

Brooklands Primary School

FAQs around entrance exams and transitions to high school

Which schools have entrance exams in Trafford?

Schools in the local area include:

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls
Altrincham Grammar School for Boys
Loreto Catholic Girls Grammar School
St Ambrose Catholic Grammar School for boys
Sale Grammar School*
Stretford Grammar School
Urmston Grammar School
All of these schools are state funded schools

Which other secondary schools lie within the South Trafford locality?

Schools in the local area include:

Altrincham College of Arts
Ashton-on Mersey School
Sale High
Wellington School
Blessed Thomas Holford Catholic College
Manor High School – Special needs, moderate learning difficulties

When are the Open Days to view these schools?

Open Days for the non-selective schools are often held in the Autumn term so it may be advisable to attend these in the first term of Year 5 with your child. Open days for the selective schools are often held in the summer term for Year 5 (or Year 4) children to attend. These are often advertised in the local papers. Some schools send fliers to our school which we distribute, but not all schools do this so please don't rely on it. Check the secondary school websites.

What information do we get from Trafford? Is there a chronological guide book?

Trafford will send out a 'Composite Prospectus' to your home address usually during the last week of August. This is an application pack which gives parents an overview of the process. It is however important that parents check individual secondary school websites or contact the school directly after Easter as some applications for sitting entrance exams need to be submitted early.

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Does my child have to sit an entrance exam?

No. This is purely your decision based on whether or not you wish for your child to attend a selective school.

Can I complete one form for my child to sit a number of entrance exams?

No, all of the selective schools arrange their own entrance exams and this must be arranged directly with them. Please remember that the application is to sit an entrance exam, it is not an application to attend the school – this is a different form which is sent from Trafford.

Are these tests 11+ exams?

There is no longer an 11+ examination. Each school sets and organises the administration of its own tests. Any arrangements are not shared with primary schools.

When do the entrance exams take place?

All tests have generally been taken by October half term with most high schools setting their tests in September.

In previous years tests have taken place on a Saturday morning or afternoon. Sale Grammar Test 2014 took place mid-week with parents being responsible for making arrangements for this and keeping us informed of such. Tests generally last for around 3 hours with timetabled breaks. Please contact the school or look at their website for updated information.

Is there a mock exam?

There have never previously been any ‘mock tests’ set by the high schools. Some schools sell practise papers for parents to purchase should they wish.

How do you apply for your child to sit the tests?

Information on admission policies and procedures can be found on individual school websites.

What if my child has special needs?

If your child has a physical disability or special need and may need special arrangements then you would need to contact the school directly. Special arrangements are usually based on support a child regularly receives in school. For example large-print test papers for visually impaired pupils, the use of coloured filters, templates or the provision of a scribe to record the child’s answers. Requests for special arrangements should usually be made at the same time as an application form is submitted.

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What if my child is unwell or unable to sit the exam on the day of the test?

If your child is unwell then contact the school as soon as possible. So long as you have applied in time for the exam, then the school should be required to make arrangements for the child to sit the test again.

What does the test comprise of?

Each school sets its own test and primary schools are not necessarily informed of what is on the test. We are aware that most schools use a verbal and a non verbal reasoning test, they may also have a written test and a mathematics test. Refer to individual school website.

What does our school do to support children who wish to take the entrance exams?

Here at Brooklands Primary School we offer an excellent all round education meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of all our children. We challenge all of our children to be independent learners who can apply their skills in different situations and contexts.

In Year 5 we teach verbal and non-verbal reasoning sessions each week. This provides useful opportunity to develop skills as well as familiarising children with such questions.

When are results published?

Most results are sent out by the end of October.

How can I make decisions regarding which high schools to apply for if the test results have not yet been received?

You will be asked to submit an application form to Trafford naming your preferred choice of schools. Write down the schools that you really want in order of preference. Consider all options. It's a good idea to attend all of the open days – don't rely on your child passing an entrance exam as this will limit your child's choices and cause additional anxiety should they not reach the pass mark. Applications MUST be made to Trafford within the allotted time and can be made on-line.

Should I have my child tutored for the entrance exams?

The selective schools would be likely to say 'no' to a tutor to coach children through a test but it is entirely your choice whether to have your child tutored or not. Remember, tests are set by the individual schools, they are all different and may change from year to year.

Is the school informed of results?

No, we are not informed of any results. Results are sent only to home addresses.

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Implications for results day:

Results day can be difficult for children who have not met the entrance criteria. It is good to let us know if your child is upset for any reason so that we can support them effectively. We work hard to encourage all of the children to have regard for the feelings of others and politely request that parents on the playground also consider this.

What can we do if our child does not meet the entrance criteria?

It is important to read the schools individual procedure on their websites. Most of the selective schools carry out automatic reviews for children who fall just short of the expected grade. Some schools also have a Special Circumstances Form for unavoidable circumstances which put a child at a disadvantage. Trafford will only be able to review the process that has taken place. For additional guidance please see Trafford School Admissions document on the internet. This will show current procedure and is updated each August.

If my child passes the entrance exam does that mean they have a place in the school?

No, this means that they have met the entrance criteria and then Trafford allocate the places. Again please refer to documentation regarding school boundaries and admissions. These may change annually.

When are secondary school places allocated?

Individual pupil school places are usually allocated on the 1st March or the next working day should this fall on a weekend.

Is the primary school informed of high school place allocations?

No, we are not informed of high school places and once again it is important to let us know if your child is in any way upset or distressed. This can be a difficult time for the children and we want to support them as sensitively as we can and indeed yourselves.

Can we appeal Trafford's secondary school allocation for our child?

Yes, information regarding this is in the paperwork that you will receive on 1st March detailing your child's allocated school.

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What transition arrangements are in place?

Some secondary schools send members of Y7 staff to visit us so that our Y6 teachers can talk to them about the children they will be receiving from us. If your child has a disability or has a special need of any sort, then the SENCo will also speak to the high school link teacher or Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

Secondary school staff may ask to meet with the children for a short informal question and answer period during this visit.

Most schools have a transition day which takes place at the secondary school. Some schools may also have an additional morning when the children are expected to attend their new high school where they may administer their own assessments.

Parents are notified of any such dates directly by the secondary school. It is parents' responsibility to organise transport for such events and advise us of the absence.

The thought of these days may be quite daunting for your child initially, but please be reassured that the children always return to us full of beans and excited about their new school and all of the adventures which await them!

We do hope this information is useful to you. If you have any further unanswered questions then please put them in writing and we will endeavour to support you with them or add them to this list.