

HYDEVILLE
TOWER SCHOOL

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Your Guide to the 11+

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“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

W.B Yeats

Introduction...

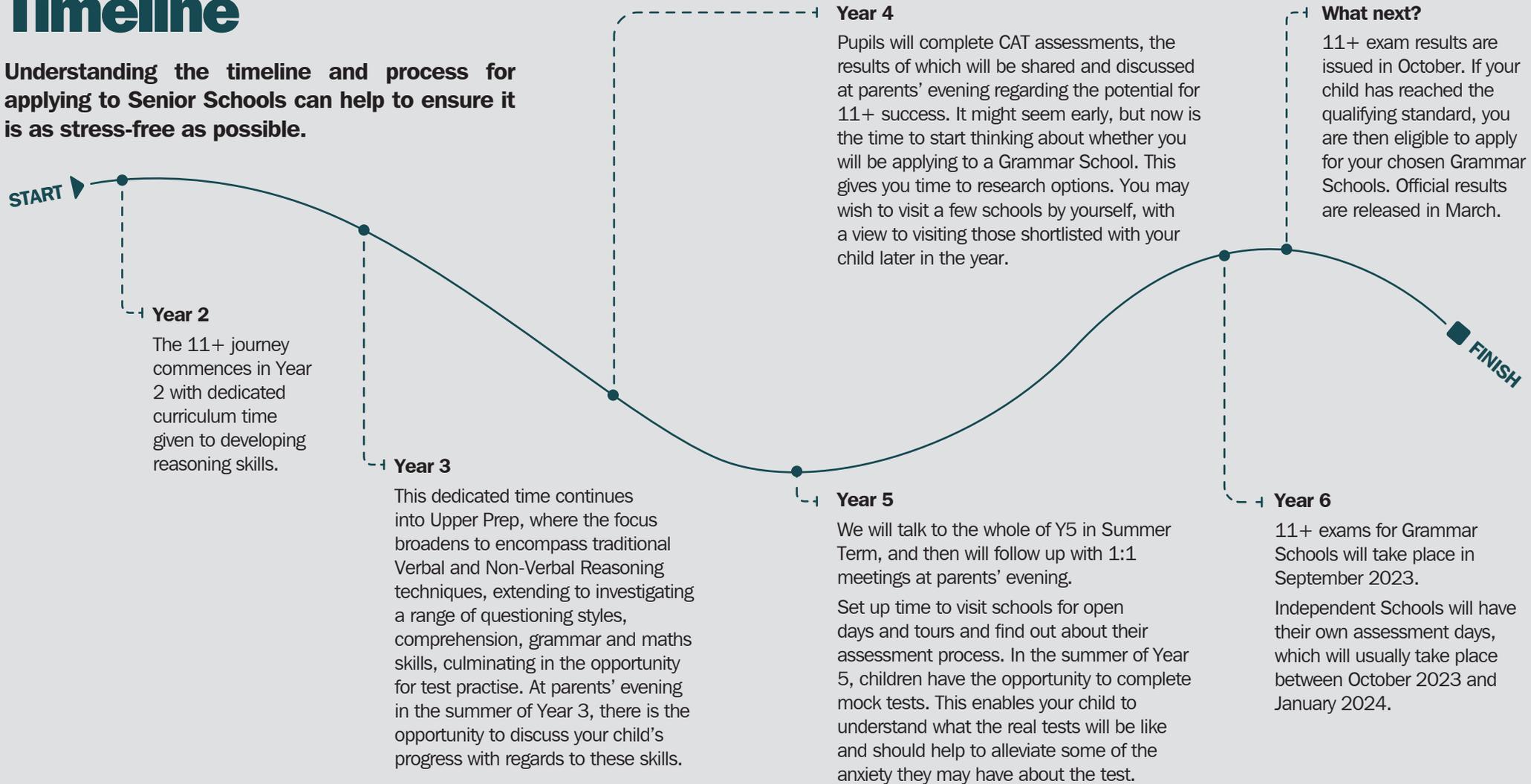
We know you want the very best for your child. Our aim with this guide is to help provide you with the advice, guidance and the benefit of our experience to make the transition to Senior School as easy as possible.

Working together in a clear, transparent and timely way, we can make sure you feel you are asking the right questions, receiving the right advice and ultimately, making the very best decision for your child’s future success and happiness.

Mrs Samra
Headteacher

Timeline

Understanding the timeline and process for applying to Senior Schools can help to ensure it is as stress-free as possible.



Admissions 2024

This year, there is a collaboration between Midlands based selective schools. The new partnership, known as 'West Midlands Grammar Schools', will incorporate all Birmingham, Shropshire, Walsall, Warwickshire, and Wolverhampton grammar schools.

For September 2024 entry, there will be one test for all children.

This will take place across the West Midlands Grammar School partnership on the same day – **16th September 2023**, or within an agreed testing window on **Monday 18th September** (certain schools only). With parental consent, candidates' tests scores can be shared between all schools within the partnership.

Dates and key processes have been aligned and all applications will be directed to one centralised application portal, opening at **9:00am on 9th May 2023**.

Parents will be asked to enter their home postcode and their child's gender and will then be directed to the relevant website to register their child for the entrance test. Children will be tested at their local test centre and will be eligible to apply for any of the schools in the group. Following the notification of test scores in October, parents will be able to list their schools of interest on the Local Authority Preference Form.

Results will be released throughout the West Midlands Grammar Schools' partnership using an age-weighted standardisation around a median score of 200 and further details will be made available on individual school websites in due course. This will mean a change for those grammar schools in Shropshire, Walsall and Wolverhampton who previously used a median score of 300.

Schools included in the West Midlands Grammar School Partnership are:

Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, King Edward VI Aston School, King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys, King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls, King Edward VI Five Ways School, King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls, King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys, Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls, Queen Mary's High School, Queen Mary's Grammar School, Newport Girls' High School, Wolverhampton Girls' High School, Haberdashers Adams, King Edward VI School Stratford, Lawrence Sherriff School, Stratford Girls Grammar School, Rugby High School and Alcester Grammar School.

Further information will become available on the websites of the grammar schools.



Types of Assessments

Many schools use GL or CEM assessments, although many will choose to combine the two or use another type of exam altogether. Although GL and CEM broadly cover the same topics, there are differences in the way they work and can have an impact on how your child prepares. Schools can choose to use any combination of the two to suit their selection policy.

GL Assessment – West Midlands Grammar Schools

- Used in the majority of Grammar Schools in the UK Covers English, Maths, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning/Spatial Awareness. Most exam papers are either standard format (where answers are written in spaces next to the question) or multiple choice
- There are two papers of approximately 50 minutes. Each will take an hour to administrate. Candidates are given a short break between the papers
- Questions are included in question booklets. Candidates MUST write answers on the separate answer sheets
- Pupils need to have a strong vocabulary, logic, maths and spelling skills
- Verbal Reasoning for GL is varied and follows the more traditional technique types.

Which Areas Will Be Assessed?



English

Tests your child's English skills through:

- Comprehension exercises - reading
- Texts and answering questions
- Writing tasks
- Punctuation and grammar problems
- Spelling tasks - spotting incorrect spellings
- Cloze procedure
- Sentence structure and order
- Vocabulary knowledge - synonyms and antonyms.



Maths

Tests your child's ability to think mathematically and problem-solve. They will need to:

- Know their times tables thoroughly
- Be able to apply the four number operations accurately (+ - x /) and at speed
- Have a fundamental understanding of number relationships, measurement, mental arithmetic, geometry and data handling
- Reason mathematically, solving worded problems.



Verbal Reasoning

Verbal Reasoning assesses children's problem-solving skills when working at speed and how effectively they can process verbal information. The test will require them to:

- Apply logical thinking
- Find and follow patterns and rules
- Determine word meaning
- Spell accurately
- Apply basic maths skills
- Work systematically.

Non-Verbal Reasoning

Non-Verbal Reasoning is used to determine your child's potential to think logically, spatially and recognise patterns. They will need to:

- Process pictorial information
- Understand how shape and patterns relate to each other
- Find and follow patterns and rules
- Apply maths skills such as rotation, reflection and symmetry.



Non-Cognitive skills

Many schools have now started to introduce an additional element to their assessment process to test a child's ability to think creatively, problem solve and communicate effectively.

This is not usually something that can be prepared for, which is why schools like to use it as a good measure of a child's ability to think critically.



Informal observations of behaviour

Although not part of the formal assessment process, schools will be looking at informal behaviours in order to make decisions about the whole child and their fit within the school and cohort.

Behaviours such as conversation, the ability to listen and receive instruction, relationships with others and table manners, will all feed into a school's decision-making process when competition for places is high.



Understanding Your Child

There is no 'one size fits all' when it comes to Senior Schools. Taking your time to find the right fit will be important. Understanding your child, and how to get the best from them, will help you to determine which school is right.

Talk to us

In the Spring Term of Year 5, we will gather the whole year group to set out how we approach the 11+ application process and what kind of support you can expect from us. In September of Year 6, we will set up 1:1 meetings to talk in detail about your aspirations for your child and the Senior School at Hydesville Tower School.

Understanding your child's academic profile

In those meetings, we will talk you through your child's academic profile. Using their CAT-4 data, we will discuss any differences in performance across the four sets of scores and how to interpret the information.

From experience, we know what kind of CAT-4 range each Senior School will accept, so we can give appropriate advice regarding likelihood for success and areas for improvement.

Your child's attitude to learning is a key part of the puzzle, so we will talk you through how they apply themselves in specific subject areas.

In discussion, we can suggest which schools might nurture both their academic and extra-curricular talents.

What are your child's strengths? Which areas require more support?

Knowing your child's strengths and areas for support will help you ask the right questions when you visit Senior Schools. Some schools may not be right for your child, so we can help to guide you on the areas in which they excel and the kind of environment that will allow them to flourish.

If your child works with our SENDCo, we will involve them in the discussion, so they can provide their advice and how to submit requests for access arrangements.

What is your child's preferred learning style?

Knowing how your child learns best will be important when it comes to selecting a school. We will talk you through what kind of learner your child is, and what style of teaching they are most suited to. Your child's attitude to learning, their ability to work independently and collaboratively, and their use of technology, will help to build up a picture of the kind of environment you should be looking for and the right questions to ask.

What are your child's extra-curricular talents and aspirations?

You will know which sports, clubs and extra-curricular activities are a big part of your child's life, so making sure they can continue these passions with like-minded friends will be an important part of your decision-making process.



Selecting Schools

What is the school's ethos? Does it 'feel' like a school in which your child will flourish?

Do not ignore your instincts when it comes to the 'feel' of a school. You will know if a school feels right for your child. Although it may be tempting to apply for the same schools as friends, it may not be the right place or provide suitable challenge. Being clear with yourself about what feels right is really important.

What is the learning environment like? Will it suit your child's learning style?

Does your child learn well independently or do they thrive on collaboration and the opportunity to tackle problems as a group? Are lessons practical, hands-on and experiential? Does the school use technology to support lessons? All of these are important questions to consider when building a picture of a school. You should assess whether the teaching approach will suit your child's learning style and inspire them to achieve their potential.

How does the school teach /non-academic skills?

It is well known that universities and employers seek young people with the skills to work collaboratively, lead empathetically and be cognitively flexible. Consider asking each school how they build those opportunities into day-to-day life.

What kind of enrichment opportunities does the school offer?

A wide range of sporting, musical, creative, technological and extracurricular opportunities should give you a sense of the commitment the school has to the 'whole child'.

What are the specialist facilities? Are there any planned investments in the infrastructure or technology that your child might benefit from?

A school should not be judged solely on its buildings. Looking at the specialist space, the equipment per pupil and the appetite for investment in future developments, will inform you of your child's potential learning experience and provide opportunities for wider subject choice.

Can you meet with students?

Seeing pupils in action and hearing about the school in their own words will help you to visualise if this is the right setting for your child.

Think long-term. Is there a Sixth Form option? What does the curriculum offer?

Moving to a Senior School from a Prep School is a big step in a young person's life. Think about whether you want to do that again at Year 11, or perhaps consider a school with a Sixth Form.

Ask practical questions. What is the format of the assessment day and which exam board do they use? How can you best prepare your child?

Independent Schools have developed their assessment processes to provide the most reliable academic data, as well as building in opportunities for interviews or group work. Ask the school for information in advance so you and your child are prepared.

What are the deadlines for application and what is the process?

The admission process differs according to the school and locality, so make sure you know in plenty of time what is needed from you and when.



Preparing your Child

Making sure you have the right preparations in place can help to spread the workload, manage time well, and minimise any stress.

Revision and preparation

Aim to keep any preparation you do light and engaging. It may be better to not discuss the exam itself, but seek opportunities to practise some of the key topics. Continue to support your child with their normal homework, whilst introducing a focus on the subjects areas that are likely to be assessed. Ensuring your child works in a quiet environment and is able to complete tasks within a certain timeframe are conducive to promoting exam skills. You will usually be able to find past papers for the various exam boards on the relevant websites, so spending some time on these with your child will be valuable.

Reading and spelling

Reading widely is essential for the development of vocabulary and accurate spelling, so your child should dedicate regular time each week to reading a diverse range of books, both fiction and non-fiction.

Online platforms

Once you know which assessment test is likely to be used, start to get your child used to the question format so they are familiar with the way the assessment will look. We use Century Tech, which provides AI-based questioning to help to support preparation for the 11+ and pre-tests.

Interview preparation

In the Autumn of Year 6, we will provide interview practice for those children who would like it. Within these sessions, children will be asked to talk about their favourite subjects, a book of interest or current affairs, as well as more informal conversations about their friendship groups or family.

An interview is a key part of an assessment process, not just testing your child's communication skills, or their knowledge of a subject, but also their values and their ability to articulate them. Although the majority of interview preparation will be led by us, you can support your child at home by regularly discussing current affairs and by subscribing to a weekly newspaper, such as The Week Junior.

Wellbeing

Build in plenty of time for fresh air, exercise, rest and fun! No child should feel unnecessarily stressed by the preparation for assessments, so try and make sure there is time to relax. Continue life as normal and allow each child to shine as an individual!



Managing outcomes

In the majority of circumstances, the outcome will be positive and we will be delighted on your behalf. If you find yourself in the position of holding several offers, then we are more than happy to talk to you again to give further advice to help your decision-making.

If the news isn't quite as you had hoped, please do talk to us again at this point, so we can talk it through.

- We will usually have been informed by the school of the outcome at the same time as you, occasionally with some feedback, but not always
- We will be keen to meet with you to talk through any specific factors that may have contributed to the outcome, such as the number of applicants per place, your child's performance in tests and the interview, or whether the school was perhaps not the right fit
- We will continue to support you as a family to find the right school.

Further Support Materials:

- **BOND 11+ English, Maths, Non-verbal Reasoning, Verbal Reasoning: Assessment Papers: 10-11 Years Bundle**



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**If you have any questions please
contact the school office.**

hydesville.com

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