



## **SCHOLARSHIP & COMMON ENTRANCE GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PARENTS**

Over the years, certain questions regarding Common Entrance and Scholarship frequently arise. This document will hopefully answer some of those questions. If you have any further questions, then staff will do their best to answer them!

### **Common Entrance or Scholarship?**

*What are the differences?*

Both are challenging exams that are in advance generally speaking of a child's academic age. By academic age, one means work that one would expect your child to do according to the National Curriculum at a particular point in their school career - in Year 3 they will work to a Year 3 appropriate programme of study for example. CE can sometimes mean a coursework project is part of the mark (Geography and RS in recent years).

In the past, Common Entrance has been viewed as "the easy option" - it is not. For example, English CE contains work that is roughly of a difficulty of OCR (Oxford Regulating Board) GCSE Higher Tier standard. That is, work students do in Years 10 and 11 if they're confident in the subject. In some subjects, the difficulty level is not as severe as this but still challenging. For subjects that are as challenging as English at CE, the subject teachers begin accelerated learning in Year 6 if possible and certainly in year 7.

To continue with English as an example, Scholarship Level is often A-Level standard, with A-Level standard writers being worked on in exams (Woolf, McKewan, Bronte, Dickens, Swift, Conrad). In English there is no syllabus, no specific set book, but students are expected to work on extremely difficult material and write about it fluently and critically.

Scholarship has previously been seen as the only way to win a financial reduction in fees for the senior school. However at Sompting, we have had successful students win "all-rounder" awards (Lancing College have given a Shearwood and Brighton a Millennium) from exceptionally high CE scores. Also, if your child wins a Music, Drama or Art Scholarship, the award is dependent on a strong CE performance.

### **How much homework is a pupil expected to do?**

At CE level, there is nowhere in the ISEB syllabus that says "the student must have X amount of homework". Nor Scholarship. But students must stay on top of workloads in all subjects. The school is encouraging of extra-curricular work, but in Year 7 and 8 students really must prioritise Prep commitments. In most cases, an in-depth CE Prep means an hour at least. Subject teachers might say, "this will take 45 minutes to an hour-it's a bit long but you need to get this done as part of the programme of study". If students have worked extremely hard in lessons then a subject teacher may set a smaller Prep that only takes 20 minutes or less. In the same way, subject teachers should always say how long they expect their students to work on Prep for. The majority of subjects have timed questions on their exam papers; when it comes around to exam practice teachers might say "just use 40 minutes (for example) as that's what you get in the exam".



Scholarship is that much more difficult and in some cases, students may need to spend more time on work than a single hour. If they are struggling with commitments, staff are guaranteed to be sympathetic providing there is responsible liaison between student, form teacher and subject teacher (and parent if necessary). We encourage students to talk to teachers about deadlines and the possibility of compromise but not in the lesson the work is due in-at the start of the day or in a break-time before the lesson. A teacher will not withhold a deadline extension unless there have been previous extensions granted which are now stacking up and becoming impossible to work through.

## **Common Entrance**

*Which senior school? Who should I talk to regarding senior schools?*

There are some senior schools which are stridently academic, others are more “sporty”, and some seek a happy medium. Mr. Stuart Douch is the best person to talk to about senior schools simply because as Sompting Abbots Headmaster, he has a good relationship with other Heads and knows aspects of a senior school that will fit an individual. He has also been through the CE process himself and understands pressures that children and parents may be under.

## **When do I need to make a decision?**

Senior schools like to register prospective students in advance; it is a good idea to do this as soon as possible once you have decided on one. Do not leave this too late; ideally Year 6 is a good time, failing that, Year 7. Lancing, Hurst and Brighton all require electronic pre-testing; this is sat at Sompting Abbots in Year 6 (or Year 7 in the case of a change of mind from a family). All our pupils who have undergone this have been offered places at their Senior Schools of choice.

**What is the difference between Level one papers and Level two?** Level One CE is an experiment for core subjects that differentiated for students who might have had high literacy but low numeracy, or vice versa. The English Level One had easier to read comprehensions and easier to work through questions on its comprehension, for example. However, despite these papers being very accommodating for students lacking confidence in one or more of the core subjects, Lancing College, Brighton College and Hurst have ruled out accepting these because they fear this will result in less chance of the students doing well at GCSE. For this reason, if a student wishes to go to Lancing, Brighton or Hurst, there is no point in them working on any paper except Level 2 for core subjects. Seaford and Sion will accept entrants with Level 1 but they may insist they sit a VR and NVR test before being accepted.

**How many examinations are there for each subject?** Usually the core subjects have at least 2. It is best to discuss with subject teachers the layouts in Year 7.

**Will teachers provide extra support?** Many do, and will offer their services for students sitting exams that year in holiday time, usually in the Easter holiday.



**What happens if my child is unable to take an examination because of illness?** Students who are unwell on an exam day should not be allowed to access facebook or social media, or use a mobile device to communicate with classmates in case they obtain an unfair advantage. They will take the exam as soon as possible.

**When will the results be known?** The senior schools usually reply within two weeks of receiving the papers.

### **Additional Scholarship Information**

**Can a candidate be awarded a Scholarship in more than one subject?** Scholarships are usually Academic, Art, Music, Sport, or Drama. If a student is doing a Music Scholarship and an Academic Scholarship, it is inadvisable to try for, say an Art scholarship on top of this as the workload would be too much. It is best to stick with the stronger field and then the next strongest.

### **What are the different awards?**

A Scholarship is an award for a candidate who has excelled in all academic fields. For those who have excelled in some but not all, an Exhibition is awarded. Some senior schools may award Major Awards for outstanding achievement.

**What if my child is struggling to cope with the Scholarship syllabus?** All Scholarship students will be closely monitored by their form teacher. Parents will be kept in the loop and communication will be constant. If the school has concerns about the happiness and emotional well-being of a student then a meeting will be set up with the parents and form teacher (and Head- master if required), to help work out the best course of action. At all times the child's welfare and best interests will be paramount.

### **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

**Do pupils with learning difficulties need an Educational Psychiatrist's Report?** They do; it needs to be up to date and relevant (your Ed. Psych. Report should make a note of this on the report). CE or Scholarship is hard, if you need more time to process answers, and you are entitled to it, you won't get it unless there is an up-to-date Ed. Pscyh. Report. It will not pigeon-hole your child as being "weak" academically, it is the necessary key to getting extra time to work on questions that children with Learning Difficulties need. Ed. Psych. Reports also make specific teaching recommendations which are valuable to staff working with your children. If parents or the intended senior school believe that a candidate needs an Educational Psychiatrist's report then this must be done at least six months in advance of the exams. The LSCO (Learning Support Co-Ordinator) teacher, Mrs Cathy Camfield, must check the report's validity. The onus is on parents to contact their child's intended senior school to check if a report is needed. A copy of this report will be needed by Sompting Abbots School and should be given to the LSCO who will then inform the Examinations Officer and relevant subject teachers.



a) Lancing, Brighton and Hurstpierpoint will accept level one papers in core subjects for pupils whose second language is English.

b) Seaford College & Sion will accept a Level One paper in the core subjects.

In the event that a reader is needed by a candidate the ISEB (Independent Schools Examinations Board) asks that:

'Schools with Special Learning Difficulties candidates should contact the relevant senior school to discuss each candidate's needs. Junior schools are asked to send senior schools the ISEB special needs report (submitted at least three months in advance). Computers may be used by candidates certified as having specific learning difficulties. In exceptional cases, schools may provide a reader or an amanuensis. For visually impaired candidates the Board will arrange for enlarged or Braille copies of the examination papers to be printed; a year's notice is required. There will be cost implications.' (taken from ISEB Website)

**Candidates whose second language is English.**

Common Entrance candidates whose mother tongue is not English are allowed to use bilingual dictionaries in Mathematics, Science and Humanities. They are also allowed up to 25% extra time if they have studied in the medium of English for less than two years. (taken from the ISEB Website)

**When do the Common Entrance Examinations take place?**

The exam timetable with invigilators will be given to all teachers by the Examinations Officer at least two weeks in advance of the examinations starting. Dates for CE and Scholarships can be found on the Independent Schools Examinations Board website:

<http://www.iseb.co.uk/dates.htm> .

**Who is responsible for the examination procedure?**

a) Mr. Stuart Douch is the designated Examinations Officer; he has direct responsibility for CE at Sompting Abbots. In the event of his absence then his designated deputy is Mr D. Buckingham.

b) The French Speaking and Listening exams are the responsibility of the head of French, Ms. S. Young. In the event of her absence, Ms I Monaghan or Mrs. A Williamson (day depending) is designated to take responsibility for these examinations.

c) The Mental Maths Paper is the responsibility of the Head of Maths, Ms A Farley and in her absence, Mr S Douch will deputize.

**When do CE exams start?** The CE examinations begin the week after the summer half-term. Examinations will start at 0830 in order to give pupils more time between exams.