



# THE IN Crowd

Getting your child into your school of choice will often involve interviews and exams. We've spoken to experts from some of the highest-performing schools in the region to find out what children can expect from the exams, what qualities are actually being tested, and how prospective students should best prepare

There are plenty of pressures on 11 and 13 year olds, from making friends to keeping up their Instagram accounts, and entrance exams are another. They may be the gateway to the best independent schools, and this means the pressure can be intense.

At Aysgarth School, the staff specialise in preparing pupils for taking entrance and scholarship exams, and emphasise the work that goes into this. 'Preparation for exams, or anything that is important to you, takes time. Above all, the need to revisit material regularly and with a desire to learn is essential,' says Dr Ed Canning, Director of Studies at Aysgarth School. 'Spending hours repeating facts is not efficient use of time so, if in doubt, seek guidance from your teachers whose experience and advice is really worth making use of. At home, have a space set aside dedicated to work; decide each day what you are going to tackle on the

following day, lay it out and have it ready; the more important the exams, the longer you should be working; repeat in different ways, make links, test yourself.'

It's important that pupils are well supported through this process – both at school and at home. 'We expect a lot from our pupils in all they do but this goes hand in hand with caring and supportive teaching and having this mirrored at home,' continues Ed. 'Ensuring that from the start of their career with us we encourage our pupils to become reflective learners, acknowledging and being able to self assess their own needs, is vital to their long term success.' He also stresses the importance of developing effective study skills. 'Encouraging a sense of independence and an acknowledgement that time spent wrestling with ideas and developing a deep grasp of taught material is essential, though this is not always easy and does require support and encouragement from staff.'

However, the importance placed on these exams does not necessarily mean that prospective students should be spending all of their free time swotting up. For many schools, it is a pupil's potential, willingness to engage and their academic curiosity that is being assessed in these tests, and it's important to know what to expect from the school you're applying for.

