



THE TRANSFER TESTING PROCESS

September 2017 Entry



Transfer Testing Process

Children born between 01/09/2005 and 31/08/2006 are due to move up to secondary school in September 2017.

There are two types of mainstream secondary schools in Buckinghamshire: grammar schools and upper/all-ability schools.

- **Grammar schools** admit children based on their performance in the Transfer Test. There are no fees to attend grammar schools.
- **Upper/all-ability schools** admit any child, regardless of ability.

The following pages explain the main testing process for admission to a

Buckinghamshire grammar school in September 2017. Later testing will only be arranged for children who move into the area.

All the grammar schools in Buckinghamshire are academies and their own Admission Authority. Buckinghamshire LA acts as the Transfer Testing process administrator for these schools. This information is provided on their behalf.

*You will need to apply for your child's secondary school place during the first half of the autumn term. You must apply to the County or Borough in whose area your child lives – your home LA (home council). The National Secondary School Application Deadline is 31 October 2016. More information about the application process for Buckinghamshire residents will be available during August in the Moving up to Secondary School Guide. Families living elsewhere should check the arrangements and deadlines for their home LA.

Registration

If your child goes to a Buckinghamshire LA primary school they will automatically be registered for the Transfer Test. As this test is not compulsory, it is sensible to think - before they sit the test - about whether a grammar school place would be suitable for your child. If you think not, just let your child's headteacher know, in writing, that you would like to withdraw them from the Transfer Test.

Parents of children going to all other schools (Partner schools and all schools outside of the county, including those in Milton Keynes) need to register their child for the test between 3pm on 3 May 2016 and 3pm on 30 June 2016. Late test registration is only available after this date for children moving into the area.

Once you have registered your child, you will receive an email to confirm this. If you need any help registering online, please contact us.

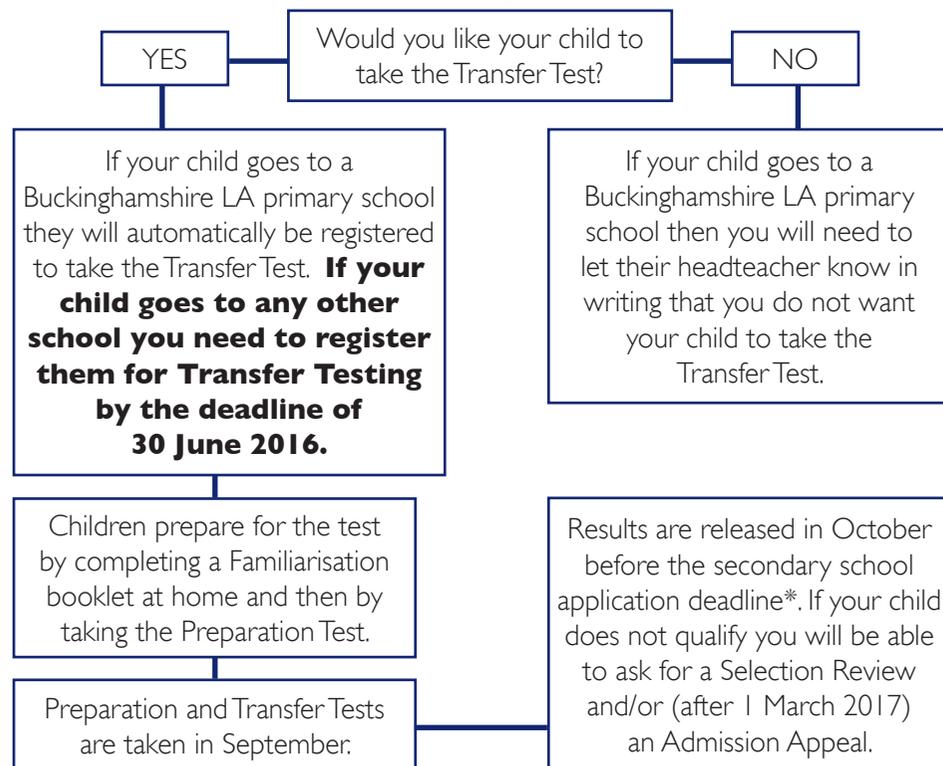
Introduction to the Transfer Test

The Transfer Test is taken at the beginning of the autumn term of Year 6. It is independently produced by the Centre for Evaluation & Monitoring (CEM) at the University of Durham. The test has been specifically designed to work out a child's potential and the skills measured in the test should make sure that all children go to a school that can best meet their educational needs.

The Transfer Test is a test of children's ability to think through and solve problems posed in three different contexts: verbal, numerical and non-verbal. This gives children the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in a range of ways – using words, numbers, and pictures or diagrams.

There has been a great deal of research internationally and for many decades about the nature of children's abilities and how best to measure them.

Main Testing Timeline



The Transfer Test reflects modern research into the nature of ability and the quite widely-held view that people have multiple abilities. It is therefore considered appropriate to test children's ability to think in a range of different contexts.

To make sure that children have had the chance to try the types of question and see the style of the test, there is a Familiarisation booklet to work through at home. Then, before taking the Transfer Test, children will also take the Preparation Test. There is more information about this later in this leaflet.

Test dates

Children who go to Buckinghamshire LA primary and Partner schools take the Preparation and Transfer Tests at school on the following dates:

Tuesday 13 September 2016 - Preparation Test

Thursday 15 September 2016 - Transfer Test

Children from out of county schools will be tested on the same days at one of the Buckinghamshire grammar schools (Central Testing). If your child is being tested at a grammar school, we will email you during July to confirm the date, time and school where your child will be tested. If you are currently living abroad, we will not be able to test your child until they return to the UK.

Illness and non-attendance on Transfer Test day

If there are supported exceptional circumstances why a child cannot attend the Central Testing Transfer Test day, then one alternative date will be offered. A clash of test date with that of another school is not an exceptional reason. Children who do not attend central testing on the day of the Transfer Test without a reasonable explanation will automatically be withdrawn from the testing process.

It is very important that children do not take the Transfer Test if they are unwell. If your child does not attend central testing for this reason, you will need to submit a letter from your GP to confirm what happened.

Late tests

Children can be tested later if, for example, they are ill on the date of the test, or if the family has very recently moved into Buckinghamshire. However, if testing is not completed on 15 September 2016, we cannot guarantee that the results will be available on 14 October 2016. We will consider later testing for children who move into the area after 30 June 2016 and by 30 June 2017.

Under-age and over-age testing

Occasionally, we agree that a child can take the Transfer Test before the school year in which they have their 11th birthday. This can only happen if they are of outstanding academic ability, are exceptionally mature and have been working well (for a number of years) with other pupils in Year 6. We will not agree to test an under-age child just because they have been in some classes with older children, or if they have been working in a class comprised of mixed year groups.

Very occasionally, we will agree to test a child who is over the age of 11. This would be because in the past there were educational reasons (which have continued) for your child to be in a lower year group. This might also be because your child has missed at least a year of school because they were ill or living abroad.

Going to a school in another country, or your child being born late in the school year, are not sufficient reasons for us to agree to test your child.

If you would like to apply to register an under-age or over-age child, please contact us.

We will ask you for more information and we will contact your child's headteacher for an assessment before we decide if we will offer testing. If your child goes to a Buckinghamshire

LA primary school or Partner school, you should speak to their headteacher as soon as possible.

Children requiring adjustments to the testing conditions

If your child has Special Educational Needs or a disability, you may like to talk to their headteacher about testing and grammar schools.

Where a child who has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (or an Education, Health and Care Plan), or a disability that could be described as having 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities', is to take the test, you may wish to discuss your child's access to the test with his or her headteacher. If the disability might affect access, you should discuss whether any special testing arrangements should be made. The same principle applies to everyday access to the curriculum so you should make sure that your child's school is aware of their needs so that, if necessary, reasonable adjustments can be made.

If it is felt that adjustments should be put in place for the test, then your child's headteacher should contact us or, if this is not possible, then please contact us.

We need to know about this before your child sits the test so that an application can be considered beforehand. We will always look for evidence of how the normal day-to-day delivery of the curriculum is adjusted to meet your child's particular needs and for other professional evidence to support your request. For this reason, if your child is at a school outside of Buckinghamshire, we will still need to contact their headteacher for further information.

More information about the Transfer Test and children with Special Educational Needs or disabilities is available on our website. It is important that you read this, particularly before you register your child to take the test. Make sure you note the deadline by which we must receive your request for adjustments.

Please note that it is not possible to offer extra marks to compensate for any special needs a child may have. This is because in each child's case it would be impossible to say, in the light of each child's circumstances, exactly how many marks would be appropriate. However, where we believe a child to be disabled within the terms of the Equality Act (2010), or where the child has a disability that will have a clear impact in relation to the format of the test, we will try to make sure that appropriate and reasonable special arrangements are put in place to make the test as accessible as possible.

If your child's Secondary Transfer Test Score is considered not to reflect their abilities, and they do not qualify for grammar school, you can request that the Selection Review Panel and/or the Independent Appeal Panel consider the Special Educational Needs and disability issues.

All papers submitted in relation to a request for adjustments to the test papers or conditions will be included with the Selection Review information provided by the LA to the Selection Review Panel and/or to the Independent Appeal Panel.

More information about the Selection Review Process and Admission Appeals will be in the Moving up to Secondary School Guide available on our website by the end of August.

Familiarisation and Preparation

Children attending Buckinghamshire LA and Partner schools will be given a Familiarisation booklet to take home during the summer term of Year 5. For children attending all other schools, a copy of the Familiarisation booklet can be downloaded from our website.

The booklet contains information about the content of the test, some advice about tackling the test and a few sample questions.

Before taking the Secondary Transfer Test in September, children take the

Preparation Test. The Preparation Test looks the same as the Transfer Test and has the same instructions. Children sit the two multiple-choice Preparation Test papers in test conditions. These are both timed like the Transfer Test, with instructions given to children via an audio soundtrack.

The Preparation Test enables children to become very familiar with the different types of questions and the style of the test, to use a separate answer sheet and to experience this under test conditions. The Preparation Test papers are shorter than the Transfer Test and take about 35 minutes each. They will not be marked or sent home. The purpose of the Preparation Test is not to see how well the children have done but to give them a good opportunity to prepare themselves for the Transfer Test.

If your child goes to a Buckinghamshire LA primary or Partner school, they will take the Preparation Test at their own school. They will not sit the Transfer Test until they have taken the Preparation Test.

Children attending all other schools will be invited to take the Preparation Test at one of the grammar schools on 13 September 2016. It is strongly recommended that the Preparation Test is taken before sitting the Transfer Test but it is not essential.

Transfer Test

The Transfer Test will be taken on 15 September 2016. There are two Transfer Test papers. They are multiple-choice and are both of about the same level of difficulty. Each paper is about 50 minutes long and is in a number of separately timed sections. Children are given instructions via an audio soundtrack.

How can parents best help their children to prepare for the test?

There are a number of things that parents can do to help their children. They can ensure that they have experience of working quietly on their own, uninterrupted by noise or distractions. They can ensure that they do any homework that is set. They can help their children to read with understanding, for example by asking them what certain words mean and what is happening in the passage or book that they are reading. They can encourage them to solve problems by themselves or to look up things for themselves.

CEM also advise that good preparation for the test is to develop a child's ability to read with understanding and to

solve problems using their numerical skills: this is what primary schools are doing with all their pupils.

Although there are products on the market claiming to provide practice for CEM tests, there are no commercially available practice papers, materials or services written by CEM (the test provider). CEM does not recommend that parents purchase or subscribe to any commercially available materials. The Secondary Transfer Test is designed to enable all children to demonstrate their academic potential without the need for excessive preparation. Tutoring is therefore not required or recommended.

Marking and the results of the Transfer Test

The test results will be available on 14 October 2016 for all children tested on 15 September 2016. Results for any child tested later will be released as soon as possible afterwards. This means that for most children the test results will be available before the secondary school application deadline.

The Transfer Test papers are marked by CEM. The marks are then 'standardised'. Standardisation balances the overall performance of children from one year to the next and makes

sure that all children are placed on an equal footing and that no child is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged because of his or her age. It takes into account the child's age in years and months on the date they take the test. A child's 'standardised score' will be between 0 and 180+. The standardised score needed to qualify automatically for a grammar school has been set by CEM, in agreement with the grammar schools, at 121 or more.

Your child's scores from the two Transfer Test papers will be added together and expressed as a Standardised Secondary Transfer Test Score (STTS).

The STTS will be the sum of the following:

- 50% of the standardised score for the verbal sections
- 30% of the standardised score for the numerical sections
- 20% of the standardised score for the non-verbal sections

If a child's STTS is 121 or more they are automatically qualified for grammar school. We anticipate that about 33% of children will get a STTS of 121 or more.

Under the Data Protection Act, Schedule 7, Section 9, candidates do not have the right to see their examination papers once they have been handed in. The Freedom of Information Act does not override

the Data Protection Act in this matter. On request and upon payment of the appropriate fee, you can request that your child's test papers are manually remarked and the age standardised score (STTS) checked. However, before doing so you should discuss this with your child's headteacher who will explain that it is extremely unlikely that your child's papers will have been marked incorrectly.

Parents of children who do not score 121 or more in the Transfer Test can ask for a Selection Review and/or an Independent Admission Appeal. The Selection Review Panel will consider your child's review case. Selection Reviews take place from late November 2016 to January 2017. An admission appeal cannot take place until after 1 March 2017 following the written notification of the decision of the admission authority to refuse admission. More information about the Selection Review Process and Admission Appeals will be in the Moving up to Secondary School Guide available on our website by the end of August.

Your child will be considered as suitable for any grammar school if they qualify through a standardised score of 121 or more in the Transfer Test, or if they are successful at Selection Review.

A child may also be considered suitable for a particular grammar school should they be qualified by the Independent Appeal Panel. More information about this will be in the Guide.

A child's STTS is not used to work out whether they are more or less likely to be offered a grammar school place: all children who score 121 or more are treated as 'qualified', and a higher score will not mean a child has a higher priority for a grammar school place. Once they have qualified, children are prioritised for a grammar school place according to the admission rules for the particular grammar school they have applied for.

If your child qualifies, but does not join a Buckinghamshire grammar school, their Transfer Test qualification will expire. Further details can be found in the Late Transfer Procedure information for a particular grammar school.

Contact us

Contact us using our online form

Office hours

9am – 5.30pm Monday to Thursday

9am – 5pm Friday

Further help

If you are visually impaired, please contact us on 01296 383250 to ask for this Guide in an alternative format.