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The Bexley Selection Test 2021

Information for parents

To be considered for a place at a grammar school within the London Borough of Bexley, your child must achieve the selective standard in the selection test held at the beginning of Year 6. This leaflet tells you about the test that will be held in September 2021, for children born between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, who will transfer to secondary school in September 2022. If you register your child for the Bexley selection test, it will be considered that you have understood and accepted all the information in this leaflet.

Bexley's grammar schools are Beths Grammar School (boys), Bexley Grammar School (mixed), Chislehurst and Sidcup Grammar School (mixed), and Townley Grammar School (girls). There will be 800 places in these four schools in September 2022. One test covers admission to all four schools.

The test is open to all children regardless of where they live, but places at the grammar schools will be allocated in accordance with the schools' oversubscription criteria. The 'Admission to Secondary Schools in Bexley 2021' booklet will be available at the end of the summer term, and will give more information about schools in Bexley and how to apply.

Achieving the selective standard does not guarantee the offer of a place at a grammar school, unless your child is one of the 180 highest scorers. Most places are offered in order of home to school distance.

COVID-19:

COVID-19: The London Borough of Bexley is planning to deliver the Bexley Selection Test in September 2021 in the usual format we have operated in the past, and as set out in this leaflet. However, in the current climate, with school closures, social distancing requirements and the government advice to remain home unless essential, we reserve the right to alter testing arrangements.

The test papers

The Bexley test covers verbal ability and English comprehension, numerical reasoning and non verbal reasoning. There are two test papers, with a mixture of questions in each. Verbal ability tests vocabulary, comprehension and verbal reasoning. Numerical reasoning tests the ability to solve mathematical problems. Non verbal reasoning tests the ability to see how objects relate to each other and to make logical deductions. The mathematical content of the questions will not go beyond what children are expected to have been taught by the end of Year 5.

Each test paper contains approximately 50 minutes of questions, plus some time for instructions and examples. Each test will be divided into sections, and children will be given an allocation of time for each section, before being asked to move on to the next section. The test papers are multiple choice, with the exception of some Maths questions where one answer must be calculated by the child, with answers marked on a separate sheet. The invigilator will play an audio soundtrack to talk children through the test papers and tell them how much time to spend on each section. All working out can be done on the test booklet and rough paper will not be supplied. The test papers are marked by an external company. The raw scores (the number of correct answers in each section) are converted to an age-standardised score to make allowance for the child's age at the time of the test and to ensure that younger children are not disadvantaged. Children will be given a separate age-standardised score for each of the three subject areas, verbal ability, numerical ability and non verbal ability, and one total age-standardised score that will be used to decide whether the child is selective or not. The total score is weighted, by adding 50% of the verbal ability score, 25% of the numerical ability score and 25% of the non verbal ability score. The mean (average) total weighted age-standardised score is 200; approximately two-thirds of candidates will achieve a score within the range of 170 – 230.

Registering for the test

All children must be registered online to sit the test, regardless of which school they attend and where they live. This includes children attending primary schools in Bexley, who no longer automatically sit the test in school, and children attending independent schools in Bexley. Online registration will be open from 4 May to 2 July 2021 from the webpage ***www.bexley.gov.uk/selectiontests***

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that registration has been completed by 2 July 2021 if they would like their child to sit the test. If you have any difficulty registering online, you can phone the School Admissions Team on 020 8303 7777 or email ***selectiontests@bexley.gov.uk*** for assistance. Internet access is available in all public libraries if you do not have a computer at home. If you do not have your own email address, we suggest that you create one with a free provider such as Google, Yahoo or Hotmail. Contact the School Admissions Team if you need advice on how to create an email address. The online registration site will close at midnight on 2 July 2021. Registration requests received after this date will not be accepted, and there is no appeal process for late registration. Online applications will be acknowledged with a confirmation email, and your application will not be valid without the confirmation. The Bexley Selection Test is very competitive and in recent years less than 30% of applicants have been deemed selective. Every year, some children are registered for the test but withdrawn at short notice. To avoid unnecessary costs, please be sure that you definitely wish your child to sit the Bexley selection test and that you have already discussed this with your child, before submitting the online registration form.

If you make an error in your registration, or have a query regarding it, please do not create multiple applications, instead please email ***selectiontests@bexley.gov.uk***, and wait for a response.

The test arrangements described in this leaflet apply only to entry to one of the four grammar schools within the London Borough of Bexley. There are separate arrangements for entry to grammar schools in other areas, and you should contact those schools or authorities direct. Your child must be registered for the Bexley test before the closing date of 2 July 2021 in order to sit the test. Registration for tests in other areas will not be accepted as registration for the Bexley test.

Test dates and test centres

Following the necessary adjustments to last year's test arrangements, we are preparing various structures for testing to take place during the week of 13 September 2021. The number of candidates per session and therefore the number of sessions will be determined and confirmed nearer the time of testing. All children registered for the test will be invited to one of these sessions, whether in their own school or at a test centre.

Children will take the two test papers at the same session. Selection tests for other grammar schools, for example in Sutton and Medway, may be scheduled for one of the same dates as the Bexley test. Bexley will not offer alternative test dates to enable you to attend other tests. Children who attend primary schools in Bexley normally sit the test at their own school. There are some exceptions to this – children who attend any of the following schools will be invited to a test centre:

- Harris Garrard Academy, Thamesmead
- Haberdashers' Aske's Crayford Temple Grove
- All Catholic Primary Schools in Bexley
- Trinitas Academy Trust Primary Schools:

Christ Church Erith, Jubilee Primary, Northwood Primary, St Paul's (Slade Green) Primary and St Augustine of Canterbury

The test centres will be in one of the four grammar schools or another secondary school in Bexley. If your child will be sitting the test in their own Bexley primary school, you will receive a letter via the school at the start of the autumn term. Other notifications of the date, time and location of the test session will be sent by email on 2 September. Please contact the School Admissions Team if you register your child for the test but have not received an email by 3 September.

Each test session lasts from two and a half to three hours, including instructions, both test papers, short practice examples and a break between the papers.

Late testing

If your child is unwell on the day of the test, or if there are serious personal circumstances that might affect performance in the test, such as the death or illness of a family member, you should notify the Head Teacher of your child's school and not send your child to the test. Arrangements will normally be made for your child to sit the test at a later date. Reasons other than illness or serious personal circumstances will not be accepted, and a medical certificate or other appropriate evidence will be required. It is not possible for allowance to be made retrospectively if a child is allowed to sit a test when ill or upset. Children who become ill during the test and are unable to finish the questions will not be allowed to sit the test again. The Review Panel will make a decision on whether he or she should be deemed selective.

You must arrive at the allocated test centre in time for the start of the test. If you arrive too late, no alternative session will be offered. You should plan your journey to the centre well in advance and allow extra time for traffic and transport delays and to find a parking space if necessary.

What to bring to the test

Children should bring two sharp HB pencils, an eraser and a pencil sharpener in a clear bag or case. Spare pencils, erasers and pencil sharpeners will be available at the test centre if required. A wristwatch may be worn, but there will be a clock in every centre and time reminders will be given during the test. Children may also bring a small bottle of water and a small snack for the break between the test papers. Please do not send your child with fizzy or sticky drinks. No other equipment is required or allowed. Mobile phones and all other personal items must be left at the side of the room while the test takes place.

Practice for the test

Neither the grammar schools, nor the London Borough of Bexley, support coaching or tutoring for the Bexley selection test. Children should be able to attempt all questions using what they have learned in school. Reading a wide range of books may help with English comprehension and vocabulary. When you register your child for the test, you will receive the link to a familiarisation pack and you can ask for a paper copy if you need them. You can work through this with your child so that they know what the test papers will look like and what type of questions to expect. There will also be example questions for children to try at the beginning of each section of the test. The soundtrack will give the correct answer and a brief explanation of why it is correct before moving on to the actual test questions.

The test papers are provided by the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring, Cambridge University (CEM). CEM does not publish practice papers or booklets. All enquiries relating to the test must be directed to the School Admissions Team or your child's Head Teacher. CEM is unable to supply information directly to parents or answer individual concerns.

Special arrangements for children with disabilities or special needs

There are some special arrangements that we can make, depending on the nature of a child's disability or need. They will normally reflect the arrangements that are made within a child's own school, such as enlarged and coloured papers for a child with a visual impairment, or additional time for children whose condition means that they work more slowly than others. Full details are available from the webpage ***www.bexley.gov.uk/selectiontests*** If your child has a disability or special need, you should first discuss the need for any possible special arrangements with your child's Head Teacher. All requests for special arrangements must be made in writing to the School Admissions Team as early as possible in the summer term but by **18 June 2021** at the latest, either by the Head Teacher or the parent(s). We would normally expect requests on behalf of children attending Bexley primary schools to be made by the Head Teacher. Each request will be assessed individually, and you must provide a letter of support from the Head Teacher and copies of any supporting reports from consultants or other professionals. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that written requests are submitted before the closing date and that all supporting evidence is attached to the application. If you are submitting a request for special arrangements, you must also register your child separately online for the test.

The selective score

Selectivity is based on the total weighted age-standardised score achieved in the test. All children who have taken the test will be ranked in order of their total age-standardised score. The Council will decide how many children should be deemed selective in order to fill the places available, and will set the selective score accordingly. More children are deemed selective than the places available, because we know from experience that some children will be offered places at other higher preference schools. In 2020, 5829 children sat the test and 1999 achieved the selective standard, with 800 grammar school places available. The 180 children with the highest total age-standardised scores are placed in one of the highest priority groups for their preferred grammar school. For other pupils who are deemed selective, there is no guarantee of an offer of a place. Grammar schools will offer places according to their oversubscription criteria, and in most cases the deciding factor will be the distance from home to school. The full admissions policies for each of the schools can be seen on the schools' websites or in the 'Admission to Secondary Schools in Bexley 2022' booklet. If places in grammar schools remain unfilled at the end of the allocation process, places may be offered to children who missed the selective score by a small margin. Any available places will first be offered to those who scored one mark below the selective score, in order of the oversubscription criteria of the school, then to those who scored two points below the selective score. All decisions are made by a panel consisting of Head Teachers and senior Council officers.

Test results and applying for a grammar school place

Emails with the test results will sent by 6 October 2021. Results will not be available online. The test result will be sent to the Head Teacher of your child's primary school for information and to assist in the preparation of a review request if considered appropriate.

If your child is deemed selective and you wish him or her to be considered for a grammar school place, you must list one or more grammar schools in Bexley among your preferences on the secondary school Common Application Form. Your child will not be considered for a grammar school place unless you do this. Information about applying for places will be published in the 'Admission to Secondary Schools in Bexley 2022' booklet later in the summer term, or in your home local authority's booklet if you do not live in Bexley.

There will be an opportunity for all Head Teachers to request a review of the score achieved in the test, but this will not happen until after the results have been published and after the closing date for secondary school applications to be submitted. If your child is not deemed selective, but you think there may be grounds for a review of the decision, you should still include a preference for a grammar school on your application form and then discuss with your child's Head Teacher whether a request for a review should be made. Please note that selective decisions will only be changed by the Review Panel in exceptional circumstances.

Secondary schools in Bexley will hold their open events in September and October 2021, and the grammar schools will hold at least one open session after the selection test results are published and before the October half term. Dates for each school will be published on the secondary admissions webpage (go to ***www.bexley.gov.uk/admissions***) in July and in the 'Admission to Secondary Schools in Bexley 2022' booklet at the end of the summer term.

Testing after September 2021

Children can only take the test once while they are in Year 6. If you move into the area while your child is still in Year 6, arrangements may be made for a late test to be taken. Children deemed selective after a late test will be placed on the waiting list for their preferred school. Children can be re-tested when they are in secondary school, or tested for the first time if they have not taken the test before, during Year 7, 8 or 9, if they are achieving the selective standard in an all-ability school. Children sitting the test for a second time will be tested at the end of the academic year. For more information, please contact your preferred grammar school.

Testing of children outside the normal age range

The decision on whether a child can be admitted to secondary school outside their normal age group must be made by the admission authority for the preferred school.

You cannot register your child online if he or she was not born between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011, and you should contact the School Admissions Team for further advice. If you deliberately enter an incorrect date of birth on the online registration form, your child will be disqualified from the test. Children taking the test outside the normal age range will usually be in a class either one year ahead or one year behind in primary school. Requests for early or late transfer to secondary school should be made by email or letter to the School Admissions Team with supporting reasons for the request and for younger children, evidence that your home Local Authority has agreed to process the secondary transfer application a year early. The admission authorities for the grammar schools in Bexley will be asked for a decision on whether the child can be admitted outside the normal age group if deemed selective.

If a child sits the test outside the normal age group but is not deemed selective, there will be no further opportunity to sit the test until the child is in Year 7 of secondary school.

Further information

Your child's Head Teacher will be able to answer most questions. All information about the selection test can be seen on the Council's website ***www.bexley.gov.uk/selectiontests***

You can also e-mail ***selectiontests@bexley.gov.uk*** *if you have questions that have not been answered by this leaflet, or contact the* ***School Admissions Team*** *on* ***020 8303 7777***

London Borough of Bexley

School Admissions Team

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The information in this leaflet is correct at the time of printing (April 2021)

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