

Future Schools

AT SKIPPERS

Skippers

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Broadening Horizons. Raising Aspirations. Preparing for the Future.

Choosing a senior school is one of the most important decisions a family will make during their child's education. At Skippers, we understand that this process can sometimes feel complex, particularly as senior schools have increasingly varied admissions procedures, earlier registration deadlines and different academic, interview and scholarship requirements.

Our role is to make this journey feel **clear, purposeful** and **manageable**.

We believe that preparation for senior school should begin well before a child sits an entrance assessment. It should start with understanding the individual child; their academic strengths, interests, character, aspirations and the environments in which they are most likely to flourish.

Our **Future Schools** programme therefore goes far beyond examination preparation. We work closely with children and parents from Year 5 onwards, providing expert guidance, academic enrichment, targeted preparation, assessment practice, interview coaching and ongoing communication. We use our knowledge of senior schools and their admissions processes to help families make informed decisions and to ensure that each child is appropriately prepared for the pathway they are considering.

The Year 7 and 8 senior section provides senior school opportunities and the chance to develop pupils allowing them to thrive at their senior school of choice. The dedicated leadership, scholarship and coaching programmes help ensure our pupils get the most out of their childhood, while receiving a senior school experience with staff they know and trust.

Our aim is simple: to ensure that every Skippers pupil leaves us confident, capable and ready to thrive at the senior school that is right for them.

Choosing the Right Future School

There is no single definition of the "best" senior school. The right school is the one that matches the individual child.

Some children thrive in highly academic environments; others flourish where there is a particular strength in sport, music, drama, art or outdoor education. Some children are naturally suited to highly competitive entrance processes, while others may benefit from a more individualised admissions route.

At Skippers, we encourage families to begin thinking about these questions early.

We can help parents consider:

- Academic strengths and areas for development
- A child's interests, talents and personality
- The academic expectations of different schools
- Boarding and day-school options
- Co-educational and single-sex environments
- Scholarship opportunities
- Entrance assessments and examination formats
- Interview expectations
- Registration and application deadlines
- Travel and practical considerations
- The type of environment in which a child is most likely to flourish

Our experience of the senior-school landscape enables us to have honest and informed conversations with parents. We do not believe in simply encouraging every child towards the most selective school. Instead, we aim to help families identify schools where their child can be both successful and happy.

Working in Partnership with Parents

We regard parents as an essential part of the process.

Beginning in Year 5, we encourage families to meet with Mr Austen-White (Headteacher) and members of our senior team to discuss future-school options. These meetings provide an opportunity to consider your child's individual profile, look at standardised assessment information and discuss potential schools and their respective entry routes.

Our aim is to give parents the information and confidence they need to make well-informed decisions.

As your child progresses through the school, we continue to communicate about attainment, attitude, progress and areas for development. Where appropriate, we can adapt our enrichment and preparation programme according to the schools being considered.

Parents are also asked to complete our Future Schools Preference Form. This allows us to understand the schools families are currently considering and helps us to tailor our support accordingly.







Understanding the Senior School Landscape

One of the most important things for parents to understand is that senior schools do not all use the same entrance process.

Some schools use the ISEB Common Pre-Test, some use the Kent 11+, while others have developed their own individual assessment procedures. Some schools combine academic testing with interviews, school reports, references and other assessments.

This is why early planning is so important.

The ISEB Common Pre-Test

The ISEB Common Pre-Test is used by a number of highly competitive senior schools as part of their admissions process.

Schools using the ISEB pathway include, among others:

- Ardingly
- Benenden
- Brighton College
- Hurst
- Sevenoaks
- Tonbridge

The assessment covers four principal areas:

English: Reading comprehension, vocabulary and understanding of language.

Mathematics: Numerical understanding, problem solving and mathematical reasoning.

Verbal Reasoning: The ability to understand, analyse and manipulate language and verbal information.



Non-Verbal Reasoning: The ability to identify patterns, relationships and sequences using visual information.

For many schools, the Pre-Test is taken during Year 6 for future entry into Year 9. Registration and application procedures, however, begin earlier, making Year 5 an important planning year.

At Skippers, our preparation is deliberately introduced gradually. We want children to develop the underlying skills and confidence required rather than simply teaching them how to complete a particular test.

The Kent 11+

For families considering Kent grammar schools, the Kent 11+ provides a different pathway.

The assessment tests a combination of academic and reasoning skills, including:

- English
- Mathematics
- Verbal Reasoning
- Non-Verbal Reasoning

Our Reasoning curriculum provides pupils with regular opportunities to develop the types of cognitive skills required for this style of assessment.

We also provide additional preparation opportunities for families who are pursuing the 11+ pathway, including targeted tuition and practice.



Individual School Entrance Routes

Not every senior school follows the ISEB or Kent 11+ route.

Schools such as:

- Battle Abbey
- Bede's
- Claremont
- Dulwich Prep
- Eastbourne College
- Mayfield

Many schools use their own individual admissions procedures and assessment formats.

These can vary considerably and may include combinations of academic assessments, school-specific tests, interviews, reports, references and other selection activities.

This is where our partnership with parents becomes particularly valuable.

Once we know which schools a family is considering, we can help parents understand the relevant process and ensure that preparation is appropriately targeted.

Our objective is not to put every child through the same preparation programme. It is to provide the right preparation for the individual child and the schools they are considering.

Year 5: Where the Journey Begins

Year 5 is a particularly important year at Skippers. Although formal assessments may not take place until Year 6, we believe that the foundations for success should be established much earlier

Dedicated Reasoning Lessons

Reasoning is an important part of many senior-school entrance assessments.

In Year 5, dedicated Reasoning lessons are incorporated into the timetable, giving children regular opportunities to develop:

- Logical thinking
- Problem solving
- Pattern recognition
- Verbal reasoning
- Non-verbal reasoning
- Speed and accuracy
- Flexible thinking
- Confidence when approaching unfamiliar problems

The objective is to develop genuine cognitive skills rather than simply teach test tricks.





ATOM: Digital Preparation

Every child is provided with access to ATOM, an adaptive online learning platform.

ATOM allows pupils to practise skills in a way that responds to their individual performance. The question styles are closely aligned with the types of questions pupils may encounter in the ISEB Pre-Test.

We use ATOM throughout the preparation process to:

- Reinforce classroom learning
- Identify areas requiring further practice
- Develop familiarity with digital assessments
- Build speed and accuracy
- Maintain academic momentum during school holidays
- Provide additional practice where appropriate

During peak preparation periods, we recommend approximately 30 minutes of independent ATOM practice four or five times each week.

The emphasis is on regular, manageable practice rather than excessive preparation.



Year 6: Intensifying the Preparation

By Year 6, children are familiar with the underlying skills and the focus becomes increasingly targeted.

The Autumn Term is an important period for families applying to schools using the ISEB Common Pre-Test.

We support children through:

Targeted Reasoning Practice

Children continue to develop their verbal and non-verbal reasoning skills.

Academic Preparation

English and Mathematics preparation becomes increasingly focused on the demands of the relevant assessments.

As the November assessment approaches, preparation becomes more focused.

Homework can be adjusted so that children concentrate on key areas such as:

- Mathematics
- Spellings and vocabulary
- English comprehension
- Reasoning
- ATOM practice

The aim is to create a period of focused preparation without overwhelming the child.

Digital Practice

ATOM tasks provide regular opportunities to practise the format and question styles.

Mock Assessments

Children complete formal mock assessments to develop familiarity with the testing environment and build confidence.

Targeted Intervention

Where appropriate, pupils receive additional support in particular areas.

Examination Familiarisation

We believe that confidence comes from familiarity.

Year 6 pupils therefore undertake two sets of mock Pre-Test assessments, normally during October and early November.

These assessments allow pupils to experience:

- Timed sections
- Digital assessment conditions
- Different question types
- Working independently
- Moving between assessment areas
- Managing time
- Remaining calm when faced with challenging questions

We are able to administer these assessments in a familiar Skippers environment, reducing some of the anxiety that can accompany an unfamiliar assessment centre.

Following each mock, we can identify areas for further development and use this information to refine preparation.

Our intention is that by the time a child reaches the formal assessment, the process feels familiar rather than frightening.

ISEB Pre-test Assessment Day at Skippers

As the ISEB Pre-Test is administered at Skippers, we are able to provide a familiar environment and a carefully managed experience.

This can be particularly valuable for children who may feel anxious about unfamiliar surroundings.

The assessment is normally divided across two days, with English and Verbal Reasoning taking place separately from Mathematics and Non-Verbal Reasoning.

The exact arrangements and dates are communicated to parents each year and are subject to the relevant assessment provider's requirements.

Our role is to ensure that pupils understand what to expect, feel confident using the technology and are able to approach the assessment calmly and independently.



Preparing for Senior School Interviews

Passing an entrance assessment is only one part of the senior-school journey.

For many schools, the interview is an important opportunity for the child to demonstrate who they are beyond their academic results.

At Skippers, interview preparation begins after the formal written assessments have been completed.

Our Academic Enrichment sessions then move towards helping children develop the confidence and communication skills required for senior-school interviews.

We help pupils think about how to:

- Talk confidently about themselves
- Discuss their interests and passions
- Explain what they have enjoyed learning
- Talk about books and wider interests
- Discuss achievements
- Reflect on challenges and experiences
- Answer questions thoughtfully
- Listen carefully
- Ask intelligent questions
- Demonstrate curiosity
- Present themselves naturally and confidently

We do not want children to sound rehearsed.

Instead, we want senior schools to meet the real child: confident, articulate, curious and enthusiastic.

Supporting Parents Every Step of the Way

The senior-school process can sometimes feel daunting for parents.

There are registrations to complete, different assessment systems to understand, deadlines to remember and decisions to make.

We believe that parents should never feel that they are navigating this alone.

Our support includes:

Individual Strategy Meetings

Parents can meet with Mr Austin-White and Tiffany Henry to discuss potential schools, application strategies and their child's individual profile.

Understanding Assessment Data

We can use standardised assessment information, including CATs, Reading and Mathematics data, to help families understand their child's academic profile and consider which schools may be appropriate.

Future School Preference Form

Parents provide us with their current school preferences so that we can understand the direction each family is considering.

Admissions Guidance

We help parents understand the different types of entrance assessment and the broad timelines involved.

Communication

We maintain regular communication with families about progress, attainment and attitude.

Interview Preparation

Once written assessments are complete, we help pupils prepare for the next stage.

Scholarship Guidance

Where appropriate, we support families considering academic, sporting and creative scholarships.



Our Knowledge of Senior Schools

One of Skippers' greatest strengths is our understanding of the senior-school landscape.

We know that every school is different.

We understand that a school which is an excellent choice for one child may not necessarily be the right choice for another.

Our conversations with families therefore focus not simply on "Can my child get in?", but also on:

"Will my child thrive there?"

We consider academic profile, personality, interests, aspirations and the type of environment in which each child is likely to flourish.

This enables us to provide parents with informed, individualised guidance rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

A Partnership Between School, Child and Family

The strongest outcomes come when school, child and parents work together.

We therefore encourage parents to engage with the process early and maintain an open dialogue with us.

We will tell you what we are seeing in school.

We will share areas of strength and areas for development.

We will help you understand the different pathways available.

And, importantly, we will help you make decisions based on your child's individual needs rather than simply following what another family is doing.

Our aim is to give every family clarity, confidence and a clear plan.









Future Schools Timeline

YEAR 5: BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

Autumn Term

- Begin discussions about future schools
- Meet with senior staff to discuss potential pathways
- Begin dedicated Reasoning lessons
- Introduce ATOM
- Develop academic confidence and reasoning skills
- Start Applications and discussions with future schools
- Attend Open days

Spring Term

- Continue Academic Enrichment and Reasoning
- Review progress and standardised assessment information
- Consider potential senior-school options
- Develop individual strengths and interests

Summer Term

- Confirm current future-school preferences
- Continue targeted preparation
- Maintain ATOM practice
- Begin considering the specific requirements of individual schools
- Prepare children for the increased academic focus of Year 6
- Complete registration if sitting for the Kent 11+
- Register with Future Schools

Summer Holidays

- Continue regular ATOM practice
- Maintain academic momentum
- Encourage reading and independent learning
- Avoid the “summer dip” while ensuring children have a healthy break



YEAR 6:
ASSESSMENT AND APPLICATION

September

- Confirm assessment pathways
- Complete relevant ISEB registration through the Guardian Portal where applicable
- Continue targeted Reasoning and Academic Enrichment

October

- Complete first mock assessments
- Review areas for development
- Continue targeted ATOM practice
- Prepare for individual school assessments where applicable

Early November

- Complete second mock assessment
- Refine examination technique
- Build confidence and familiarity
- Focus preparation on individual needs

November

- Sit formal ISEB Pre-Test where applicable
- Complete individual school assessments where required
- Provide continued pastoral and academic support

After the Written Assessments

- Move the focus towards interview preparation
- Develop confidence and communication
- Prepare children to discuss their interests, achievements and experience

YEARS 7 AND 8:
CONTINUING TO RAISE ASPIRATIONS

Preparation does not stop once an initial senior-school assessment has been completed.

In Years 7 and 8, pupils continue to develop the skills that will allow them to thrive in their next stage of education.

This includes:

- Independent learning
- Research
- Presentation
- Leadership
- Academic enrichment
- Scholarship preparation
- Confidence and communication

The iPQ provides further opportunities for independent project work, while our scholarship carousel allows pupils to develop their individual talents and prepare for scholarship opportunities.



What Makes the Skippers Approach Different?

At Skippers, we believe our approach is different because senior-school preparation is not treated as a separate activity that begins shortly before an examination.

It is woven into the educational journey.

We provide:

Early preparation

Beginning in Year 5, before the pressure of formal assessment.

Academic enrichment

Going beyond the standard curriculum to develop higher-level skills.

Reasoning development

Building the cognitive skills required by a range of entrance assessments.

Digital preparation

Using ATOM to provide adaptive, regular practice.

Mock assessment experience

Making the assessment process familiar and manageable.

Individualised guidance

Recognising that every child and every school is different.

Parent partnership

Supporting families with decisions, registration and preparation.

Interview preparation

Helping children communicate their personality, interests and strengths.

Scholarship preparation

Nurturing academic, sporting and creative talent.

Senior-school knowledge

Using our experience of different schools and their admissions processes to help families make informed decisions.

Above all, we prepare children not simply to pass a test, but to become confident, curious and capable young people who are ready for the opportunities and challenges ahead.





Future Schools at a Glance

Understanding the Different Entry Pathways

Every senior school has its own admissions process. Some schools use the ISEB Common Pre-Test, while others have developed their own entrance assessments. Some combine academic testing with interviews, school reports and references, while others offer additional scholarship pathways.

The table on the next page provides an overview of some of the senior schools commonly considered by Skippers families.

Please note: *Entry requirements, assessment dates and admissions procedures can change. Families should always confirm the current requirements directly with the individual senior school. The Skippers team will support families in understanding the requirements relevant to their child's chosen pathway.*



Future School	Typical Entry Pathway	Main Assessment Areas	Interview / Additional Assessment	How Skippers Supports
Ardingly →	ISEB Common Pre-Test	English, Mathematics, Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning	May include further assessment/ interview	ISEB preparation, Reasoning, Academic Enrichment, ATOM, mock assessments and interview preparation
Benenden →	ISEB Common Pre-Test	English, Mathematics, Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning	Interview / further admissions stages may apply	ISEB preparation, Reasoning, Academic Enrichment, ATOM, mock assessments and interview preparation
Brighton College →	ISEB Common Pre-Test / school admissions process	English, Mathematics, Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning	Further school-specific stages may apply	ISEB preparation, Reasoning, Academic Enrichment, ATOM, mock assessments and interview preparation
Hurst →	ISEB Common Pre-Test	English, Mathematics, Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning	Interview / further assessment may apply	ISEB preparation, Reasoning, Academic Enrichment, ATOM, mock assessments and interview preparation

Future School	Typical Entry Pathway	Main Assessment Areas	Interview / Additional Assessment	How Skippers Supports
Sevenoaks →	ISEB Common Pre-Test	English, Mathematics, Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning	Further admissions process may apply	ISEB preparation, Reasoning, Academic Enrichment, ATOM, mock assessments and interview preparation
Tonbridge →	ISEB Common Pre-Test	English, Mathematics, Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning	Further assessment / interview may apply	ISEB preparation, Reasoning, Academic Enrichment, ATOM, mock assessments and interview preparation
Cranbrook →	Kent 11+ / grammar-school pathway	English, Mathematics, Verbal & Non-Verbal Reasoning	School-specific requirements may apply	Reasoning curriculum, Mathematics and English preparation.
Battle Abbey →	Individual / school-specific route	School-specific academic assessment	Interview / additional assessment may form part of the process	Bespoke preparation based on the school's current requirements
Bede's →	Individual / school-specific route	School-specific assessment	Interview / additional assessment may form part of the process	Bespoke preparation based on the school's current requirements

Future School	Typical Entry Pathway	Main Assessment Areas	Interview / Additional Assessment	How Skippers Supports
Claremont →	Individual / school-specific route	School-specific assessment	Interview / additional assessment may form part of the process	Bespoke preparation based on the school's current requirements
Dulwich Prep →	Individual / school-specific route	School-specific assessment	Interview / additional assessment may form part of the process	Bespoke preparation based on the school's current requirements
Eastbourne College →	Individual / school-specific route	School-specific academic assessment	Interview / additional assessment may form part of the process	Bespoke preparation based on the school's current requirements
Mayfield →	Individual / school-specific route	School assessment; early assessment options may mirror Pre-Test-style skills	Interview / additional assessment may form part of the process	Bespoke preparation based on the school's current requirements



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