



Leehurst Swan School SALISBURY

Preparation for the 11+ at Leehurst Swan

What next? Where next?

The narrative of 'what next, where next?' is familiar in a world where striving for excellence has become engrained in the everyday; in a world where expectations are high, and the most fulfilling experiences are highly sought after. The very same narrative takes place within the education sector, within schools, individual classrooms, and beyond. Leehurst parents invest heavily in the education of their child and Leehurst teachers invest heavily too, with the shared goal of providing those in their care with the very best they can offer.

Your child may have only recently started their journey into education, or they may be heading towards their final years of primary education, still, the narrative prevails, and the question of where their journey may take them beyond their primary years will likely be surrounded by feelings of excitement and anticipation, alongside some apprehension.

At Leehurst we are committed to supporting your child as they prepare for their next step into secondary education. Whilst we are delighted that many choose to continue their journey at Leehurst, we are extremely proud of the very high 11+ rolling success rate of our Prep pupils.

How do I know whether my child is 'suitable' for a grammar school education?

There is much debate about how much preparation might be considered 'too much' and whether embarking on the 11+ process is the right decision for every child.

Ultimately a grammar school education maintains a strong focus on high academic achievement in large class sizes of pupils who have achieved the same required standard. It is therefore important, not only to consider the academic ability of your child but also whether or not they have the disposition to achieve within a large, grammar school. Through careful monitoring and analysis of your child's attainment, at Leehurst we are able to provide you with a strong indication as to how your child may perform in the examination and how they may respond to the pressures of learning within this type of environment.

You may have a strong feeling that the 11+ process is going to be the right one for your child from the outset, alternatively you may have ruled the 11+ process out early on. At Leehurst, we encourage all who feel interested to take part in our familiarisation sessions and encourage them to embark on the process with an open mind and to view the process as journey. Whilst no two journeys are the same, we aim to make the entire experience enlightening and enriching for all.

Some children thoroughly enjoy the 11+ process and find that learning and practising these new skills comes naturally; for others, the entire process can feel daunting, unsettling and can bring about feelings of anxiety. Adopting new techniques to problem solving, deciphering unfamiliar puzzles, and answering a vast number of questions under significant time constraints are the key challenges faced. At Leehurst, we keep a close eye on those engaging with the 11+ process and carefully monitor their wellbeing, alongside their progress. We work in partnership with parents and feedback any concerns to ensure that every child is fully supported.

11+ preparations: What? Why? How?

At Leehurst, we believe that every individual in our care should be provided with the opportunity to engage with the 11+ process and thus consider a grammar school education. As such, we are proud to offer 11+ familiarisation sessions to all of our Prep pupils.

We currently offer 11+ familiarisation sessions to pupils in Year Five. From September 2021 we are excited to further embed our 11+ sessions within our curriculum by extending our offering to pupils from Year Three.

At Year Three and Four, preparation will focus on core maths and English skills to secure the fundamentals. Pupils will work on developing a broader vocabulary, as well as developing their problem-solving skills. In Year Five, sessions are lengthier, with the introduction of mock exams and timed tests. We ensure pupils are familiar with the exam process and we help them to develop exam technique through regular practise, focusing on both GL and CEM examinations.

How can I support my child at home?

- Consider your child throughout the process and how they learn best. Some children work better with short intensive periods of study, whilst others benefit from a more gradual approach to studying. Avoid doing too much extra 11+ practise at home; your child will likely switch off from the whole process; observe and listen to your child.
- Read, read, and read some more! Encourage your child to read as broad a range of material as possible. Vocabulary plays a significant part in 11+ success and reading is a brilliant way of discovering new words. Tempt your child with new genres and formats and encourage them to visit local bookshops or the library – and we will encourage them to visit ours in school!
- Help them practise their times tables often and encourage them to engage with maths in a practical sense, for example when out spending money, cooking, or telling time.
- Consider ways in which you can develop your child's core 11+ skills – this could include completing a crossword or Sudoku puzzle together, playing board games together, or perhaps some quickfire maths or word games!

- Avoid comparing your child or your situation to others and encourage them to avoid doing this too. Praise them for effort, as well as achievement. Ensure they understand that there is value in their application to work, as opposed to only 'good marks'.
- Encourage your child to be ambitious and to do their best but do all you can to ensure that 11+ preparations are fun, relaxed and enjoyable. Too much pressure can result in children becoming overly stressed, which can result in underperformance. Reassure your child that passing the 11+ is not their only option.
- Keep your child feeling relaxed and happy, especially in the weeks leading up to the exam. Encourage them to spend time outside, engage in physical activity, participate in activities other than 11+ preparations, and ensure they sleep well!

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Leehurst Swan School

