare for pre-tests?

We prepare boys for the reasoning tests, while their normal class work in English and Maths prepares them for those parts of the pre-test. Where available, we also use past 11+ papers for practice and other suitable 11+ revision material. We use the InCAS computer based adaptive test (also written by CEM) to track pupils each year which gives the boys an opportunity to complete a series of tests that reflects the Pre-Test style.

Will the boys have an interview?

A few schools include an interview – if parents warn us of the date of an interview the Headmaster or a senior member of staff will conduct a practice for the individual boy a few days before the real interview. The School is not always directly informed about such interviews, so we rely on parents to tell us about them. At the beginning of the spring term we invite an external consultant to interview all the boys. The consultant will deliver instant feedback to the boys and to the Assistant Head (Academic). Senior staff will then follow up these notes with a couple of further sessions with your son before his interview.

Will senior schools ask for a reference?

All senior schools ask for a confidential reference about a boy from the Headmaster which will indicate if he believes the right choice of school has been made. This is particularly with regard to the level of pass required at Common Entrance and does underline the need for parents and the School to be realistic as well as hopeful about an individual boy's chances. The reference also includes information about a boy's interests and achievements in other areas apart from the academic. At the end of each term form tutors send home a Record of Achievement form for parents and boys to complete which lists a boy's interests and achievements for the previous term. The Record of Achievement also includes details of parental involvement with the School. The Headmaster uses this information when completing the confidential references to senior schools.

How many schools should we register for?

Many London parents are putting their son's name down for several schools at once – which goes some way to explaining the competition for places. It is quite hard to opt for just one school in such a climate and many parents are prepared to pay several registration fees to create a 'safety net'. In practice, however, there comes a moment in Year 8 when the School has to declare which senior school is to mark the Common Entrance papers – they can only go to one school. Ideally we should be in complete agreement during the course of Year 7 at the latest and then there should be no surprises. We are able to do this as the pre-tests for KCS Wimbledon, Hampton and St George's are in January of Year 6, although some senior schools – including Hampton and St George's – offer a second opportunity to sit their entrance exams in Year 7.

Is there any provision for Special Educational Needs?

Boys who have an educational psychologist's assessment might be eligible for additional time in pre-tests and at Common Entrance. For more information about this please contact the School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Mrs Wright.

What happens with the results of the ISEB Common Pre-Test?

Once the boys have completed their online test the marking and publication of their results will be done electronically. Each boy has a Standard Age Score (SAS) which is based on the number of questions answered correctly; the score is adjusted for age and placed on a scale which makes a comparison with a standardisation sample taken from the independent schools sector; the average is 100. The reports will show individual stanine, percentile rank and group rank scores, together with mean SASs. The senior schools will have access to these results. If your son has been registered at a number of schools where they take the Common Pre-Test your son will only need to sit the test once and the results will be shared to those senior schools by ISEB.

Will my son receive more homework?

The homework schedule for Year 6 has been adapted to allow more time for English and Maths. On these evenings there will be no other homework set so the boys will be able to have complete focus on one subject. This will also allow enough time for any practice paper to be completed.



ST PAUL'S SCHOOL

Est. 1509

Pre-Test	<p>Boys will take the Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB) Common Pre-Tests at The Mall School, testing them in English, Maths and Reasoning. These will take place between October or November of Year 6.</p> <p>A Headmaster's report will be sent covering character, academic strengths and interests. Parents and schools will be informed in mid-December of the boys invited to interview.</p>
Interview	<p>Interviews take place between January and July of Year 6. Boys take two 15 minute papers, one in English and one in Mathematics. When they have completed these, boys meet with a senior member of teaching staff who will spend 20 minutes talking to them about their academic studies.</p>
Offer	<p>Based on the results and the interview, St Paul's will contact parents within three weeks of the interview to let you know the decision. This will be one of three outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A place on the Main List. A conditional offer.• A place on the Reserve List. Once the deadline for the acceptance of Main List offers has passed the Reserve List will be reviewed. An up-to-date report from the Head Teacher will be requested and some boys may be moved to the Main List.• We are unable to offer a place at the school.
Expectations	<p>Boys must achieve a minimum of 70% in each subject at Common Entrance.</p>



REED'S

School

Pre-Test	<p>Boys will be required to sit the pre-test held two-and-a-half years before their proposed date of entry.</p> <p>The pre-test consists:</p> <p>English paper (60 minutes) will be in two parts, a Comprehension and a piece of Creative Writing.</p> <p>Mathematics paper (50 minutes) testing numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages and ratios, basic algebra, data handling and problem solving.</p> <p>Verbal Reasoning tests (50 minutes) are 11+ multiple-choice papers</p> <p>Past test papers are not published.</p>
Interview	<p>Boys will have a short interview where they will be able to talk about themselves and their interests. A confidential report from the candidate's current school will also be obtained.</p>
Offer	<p>Based on the results of the Reed's pre-test and the report from the prospective pupil's current school conditional offers are made by the Headmaster in early February.</p>
Expectations	<p>Those who pass the Pre-test will then be required to take Common Entrance and achieve a minimum 60% average on the 'qualifying papers': Mathematics, English, Science and French (or another foreign language). Previous school reports are also taken into consideration.</p>



St George's
WEYBRIDGE

Pre-Test	<p>Boys will be required to sit the pre-test in January of Year 6, two calendar years before entry. Parents will need to stipulate before the examination that the application is for 13+. The assessment is in: Verbal reasoning, Non-verbal reasoning, Mathematics and English (assessing extended writing, comprehension and technical skills).</p> <p>The English paper involves an extended writing piece and the Maths paper tests key skills on numbers and algebra. Registration must take place before the last day of the November preceding the test.</p> <p>A child failing to gain an offer at 11+ can re-register for the 12+ pre-test. The 12+ pre-test involves testing of verbal and non-verbal reasoning, which will be completed online, using CEM Select, as per the 11+ pre-test and short English and Maths.</p>
Interview	<p>At the moment, St George's do not interview candidates but this is under review and could change as quick as this academic year.</p>
Offer	<p>The families of boys and girls who pass the pre-test will be made a conditional offer of a place.</p>
Expectations	<p>There is an expectation that those who have succeeded in the pre-test will achieve Common Entrance scores which will not average less than 60%. The average Common Entrance score is normally around 70%. A fully supportive reference is also required from The Mall School.</p>



WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

A LEADING AND LIBERATING EDUCATION

Pre-Test	Boys will take the Independent Schools Examinations Board (ISEB) Common Pre-Tests at The Mall School, testing them in English, Maths and Reasoning. These will take place between October or November of Year 6. Westminster then requests the results in addition to a reference from the Headmaster.
Interview	During the first half of the spring term, boys who have performed strongly in the tests and who have received a satisfactory reference are invited to Westminster for an interview, which will include short tests in English comprehension (25mins) and Maths problem solving(25mins).
Offer	After the interviews, parents will receive a letter either offering their child a conditional place at the school (an offer to place the child's name on a waiting list for conditional places) or a letter explaining that the child's application will not be taken forward.
Expectations	A boy with a conditional place must sit the Westminster entrance exams in order to secure it. There is a choice of two sets of papers, 'The Challenge' scholarship examinations or Common Entrance. Boys must achieve a minimum of 70% in each subject at Common Entrance.



HAMPTON SCHOOL

Pre-Test	Boys will sit Hampton's own pre-test examination. These tests will take place in January and they are designed to identify potential and innate ability rather than test what has been taught. These are: English Response & Composition (2 x 30 minutes) Paper 1 is a 30 minute English Comprehension Paper 2 is a 30 minute composition Words & Reasoning (40 minutes) Mathematics (55 minutes)
Interview	Boys showing potential in the written assessments are invited for an interview with a member of Hampton's teaching staff. The interview is an important part of the decision making process and provides boys with a further opportunity to shine. The interviews are general in nature and last around 20 minutes. Not all boys who sit the written assessments are invited for interview and not all boys interviewed are offered a place.
Offer	Offers are conditional on a satisfactory performance in the Common Entrance or Common Academic Scholarship Examinations which candidates sit in the summer of Year 8 prior to entry.
Expectations	There is an expectation that those who have succeeded in the Pre-test will achieve Common Entrance scores which will not average less than 65%. The average Common Entrance score is normally around 70%. A fully supportive reference is also required from The Mall School.



KING'S COLLEGE SCHOOL
WIMBLEDON

Pre-Test	The pre-test takes place on a Saturday morning in January when boys are in Year 6. There are three examinations, English, Mathematics and Verbal Reasoning. Specimens of the English and Mathematics exams can be found on the specimen pre-test papers page on the KCS website.
Interview	Parents will be told about ten days after the pre-test whether or not your son has been invited back to be interviewed. If he has, he will have two short interviews; one based on science and maths, and the other on English and general topics. King's College School do not take forward any applicants who are not offered an interview. These interviews will take place at the end of January.
Offer	Following the interviews there are three outcomes. In mid-February some parents will receive a letter making their son a conditional offer of a place in Year 9. Others will unfortunately be told that we are not able to make an offer. A third group will receive the offer of a place on the waiting list.
Expectations	There is an expectation that those who have succeeded in the Pre-test will achieve Common Entrance scores which will not average less than 65%. The average Common Entrance score is normally around 70%. A fully supportive reference is also required from The Mall School.



ST JAMES

Senior Boys' School

Pre-Test	Boys will sit St James's own pre-test examination. These are: Mathematics (1 Hour) - a non-calculator paper consisting of number, shape, algebra and data. English (1 Hour) - consists of both reading and writing. The comprehension requires the pupil to read an extract and to answer questions based on the text. For the composition, the pupil will be given a title or sentence, around which they must compose a piece of writing. Verbal Reasoning (15 minutes practice; 50 minutes test) These tests will be held towards the end of January.
Interview	At the start of the second half term of the spring term, boys who have performed strongly in the tests and who have received a satisfactory reference are invited for an interview.
Offer	Towards the beginning of February parents will receive a letter making their son an unconditional offer of a place in Year 9. Others will unfortunately be told that an offer will not be made.
Expectations	To perform as well in CE as possible

Should you have any further questions about pre-tests please speak to Mr Miller, Assistant Head (Academic).

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