

Preparing for the Trafford School Entrance Exams

In addition to our information video which can be accessed via this link www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSIORZjk64k is a detailed breakdown of our 11+ course.

The Trafford Entrance Exams

The Entrance Exams in Trafford take place in the September of Year 6. Depending on which school or schools you are considering for your child will depend on the exam or exams that they will need to sit.

Trafford Consortium Exam (serving AGSB, AGGS, Sale Grammar, Urmston Grammar and Stretford Grammar)	Loreto Grammar School	Saint Ambrose College
GL Assessment: Verbal Reasoning Numerical Reasoning Non-verbal Reasoning	GL Assessment: Verbal Reasoning English Internal Maths Paper	GL 'style' Assessment: Internal papers testing: Verbal Reasoning English Maths

Why students should prepare?

Tuition for the 11 Plus is a topic that generates much debate. However, just as we wouldn't expect to sit an exam, attend an interview, or give a presentation without thorough preparation, the same applies to the 11+. Similarly, we encourage students to prepare for GCSEs and A-Levels. Those who prepare feel more confident and perform better than those who do not. The 11 Plus can be an anxious time for some children, as it is often their first experience of a formal test. Understanding the significance of the outcome, being well-prepared not only makes them comfortable and confident with the process but also instils valuable habits for their future academic endeavours.

Many schools do not specifically teach the content tested in the 11+, making the types of questions seem unfamiliar. This unfamiliarity can cause stress and anxiety, affecting children's ability to answer questions effectively. Familiarity with the test processes helps children feel more confident, enhancing their chances of success in the exams.

Some of the knowledge and skills tested in the 11 Plus are part of the Year 6 and even Year 7 curriculum, which many children may not have encountered yet. These areas are covered throughout our course, ensuring that students are well-prepared.

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How can you guide your child through the 11 plus?

Achieving success in the 11+ exams is the result of sustained and strategic preparation. This process begins with building on students' existing knowledge, introducing new concepts, reinforcing learned material, and ultimately honing exam techniques.

To support this comprehensive preparation, we offer a year-long course specifically designed for Year 5 students. Below is an outline of how we structure our program for both children and parents participating in our 11+ group course. You can also adapt this framework if you plan to support your child's preparation independently.

Our courses are tailored to meet the unique needs of each student. While we adhere to a structured curriculum similar to schools, the content and teaching methods are customised based on the specific strengths and development areas of the children we work with. This personalised approach is informed by our professional assessments, strong student relationships and ongoing observations.

Our course information

Unlike many tuition companies, our courses are customised to meet your child's specific needs. Our teaching approach is flexible, adapting to the unique requirements of each student. Our courses are delivered by experienced, qualified teachers who work in both primary and secondary schools, bringing extensive knowledge of the 11+ exam content. These highly skilled educators continuously assess students' learning informally and adjust their teaching methods accordingly.

Moreover, we do not require formal assessments for children to join our courses. Formal assessments often fail to provide a comprehensive view of a child's abilities, offering only a snapshot of their performance at a specific moment. This does not always reflect their true potential. We believe that children, given the right opportunities and encouragement, can make significant progress in their learning.

We value building strong relationships with our students, and we believe that starting with an exam is not conducive to this goal. Instead, we trust your expert judgement as a parent. You know your child best, and if you believe that the grammar school path is suitable for them, we are here to support that journey.

Our focus is not on protecting or securing pass rates but on supporting each child's individual learning goals. We maintain open and honest communication with parents, providing regular opportunities for feedback and discussions about their child's learning and progress.

Additionally, to aid home preparations, we provide parents with a range of supportive resources throughout the year, including:

- Five bespoke written GL-style practice exam papers
- Access to a year's subscription of self-marking online practice materials for use at home
- A variety of how-to videos
- Homework tasks

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These resources are designed to enhance your child's learning experience and ensure they are well-prepared for the 11+ exam.

Our course structure:

September – March:

We begin by introducing the curriculum areas essential for the 11+ exams before gradually incorporating exam-style questions and formats. This process starts with identifying each child's individual strengths and development areas in the key subjects through informal testing with approved materials. It is crucial that children do not feel disheartened by any initial difficulties, so we ensure this assessment is conducted in a relaxed and non-judgemental manner.

During this initial phase, we familiarise children with the exam content and the types of questions they will encounter. We present this material in a non-pressurised and enjoyable way, aiming to build their confidence before tackling exam questions.

Children are given ample time to process and consider the questions, discussing different approaches to answering them. At this stage, we do not recommend that children attempt exams under timed conditions. The focus is on building confidence, expanding their knowledge, and learning how to apply it effectively.

As the course progresses, we gradually increase the quantity and difficulty of the questions, ensuring that the pace remains appropriate for each child. This approach allows students to steadily develop their skills and confidence, preparing them thoroughly for the 11+ exams.

March – July:

We progressively introduce formal exam techniques and practice alongside the core knowledge and content. This includes familiarising students with exam formats and gradually increasing the demands of working under timed conditions. By integrating these elements, we ensure that students are well-prepared to manage both the content and structure of the 11+ exams, building their confidence and competence in a supportive learning environment.

At this stage, children have a clear understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. We now introduce more structured timings for answering questions, gradually and in a non-pressurised, enjoyable manner. Techniques such as 'personal bests', 'team times', and 'rally races' are used to make this process engaging.

By acclimatising children to the time pressures of the exam in this way, we help to alleviate potential exam stress as the test date approaches. This combination of formal exam techniques, familiarisation with exam

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formats, and the gradual increase in timed practice ensures that students are well-prepared and confident in managing both the content and structure of the 11+ exams.

Our 5 Mock Exams run during this period.

July – September:

We increase the frequency and number of papers that children complete under timed conditions, progressively building their stamina and familiarity with the exam environment. At this stage, we also recommend considering a formal “mock exam.” This experience can significantly reduce examination anxiety and stress, and we organise such mock exams during this period.

In addition to increased practice, we focus on specifically teaching examination techniques and establishing effective routines and practices for the actual exam.

Throughout August, our 11+ preparation Summer School is in session. During this final month before the exam, we offer longer and more frequent lessons, including additional guided mock exams, opportunities for additional learning in groups and 121 settings to target the specific identified areas of need. Detailed information about the Summer School is provided separately.

The day of the exam:

As the exam approaches, all the hard work is about to pay off. The night before the exam, we recommend avoiding any study. Instead, enjoy a good meal, engage in distraction activities, and ensure ample rest.

On the day of the exam, help your child relax in the morning by doing something enjoyable together. Endorphins can greatly enhance exam performance, so plenty of laughter, love, and positive encouragement are essential. Make sure to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, and maintain a calm, relaxed, and confident atmosphere for both you and your child.

We send all our students to the exam with our best wishes, confident in their achievements. Since joining us in September, each child has made significant progress, reached learning milestones, overcome challenges, and grown more resilient and confident.

What if a child does not pass? Regardless of the exam results, we celebrate every child’s achievements. They have learned a great deal, none of which is wasted. Their reading, numerical, and problem-solving skills have all been enhanced through their efforts in the course.

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Why groups?

- Collaborative learning using proven group and peer strategies enhances both the learning experience and the quality of learning.
- Our classroom environment optimises children's focus, attention, and mindset. This heightened engagement allows them to gain more from each session.
- Learning in small groups accelerates the pace, enabling more content to be covered while maintaining focus.
- Children build friendships and camaraderie, offering familiar faces for reassurance on exam day.
- Most children thrive in small groups. Research by the Education Endowment Foundation has determined that small group tuition is broadly as effective as 121 tuition, and in some cases, especially when it comes to reading based learning, group tuition can be more effective than a 121 setting
- For situations where group learning is unsuitable, such as SEND or SEMH needs, we can explore 121 or paired learning options subject to availability.
- The Education Endowment Foundation's research supports small group learning as a highly effective model for additional support, nearly as beneficial as one-on-one tuition.

When does the tuition take place?

We run our 11+ course as a weekly, term time course. We offer mock exams, 121 top ups, workshops throughout the year and a comprehensive Summer School to further support children's preparations throughout the year.

If children are considering the preparations with a friend, timetable permitting, we may be able to accommodate our preparation course at a time that suits you: we offer this for friendship groups of 2+ children working together.

In addition to our Year 5 course, we do offer an introductory course that runs throughout Year 4 which supports children's readiness for the Year 5 process.

About our team:

All our teachers at LNW are qualified, DBS checked and have ample experience. Our 11+ course is led by Helen and Jo and they are supported by our team who have undergone extensive training and work placed supervision to ensure that they have the knowledge and expertise to deliver this specialised programme.

Helen Marshall:



Helen Marshall, BA (Hons), QTS, has had a lifelong passion for teaching, a dream that began at the age of seven. She graduated with First Class Honours in Primary Education from Manchester Metropolitan University in 2008 and has dedicated herself to the profession ever since. Initially starting her teaching career in Sheffield, Helen eventually moved to Manchester, a city she loves and has called home for many years.

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Helen's extensive teaching experience spans across Key Stages 1, 2, and 3/4, including work in alternative provision and with EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) students. Her primary specialism lies in KS1–2. Notably, she has significant experience working with SEND children, including in a specialist ASD unit.

Currently, Helen, one of our Equity Partners, serves as LNW's Relationship Manager, a role she thoroughly enjoys. She is also the Head of the 11 Plus programme, a position that aligns perfectly with her passion for nurturing children's potential and building their confidence and self-belief. Since 2018, Helen has successfully led the 11 Plus course at LNW, developing a comprehensive programme that not only meets the demands of entrance exams but also supports students' mental preparation by fostering positive mindsets, self-esteem, and a can-do attitude. Her extensive knowledge of these exams has been instrumental in helping numerous students and their parents navigate the complexities of various entrance exams, from Trafford Grammar Schools to Independent Schools across Manchester, Cheshire, and even London.

In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Helen is actively involved in the community as a member of the Altrincham and Sale Chamber of Commerce. She has also been selected to lead the teaching and support of an outreach programme for disadvantaged pupils. This programme, run in collaboration with several schools across the borough of Trafford, has seen significant success and expansion over its three-year duration, producing many inspiring success stories.

Helen is not only a dedicated educator but also a mother of four. Her commitment to her profession and her role at LNW is evident in her ongoing efforts to ensure every child reaches their full potential.

Jo Wormstone:



Jo Wormstone, BA (Hons) in Geography and Management from the University of Leeds and a PGCE from Liverpool Hope University, is a dedicated educator with 22 years of experience. She began her teaching career at an Outstanding school in one of the most socially deprived wards of Leeds, West Yorkshire. There, she also contributed to the school's status as a Teaching School by mentoring 3rd and 4th-year students.

After relocating to Manchester, Jo spent 12 years at a school in Urmston, where she took on the role of Maths Lead. To enhance educational standards, she completed continuing professional development with the North West Maths Hub. She also established a schools partnership hub for cluster schools to share best practices and continued to mentor teaching students. Her expertise lies particularly in reasoning.

Most of Jo's career has been dedicated to Key Stage 2 (predominantly Year 6), but she has taught across all Key Stages, including Key Stage 3/4 in an alternative provision setting for children with behavioral or SEMH challenges.

Since 2019, Jo has been working with LNW, enjoying the opportunity to tutor and deliver interventions to local schools in Urmston and Timperley, as well as in alternative provisions. As a Partner with LNW, Jo takes lead responsibility for the Year 4 11+ course preparations and deputises for the leadership, organisation and delivery for the Year 5 11+ course. Jo has extensive experience preparing and teaching children for the Trafford School

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11+ exams as well as the exams for private independent schools. Passionate about teaching all aspects of the curriculum, Jo particularly enjoys maths, English, and humanities.

For more information about the 11+:

There is a wealth of information available directly from the schools regarding the 11+ process including links to practice materials, sample papers etc. We strongly advise that you look directly at the schools you are intending on applying to.

You can also contact us directly to discuss your individual needs and ask any questions you have about the process.

Social Media

We share lots of insight into our teaching on our social media alongside other nuggets of information; please do have a look for more information.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/learnnorthwest

Instagram: @learnnorthwest

Twitter: @learnnorthwest

We look forward to working with you and your child and thank you for choosing Learn North West.

The Partners