

Secondary School Preparation 2025



This is not a normal situation!!!!!!

- Very few parts of the country have the concentration of selective or partially selective schools that we have in Watford.
- As an example, one school I know in Hertfordshire has 58/60 of their pupils going to the secondary school over the road.

Vocabulary

- Selective schools
- Partially selective schools
- Value added/progress 8
- Grammar Schools (There are no grammar schools in Hertfordshire)
- Consortium
- Consortium tests (the tests used for the SWH Consortium schools)
- 11+ (the test used for grammar schools)

What is Progress 8?

- Progress 8 is a type of 'value-added' measure that indicates how much a secondary school has helped pupils improve (or progress) over a five year period when compared to a government-calculated expected level of improvement. Confused? You may need a moment to get your head round it but essentially this measure takes a pupil's performance in relation to their peers at primary school level, compares it with their performance at GCSEs (their Attainment 8 score) and then, after some mental arithmetic, establishes whether the individual has progressed at, above or below the expected level. As before, the scores for individuals are not published but they are grouped together to get an average for a school's overall score.

Rickmansworth School – an example

- The banding for this school or college is 'well above average' because the score is greater than or equal to 0.5, and the entire confidence interval is above 0.
- Banding Well above average
- Score 0.55
- Confidence interval Open help text for Confidence intervals opens a popup 0.36 to 0.74

Progress 8 information from DFE website

- examples

- Watford Boys- well above average
- Westfield- above average
- Parmiters- well above average
- Croxley Danes- above average
- Watford Girls- well above average
- Kings Langley- average

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>

Open evenings

- Look beyond flowers
- Look beyond titles of schools
- What is right for your child?
- What are the head's values?
- What are parents saying; currently?
- Look at value added over outcomes – Progress 8
- Look at pastoral, if this is something that your child needs.
- What are the current pupils like?
- How strict is it?
- What are the financial expectations?

Know your child.....

- Some schools provide well for really able children.
- Some schools have excellent pastoral/wellbeing care.
- Some schools cater for SEND really well.

Naming 4 schools

- Use all 4 of your choices

Think about your choices

- If you are applying on test results be realistic! Not aspirational!
- Do not rely on sorting everything with an appeal- this is highly unlikely to work.
- If your child has not taken the consortium tests in September then you cannot apply under test results.
- To take the test you must have registered in June. There is no late application!!!!
- Include one non-selective school in your choices.

You can apply outside of your
county/Herts

Don't rely on an appeal

- Appeals are statistically unsuccessful
- You have to have EXCEPTIONAL reasons
- We can't help (much)

<https://www.swhertsschools.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/HISTORICAL-TEST-SCORE-INFORMATION-FOR-CONSORTIUM-SCHOOLS-2025.docx-1.pdf>

Timings (please use the dates on the official Herts website)

- Applications opened on September 1st
- Open events over September and October
- Consortium test results are in October
- Deadline for applications is 31st October – don't leave it to the last minute!!!
- 2nd December 2025-Last date to submit a written explanation giving reasons why your application was late, for your application to be agreed as 'on time'. If you move house, this is the last date for you to provide evidence of your new address and for it to be considered 'on time' in the allocation process.
- January 30th Late application cut off date for allocation day.
- National Allocation Day 2nd March 2026

Please don't play games

- Schools are very strict about checking addresses
- We have to verify addresses that you have used on your applications
- We are employed by Hertfordshire County Council

Do not leave your application to the last day or two.

- Systems crash
- There are more steps to do than you think- setting up a parent ID etc.
- The school is not open during the week prior to the deadline
- so do your application before half term week!

National allocation day- 2nd March 2025

- **Taken from the Herts admissions webpage**
- *We will email you the school you've been allocated, if you applied online and confirmed your email address.*
- *The online allocation system will be updated with allocations and be made available only after allocation emails have been sent.*
- *If you applied on paper, we will send you a notification letter and response form by first class post.*
- *If you applied online, you can use online facilities including opting out, making a new application and submitting an appeal.*

PLEASE ACCEPT A SCHOOL!!!!!!

- If you reject a place then you go to the bottom of the priority list. Always accept a school to save your place in the process.

Altogether now.....

‘Never reject, always accept!’

2 – 9th March 2026 - Continuing interest lists are created.

- Applicants that didn't get any higher preference schools will automatically go on the list for those schools.
- Parents or carers should confirm this with schools responsible for their own admissions.

Continuing Interest

Continuing interest applications open.

- You can add new preferences for some Hertfordshire schools for the first continuing interest run. Information will be available online from 2 March 2026.

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- 9th March 2026 - Last date to accept the place offered.
- Online applicants should accept the place online.
- Paper applicants should return their response form to the Admissions and Transport Team.

- 23 – 27 March 2026- First continuing interest run.
- We'll contact you with an offer of a new school place, if you're successful.
- 27 March 2026(4pm)- Last date to register an appeal.
- 30 March – 10 April 2026 - Continuing interest applications open again.
- You can add new school preferences for all schools for the second run of continuing interest.

- 10 April 2026- Last date to register a change of preferences or for new applications to be added for the second continuing interest run.
- 27 April – 1 May 2026- Second (and final) continuing interest run.
- We'll contact you with an offer of a new school place, if you're successful at the second continuing interest run.
- 29 April – 15 June 2026 (excluding half term and bank holidays) - School admission appeals take place during this period.

- May – July 2026 - If school vacancies occur, places will be filled from remaining continuing interest lists.
- To retain your continuing interest for a Hertfordshire upper or studio school or UTC you will need to make an in year application from 23 July 2026
- Continuing interest lists for secondary schools close on 23 July 2026.
- To retain your continuing interest for a Hertfordshire secondary school you will need to make an in year application from 24 July 2026.

A little word about SATS

- Sometimes parents lose interest after the consortium tests
- SATs are in May (June for writing)
- They are used for the progress 8 scores and can influence their GCSE groupings in some schools.

Writing SATs/Attendance

- These are teacher assessed over Year 6
- We need to have enough evidence of good writing over the year to give them the pass/ARE grade
- Some children last year did not get the pass/ARE grade for writing because they had missed too many writing modules over the year.

Progress 8

- <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/136606/rickmansworth-school/secondary>

SEND

- If your child is in receipt of an EHCP then it is true that you, as parents, can name their school rather than apply through the normal application process.
- You cannot just ask for an EHCP- these take a minimum of 20 weeks and are not easy to get as they require years of evidence and assessments to evidence need.

So you are not a parent of a year 6 child....

- Year 5 parents will have to decide on whether to apply for the consortium tests and the grammar school 11+ tests this year.
- If you think that your child might need extra time or support for the consortium tests then we can provide a letter but it needs to be based on what we have been doing for your child. We can't magic up a profile of evidence with a weekend's notice.
- Start doing open days/evenings

‘Out of cohort pupils’

- Out of cohort pupils are those that are in a different year group from that of their date of birth.
- Typically this is someone who deferred Reception year.

Never say anything bad about a school....

- You might end up sending your child there.
- Their best friend might end up going there.
- It can cause issues in class or on the playground.

When you get your school allocation...

- Congratulations if you get the result that you wanted. *All you have to do now is spend lots of money on equipment/uniform and fill in lots of forms!*
- Don't panic if you don't
- You can speak to me.
- Things always change, every year.
- Continuing interest!!!!

Secondary School

- Let us help with the transition.
- Keep in touch.