



Bringing out the best in every boy

A positive move towards 11+



The Mall School



Bringing out the best in every boy

The Mall School's mission is to bring out the best in every boy. We believe that all boys have potential and that it is through inspirational teaching and excellent pastoral care that we can develop this potential. Our independence enables us to find the right senior school for every boy.

We are a forward looking, progressive school which considers how best we serve our boys. Over the past 18 months, we have undertaken internal and external assessment of our local market and conditions for senior schools. We have listened to what you are telling us as parents, what our senior school heads are saying about the future market and engaged with experts in the field. This exercise has highlighted the fact that in recent years it has become increasingly apparent that senior schools are experiencing an increase in demand for places at 11+ driven largely by parents' preferences. In response, the supply of places at this level has increased. It is our view that this trend will continue and in time most senior schools will move towards 11+ as their main point of entry.

We want to play to our educational and pastoral strengths and secure the best future for all our boys. Therefore we have decided to move from being a 13+ school to an 11+ school from September 2019 with the current Year 4 boys becoming the first to leave at 11+ in July 2019. The final Year 8 cohort will leave The Mall in July 2020. It is our strong belief that in making this structural change now, the ethos of the school will remain intact and our strong record of success and ability to bring out the best in every boy will be maintained.

We will continue to offer our boys an excellent all-round education. The boys will still experience a rich and challenging curriculum encompassing a broad range of subjects, both academic and non-academic, taught by specialist teachers within our impressive facilities. Our commitment to offering strong pastoral care will remain focused on securing each individual boy's happiness and well being. We will continue to be an independent prep school preparing boys for a range of academically selective senior schools. Parents will not have to commit to a senior school at age 4+ as we will continue to gain entry for boys to all those senior schools we currently send boys to.

We hope this document will answer many of the questions that you may have. It is meant to be comprehensive but it will almost certainly not be exhaustive so we encourage parents, current or prospective, to get in touch if you have any queries.



Your questions answered

The structure of the school

How did the decision process take place?

We have not taken this decision lightly. It has been a considered process and one which has incorporated a number of different elements. We commissioned several pieces of research using independent consultants. We have listened to you as parents to understand your perceptions of our strengths and areas we need to improve upon. Furthermore we have listened to the views of a number of senior school heads on how the market is changing. This, together with our own internal analysis of the market, and consultation with experts in the independent schools' market, has led us to believe that the decision we are making is positive and will reap benefits for all our boys.

Will this have a financial impact on the school?

Absolutely not. The school's finances are in robust health and played no part in the decision to phase out Years 7 to 8. We plan and review our finances regularly and have accounted for the change in pupil numbers that will take place over the next few years while we adjust to becoming an 11+ school. We also believe that the decision will help secure the school's strong financial standing for the future.

Does this mean you will be academically selective at entry into Reception?

No. We will remain non-selective at Reception. Boys who join the school at the start of Reception will not be required to pass an assessment to progress through to the upper part of the school. Entry from outside the school into Year 3 will be assessed and only boys who we feel are able to meet the demands of our curriculum will be offered a place. We will continue to conduct our own internal assessments and exams which we will use to inform parents about their sons' progress and to identify potential senior schools for them.



Was the expansion to three forms in Year 3 part of this?

No. The introduction of an additional class in Year 3 from September 2017 is due to an increase in demand locally. Two form entry throughout the school meant we could only offer a few places at 7+ and we were turning away boys who had passed the assessment but where we did not have enough places for them. We did not want to increase class sizes so decided to add a class in order to offer places to all boys who passed the assessment. The move to 11+ has also been decided largely in response to external factors, as outlined above, but the two decisions are not connected. If we felt there would still be the right school for every one of our boys at 13+ we would be continuing to educate them until the end of Year 8, regardless of how many boys were in the year and at what stage they had joined the school.

Will this affect the site and facilities?

No. The pre-prep will remain at 84 Hampton Road. The expansion to three forms in Years 3 to 6 means we will need space on the main site for these year groups. We have asked a firm of architects, who have a great deal of experience in working with schools, to identify how we best utilise the space we have in the future. We will share more on this with parents as our plans progress.

Is the move to 11+ a precursor to co-education?

No. We believe there is still sufficient demand and support for single-sex education, particularly for boys, in the area. We understand boys and we know how to get the best out of them. That is what we were established to do and there is no desire to fundamentally change our ethos. We already have plenty of families within the school who have daughters educated at a number of other schools.

What does this mean for 13+ education?

As a school we have always been passionate about the benefits of a prep school education until the age of 13. We still believe in the opportunities offered in Years 7 and 8, but we need to consider the interests of the boys lower down the school. There is no guarantee that our younger boys will have the same number of 13+ places available to them when they reach Year 8 that our current senior boys have. By making this change now, we have plenty of time to prepare all boys thoroughly for the next stage of their education.

The move to 11+ also opens up a wider range of senior schools which boys can apply for enabling us to stay true to our commitment to finding the right school for every boy.



Future Schools

What senior school options will there be for boys at the end of Year 6?

We believe that the move to 11+ opens up more choice for boys as there are more day schools within easy travelling distance from Twickenham that only take pupils in at age 11 or who only have limited places at 13+. These include: Latymer Upper, Kew House, Ibstock Place and Kingston Grammar. A number of schools have reduced the number of places on offer at 13+. For example, last year, King's College School, Wimbledon, increased their 11+ entry at the expense of 13+ places.

Can my son still go to a 13+ school?

Yes. Where a senior school has an 11+ or 13+ entry point we will discuss with parents which would be the more appropriate entry point. Where a senior school only has a 13+ entry point a boy can still sit the pre-test at The Mall and then move to another prep school for Years 7 and 8. We will very shortly be making links with a number of prep schools which continue through to Year 8 to discuss arrangements for the transfer of boys from The Mall at the end of Year 6.

Will you prepare boys for entry into state schools at 11+?

Yes. A small number of Mall boys have in the past moved to state schools at the end of Year 6. Boys will, of course, be able to sit tests for selective schools such as Tiffin and will be well prepared to do so. Parents may also apply to non-selective state schools through the normal admissions process via their local authority. Online admissions close at the end of October in Year 5 and places are announced in early March meaning parents can consider these and their independent school offers at the same time. If parents are considering non-selective state schools that are oversubscribed we would recommend applying by the deadline so that they can keep all options open.



Will it be harder to get into selective independent day schools at 11+ as so many more pupils apply for places?

No. Although there are more pupils sitting for places at 11+ there are more places available. The level of competition as measured by the ratio of supply and demand for places is no different at 11+ than at 13+ for most senior schools.

Do senior schools welcome applications from prep school pupils at 11+?

Yes. Senior schools want the best possible pupils in their schools. They want pupils who will be happy, successful and benefit from the opportunities they offer. They make offers based on results in their entry tests, interviews and reports from candidates' current schools not based on which school they are coming from.

What happens if boys do not get a place at their chosen school at 11+?

By the start of the summer term in Year 5 we will have agreed with parents which schools we believe the boys should take entrance exams for during the course of Year 6. The list will consist of 3 to 5 senior schools which the school believes a boy has a realistic chance of being offered a place at. If a boy is hoping to get a place at one of the particularly competitive schools then we will recommend a range of alternative options.

How important is the interview process for getting a place at the school?

We are already very experienced at preparing boys for interviews. The interview is mostly about meeting potential candidates to see if they are suited to the school and will be happy there. Each Year 6 boy will have a practice interview with an external consultant who will provide feedback. Senior members of staff will also give a second interview practice. Drama lessons, which include public speaking, and giving Year 6 boys the opportunity to show visitors around the school, will also help to develop their confidence. Although the interview is an important part of the process, it is a boy's performance in the assessment that carries the most weight.



The curriculum, timetable and staffing

Will the curriculum change?

No. The breadth and range of subjects will not change but the requirements of the 11+ will require a slight rebalancing of the time spent on some non-core subjects to allow us to focus on the core subjects the boys will be examined on. We will continue to cover all the subjects we currently offer, and will also be providing discrete verbal and non-verbal reasoning lessons rather than these being taught as part of English and Maths as currently happens.

Will the length of lessons or the school day change?

No. The actual structure of the timetable will not change and we will continue to operate the normal school day as applied to all sections of the school.

Will the boys be ready to sit the 11+ exams in Year 6 by January 2019?

Yes. Boys sitting the 11+ will be sitting essentially the same test as they currently do in Year 6 for the Common Entrance pre-test. Our recent parent satisfaction survey highlighted areas where the school performs particularly well when compared to other preparatory schools. These include preparation for senior schools, advice on the next phase of education and teaching of literacy and numeracy. We therefore feel reassured that we can play to these strengths in the transition to become an outstanding 11+ school.

Do teachers at The Mall School have relevant 11+ experience?

Yes. Our teachers have been preparing boys for their pre-tests in Year 6 for many years. The pre-test is very similar to the 11+ exam.

Will any new teachers have 11+ experience?

Yes. The school's recruitment policy ensures that any staff we hire have the relevant qualifications and experience to allow them to prepare their pupils for the exams they will face.



What will the Year 6 timetable look like after the 11+ exams in January?

Year 6 will continue to have all the same lessons they had before the 11+ exams. They will write end of year internal exams in all subjects and they will have the opportunity to work on interesting projects. Reasoning will fall away to become time to look at current affairs or focus on key skills such as problem solving.

How will games be timetabled once we lose Years 7 and 8?

Boys in Years 4 to 6 will continue to have two afternoon of games each week including competitive fixtures against other schools. They will also have weekly lessons of swimming and PE.

What will be the impact on teachers?

All staff have been briefed on the move to 11+ and will be meeting with the Headmaster to explore in more detail what it means for the teaching of their subjects. Specialist teachers will continue to teach their subjects. Where staff are qualified to teach other subjects, their role may change slightly to take into account the focus on additional English and Maths for 11+.

With there being a greater need for certain subjects to be taught, Maths and English in particular, will all teachers in those subjects be specialists?

Yes. All teachers will be qualified to teach the subjects they are given. Some of our teachers are primary specialists with training in Maths and English teaching, while others are secondary trained with significant prep school experience.



Pastoral care and the well-being of the boys

Will the boys be emotionally mature enough to move to a senior school at 11+?

Yes. The vast majority of children in this country move to senior school at the age of 11. We already introduce soft skills in Year 4 to help prepare boys for senior school life, such as moving between classes for lessons, organising their books and equipment and having subject specialist teachers. These are things that the majority of children in state primary schools and in some prep schools will not have experienced. Senior schools are very good at making the settling in process as easy and seamless as possible for new Year 7s. For example, many run bonding expeditions at the start of Year 7 to help pupils settle in to the school.

How will you manage having two sets of leavers for two years before Years 7 and 8 are phased out?

We are looking at how we can adapt the extra-curricular and Leavers' programmes to ensure that Year 6 and Year 8 boys in 2019 and 2020 each enjoy a distinct and relevant range of opportunities in their last year at The Mall School. We are also looking at trips, particularly residential trips during these transitional years, and boys will continue to be awarded prizes at Prize Giving. In those two years when we will have both Year 6 Leavers and Year 8 Leavers, we will ensure there are leadership opportunities for boys in both year groups including, for example, showing prospective parents around the school.

How will you support my son through this process so he does not get overly stressed?

In addition to the usual form tutor role, several members of staff will be allocated a small group of boys in Year 6 to mentor throughout the year. The staff member will monitor the group's well-being and will allow the boys the opportunity to talk about their stresses and fears. It is hoped that this will give boys someone they can refer to as and when the need arises and parents can also link with the mentor.

We will also be asking boys in Years 4 to 6 to complete an emotional well-being survey in September which will give us some indication of their confidence levels and self-esteem. We will use this information to track pupils who may be feeling overwhelmed and work together with parents, form tutors and the staff mentors to support them. .



We have heard that the 11+ can be stressful for parents too. Who can parents talk to?

We already have lots of experience in supporting parents as well as boys for the pre-test and the market research carried out with parents in 2016 highlighted this as a key strength of the school. We hold a Future Schools' evening for parents in Years 4 to 6 to which we invite a guest speaker from a senior school to talk to parents. The Heads of Maths and English also talk about expectations around the 11+ assessment and reassure parents. In addition, parents can always make appointments to speak to the form tutor, one of the Assistant Heads or the Headmaster.





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