



11+ West Midlands
PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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THE OFFICIAL

11+
SERIES

THE OFFICIAL

PARENTS'

GUIDE TO THE 11+

**Essential Information, Advice and Strategies
for Success in 11+ Preparation and Exams**

Created by the experts to help you through your journey

RRP **£3.50**



Who are 11+ West Midlands?

11+ West Midlands has been established since 2005.

11+ West Midlands are committed to giving your child the highest quality education and training. We help children to perform to their greatest potential in Grammar school 11+ entrance exams, through:

- The excellent teaching and support services we provide
- Helping you make the right choices
- Making sure you always have the right advice
- Encouraging you to think ahead, to build a strong foundation for your child's future
- Helping you to support your child

What services do 11+ West Midlands provide?

11+ West Midlands provide a full spectrum of products and services to cater for ALL your 11+ and general educational needs:

1. Weekly classes in small groups in centres across the West Midlands
2. One-to-One tuition in your home or at tutor's premises
3. We cater for year 1 to year 11
4. Weekly tests to monitor progress
5. Weekly homework packs to assist learning
6. Only qualified, CRB checked teachers
7. We SPECIALISE in 11+, so you know you are talking to the experts.



A parents' guide on how to survive the 11 plus

It is a well known fact that competition for places at selective private and grammar schools is extremely high.

More and more parents are deciding that this route will provide the best opportunities for their children.

Many parents want to maximise their children's chances of gaining offers at several schools from which they can then choose.

In response to this, www.11PlusWM.co.uk have put together a guide to help parents successfully navigate their children through the eleven plus selection process.

Most parents are unsure about where to start the process of preparing their child for the next phase of their school career.

Based on our experience we have tried to simplify the thought process that all parents will need to go through, and to provide clear guidance on how you can survive the 11 plus!

Let's start with a complete overview and think about a timetable of key events and dates.

Below is a suggested timetable – it assumes your child will start secondary school in September.

Step What to do When

1	Assess your child	Start of Year 3
2	Research possible schools	Year 3/4/5
3	Discuss and agree choices	Year 4
4	Start to prepare for the exams	Year 3/4
5	Deal with offers / appeals	Year 6
6	Prepare for starting secondary school	Year 6



Step 1 - Assess your child

This is an important part of the process and should be your starting point. There are several ways in which you can approach this, but we would recommend the following:-

- Speak with your child's Form Teacher at their current school and ask whether they think he/she has the ability to pass grammar or private school entrance exams.
 - Ask the teacher to be objective and specific
 - Two subjects that must be focussed on are Maths and English
 - Are there any areas of weakness that could be improved with extra work?(look for specific topics e.g. fractions, time, punctuation or homophones)
 - What will the school be doing to help prepare children for the 11 plus?
 - Have children from the school gained places at local grammar or private schools?
- You can assess your child yourself or ask 11+ West Midlands for a FREE Assessment:
 - Use practice tests and note down the questions that your child had difficulty with.
 - Group these questions by topic (e.g. four rules, decimals, percentages, grammar, synonyms and antonyms)
 - Use 70/75% as a rough guide for a pass mark



Step 2 – Research possible schools and their selection process

Research and planning will help to relieve some of the anxiety that you and your child may be feeling (as the step from primary to secondary school is a major one) and also ensure that you make the right choices for your child's education. There are various sources of information you could use and we have listed a few of them below:-

- Speak with parents whose children have made the move from your child's primary school to the local grammar or private school
- Visit the education area of your LEA's website, where you will find information on local schools and the timetable/process for submitting various forms
- Remember you will need to research private schools separately as their admissions process is not controlled by your LEA
- Find out as much as you can about the formats of the exams and which subjects will be examined
- Review OFSTED reports for the schools you may be interested in
- Review attainment tables (previously known as league tables) to see how the school performed. (A useful statistic is the GCSE rankings)
- Attend open days of schools a year early. There is no harm in doing this as this will give both you and your child a clear idea of what a school is like
 - Use the day effectively
 - Speak with existing pupils
 - Review pupils' books (they should be excellent as they have been selected for an open day. If they are not...well you have to wonder why?)
 - Speak with teachers, ask them how long they have taught at the school, where did they teach before, how does it compare to other schools in the area....do not be shy!
 - Try and meet with the Head of Year 7 if you can as this can also prove to be useful



Step 3 – Review and discuss

You will have a lot of information by now and we would recommend you organise/file it, so that you can refer to it easily.

At this stage it is worth sitting down with your child and openly discussing what each of you like/dislike about the schools that you have researched so far. This is important as you will get a good idea from your child as to whether they will enjoy it at a school from their feedback. It is a well known fact that people perform better when they are happy.

Another benefit of this step is that you can use visualisation as a motivational tool with your child. In simple terms if they can visualise themselves going to the school and keep this image in their mind, it is likely that they will remain motivated throughout the preparation process. We have known parents to actually drive past a school on a regular basis commenting on how nice it looks etc, on their way out shopping!



Step 4 - Prepare for the exams

This is it...you have decided on the schools you want to target and have in your mind which schools you are most keen on. Now it's time to prepare! Most children start to prepare about 6 – 18 months before the actual exams. As the competition for places is extremely high, parents are doing more and more to ensure their child has an advantage over other children. When you start is entirely up to you, but we would recommend at least 12 months, in order to avoid a period of cramming.

Even if your school says they are preparing your child, you will need to supplement this with additional work at home in an effort to maximise your child's chances. Another advantage of this is that you can actually monitor how they perform in tests and can then take immediate action on areas that show up as a weakness.

Practice tests

Using practice tests is an excellent way of helping your child to:-

- become familiar with the types of questions they will face
- work under timed conditions

However, to ensure the time your child spends on them is effective, you must set realistic exam conditions.....this means no noise in the house!

Tuition Centres and One to One Tuition

Most children benefit greatly from attending our centres or our one-to-one tuition, however, if you feel your child is fairly able and you feel you have the time, you can support your child through their preparation.

Follow these brief guidelines:-

- Purchase quality practice materials with detailed mark schemes. 11+ West Midlands have the most COMPREHENSIVE materials available anywhere. These consist of both Test Papers and detailed Worksheet Packs.
- Construct a revision timetable that both you and your child are happy with (e.g. Maths on Monday, English on Wednesday, Reasoning on Friday)
- Create realistic test conditions for when your child completes a test
- Mark the test without your child and then provide feedback on those questions that went well and those they had difficulty with



- Supplement areas of difficulty with revision worksheets
- Repeat tests if required (there is no harm in this, but keep a reasonable gap to avoid them being able to answer questions from memory)

Step 5 - Offers and Appeals

Hopefully you are at the stage where your child has managed to secure a place at the school of their choice and now can relax over the summer.

Every year children will be put on the waiting list for schools as they did not quite make the top 120 -150 out of the 800 or so children who sat the exam.

This is a very difficult time and you need to try and remain objective to ensure you do not rush your decision. Find out where on the waiting list your child is and consider the school's selection criteria e.g. catchment, siblings etc. to understand the likelihood of being offered a place.

If your child does not gain automatic selection, then it might be worth considering if the school is going to be right for your child, as he/she may perform better elsewhere in the long run.

It is also worth noting that if your child was heavily prepared to pass the entrance exams, then be aware that the school will be teaching to a high standard and often fast pace. This is because the school will assume that every child is able (i.e. top 20-25%) and can therefore cope with the standards at the school. It is not uncommon for children to struggle with the work at a selective school, if they have crammed their preparation. Preparing over a longer period of time will ensure that your child is used to a heavier workload and working to a certain standard. However, you may want to keep a close eye on their homework diary and exercise books for the first few weeks to ensure there are no problems.



Step 6 - Transition from Primary to Secondary school

This is one of the most daunting challenges a child can face as they move up from a smaller and more secure environment of a primary school. Making that transition to a large secondary school with close to 1,000 pupils is scary for some children. Some children thrive in this environment and are excited by the prospect of making new friends, playing new sports and learning new subjects. However, you need to be prepared if your child needs some help and support over this transition period.

It is also hard for parents, but you have to put on a brave face and not pass on your anxiety to your child.

We have come up with some ideas that you might want to consider:-

- Most secondary schools organise an induction day for Year 6 children that are due to start in September. Make sure your child attends this day as it is an excellent way of breaking the ice with boys/girls that will be in their form as well as meeting teachers and getting a feel for the school

- Uniform/equipment
 - Make sure all uniform and equipment is named and be prepared for the odd thing to go missing as most children find it difficult to keep their left and right trainer together!

However, all schools have a lost property team, so as long as the items are labelled they will find their way back

- Buy a school bag that is as unique as possible. All too often the wrong bag will be picked up from the playground by another child by mistake, which can mean your child will be without their bag until it gets resolved

- Your child will be doing more work on a computer so it is worth investing in a 'USB pen drive' as it can store larger files. This makes it easy to transfer work between home and school

- Help your child to organise their workload and give them advice on the best way to organise themselves. Keep a close eye on their homework diary and take an interest in the homework that has been set each day. However, you need to find a happy balance as your child needs to start to take responsibility for their own learning. Some children will learn the hard way, so be prepared for the odd detention for homework that is incomplete or not done



- Be clear on the system of pastoral care at the school. Usually the Form Tutor should be contacted with any concerns and this can be escalated if necessary to the Head of Year 7
- Keep a general eye on your child during this period and take time to talk informally about their day on a regular basis. If you have any concerns do not hesitate to speak with the school as this may well put your mind at rest

Overall be prepared for some insecurity as your child gets used to a completely different way of doing things and all of a sudden finds himself/herself as a small fish in a big pond. However, the majority of children settle in within the first half term and cannot wait to go to school everyday!

The Team at 11PlusWM.co.uk wish you and your child the best of luck over the preparation period and in the exciting challenges that secondary school will bring.