

POST PRIMARY TRANSFER CONSORTIUM

Details of the PPTC Entrance Assessment 2021-22

1.0 Introduction

The information in this document provides details of the Entrance Assessment, which is provided for PPTC by GL Assessment. The Assessment consists of an English paper and a Mathematics paper. An Irish Medium version of the Assessment is also available.

The areas covered are:

- Section 2: Assessment Format
- Section 3: Assessment Content
- Section 4: Assessment Administration
- Section 5: Assessment Marking and Scoring
- Section 6: Timetable
- Appendix: Format and Specification of the 2021-22 PPTC Entrance Assessment: A guide for parents and teachers (This appendix was previously published on the www.pptcni.com website on 17th May 2021)

2.0 Assessment Format

Each assessment paper has an assessment booklet, containing any reading passages and questions, and a separate answer sheet. Additional paper is provided for pupils to use for any rough work.

All questions are multiple-choice, with 5 potential answer options.

2.1 Practice Assessments – as part of the Entrance Assessment papers

Each assessment paper begins with a Practice Assessment which is followed by the Main Entrance Assessment. The Practice Assessment is intended to provide pupils with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the style of questions in the Main Assessment, and to become accustomed to the multiple-choice method of responding and the use of a separate answer sheet.

The Practice Assessment contains both familiarisation questions and practice questions. The familiarisation questions are worked through with the pupils and the correct answers are provided with explanations of those correct answers given by the Assessment Invigilator. They also provide an exercise in the use of a separate answer sheet where pupils are required to mark their intended answer. The practice questions allow the pupils some time to work independently through some questions in preparation for starting the Main Assessment. Answers are provided for these practice questions prior to the start of the Main Assessment.

2.2 Main Assessment - English

The English assessment paper begins with a Practice Assessment comprising of a short reading passage with 3 familiarisation questions (comprehension) and 7 practice questions (4 spelling and 3 punctuation) which takes about 20 minutes to complete. None of these 10 questions count toward the overall mark.

The Main Assessment then begins and requires the pupils to work through 50 questions in 50 minutes. There are **two** reading passages. For 2021-22 one of these reading passages will be fiction or non-fiction and the other will be poetry (all from 20th century onwards). Both reading passages are followed by 16 comprehension questions. Each comprehension question has A, B, C, D or E answer options. There are also 9 punctuation questions and 9 spelling questions which, in addition to A, B, C, D all have a valid answer option of "N" meaning that there was no mistake or error. Overall, 64% of the marks are for the comprehension questions which follow the reading passages and 36% of the marks are for the spelling and punctuation questions.

Comprehension passages are presented in evenly spaced 12pt text. They may be accompanied with images to illustrate the text.

2.3 Main Assessment – Maths

The Mathematics assessment paper begins with a Practice Assessment comprising of 3 familiarisation questions and 6 practice questions. The 3 familiarisation questions are worked through with the pupils and then they are provided with a further 10 minutes to complete the remaining 6 practice questions. None of these 9 questions count toward the overall mark.

The Main Assessment then begins and requires the pupils to work through 45 questions in 45 minutes. Each Mathematics question has A, B, C, D or E answer options.

2.4 Sample Familiarisation Materials

A sample of both English and Mathematics material, laid out in the format of the assessment papers, including answer sheets, is included in the Registration Pack, which is available on the www.pptcni.com website and from Assessment Centres.

2.5 Sample Practice Materials

A full practice English paper and a full practice Mathematics paper (+ Gaeilge versions) will be available, at no cost, on the www.pptcni.com website or from the Assessment Centres in September 2021.

3.0 Assessment Content

3.1 English

The content of the Entrance Assessment English paper is intended to reflect aspects of English language involving comprehension, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling.

The assessment paper has been designed to be similar to a normal book layout; title and contents pages are at the front, index, and glossary at the back. The reading passages chosen have been selected to represent a variety of styles and authorship and the types of passage a pupil might come across in the normal course of reading in school or at home. The content of the passages is suited in difficulty and interest to pupils in the age group being assessed.

One of the reading passage will be fiction or non-fiction and the other reading passage will be poetry but none of the passages will be from texts written before the 20th century. The overall length of the reading material has been reduced by around 30%-40% compared to previous Entrance Assessment papers which had three reading sections; i.e. reducing the number of reading passages has not meant increasing the length of the passages.

Comprehension is considered to be of considerable importance and this is reflected in the structure of the assessment paper. Other skills occupy a smaller proportion of the assessment questions. The questions which follow each reading passage are phrased in language which is simpler in structure and vocabulary than the reading passages.

The spelling and punctuation exercises use short passages of dialogue taken from pupils' literature.

The assessment includes the following:

- Comprehension: literal and inferential interpretation of statements in the passages.
- Vocabulary: meanings of selected words in the context of the passage.
- Spelling and Punctuation: proofreading skills in detecting mistakes in printed material.

3.2 Mathematics

The content of the Entrance Assessment Mathematics paper is guided by the CCEA specification in **the Mathematics and Numeracy** Area of Learning section of the Northern Ireland Key Stage 1 and 2 Curriculum.

The questions will address the content detailed in the Programme of Study strands:

- Numeracy
- Measures
- Shape and Space
- Handling Data

Detailed Key Stage 1 and 2 Mathematics and Numeracy content of these strands is set out in Section 3.2 of the CCEA document “The Northern Ireland Curriculum: Primary” .

To access this document, go to: <https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/northern-ireland-curriculum-primary> and click on the link to the pdf document on the front page.

Please note that:

Some topic areas which have been assessed in previous years will not be assessed in the 2021-22 Entrance Assessment. Some topics areas have been simplified by removing more challenging parts of the topic.

The list below indicates topic areas which will NOT be included in the 2021-22 Entrance Assessment Mathematics Paper and limitations in some topic areas.

2021-22 Mathematics Assessment – Topic Area exclusions and limitations

- Proportion will **not** be examined.
- Ratio, including scale will **not** be examined.
- There will be **no** algebra questions.
- There will be **no** questions involving use of brackets.
- Pie charts will **not** be used in questions.
- Probability and likelihood will **not** be examined.
- There will be **no** questions on cube numbers.
- There will be **no** questions involving negative numbers.
- Averages will be **limited** to mean i.e. there will be **no** questions on mode or median.
- Calculation of perimeter and area are included but calculation of the volume of cubes and cuboids is **not**.
- Questions may be asked on 2D shapes but **not** on 3D shapes.
- Metric units for length, mass and volume will be **limited** to cm, m, km (length), g, kg (mass) and ml, l (volume).
- Although questions may be asked on 12 and 24-hour clocks there will **not** be any questions which use timetables.

4.0 Assessment Administration

The Entrance Assessment is formally standardised which requires the Assessment Invigilators to read strictly word-for-word from a provided set of administration instructions ensuring that all pupils taking the Entrance Assessment have an identical experience. This also ensures that the correct level of support is offered by each Assessment Administrator, regardless of experience.

All answer sheets will be pre-printed with the pupil’s personal details therefore eliminating the need for pupils to complete the appropriate boxes at the top of the answer sheet. This has also reduced the amount of time that pupils will need to be within the formal assessment environment. Assessment Invigilators will be supplied with spare answer sheets in case any of the personal details are incorrect; however, the Assessment Invigilator will still be required to complete the pupil’s personal details manually.

5.0 Assessment Marking and Scoring

5.1 Marking Process

The answer sheets will be returned to GL Assessment for independent marking and scoring. The answer sheets will be scanned using QRA and Quartz scoring software. GL Assessment enforces stricter levels than those specified by industry standards in the detection, discrimination and handling of all marks on answer sheets.

Any question which has multiple answers detected will prompt permanent internal staff to interpret whether the pupil's intended answer is clear, and if so override the question with the pupil's intended answer. Where there is doubt senior scoring staff are consulted.

In the event of any score being in doubt after results are returned to the Assessment Centre, GL Assessment will hand score answer sheets as requested by the Assessment Centre to alleviate any concerns with the technology, processes or procedures being used.

In the case of re-mark requests, following the issue of Entrance Assessment outcomes to parents, the answer sheets from both papers are hand marked.

5.2 Scoring

Pupils are awarded one mark for a completely correct question based on their clearly intended answer. There are never any fractional marks awarded. Raw scores are calculated (the number of questions answered correctly) per assessment paper per pupil. A valid Mathematics raw score will be between 0 and 45 (as there are 45 questions in total). A valid English raw score will be between 0 and 50 (as there are 50 questions in total).

Pupils' ages are calculated using their dates of birth and dates of assessment to the number of completed months old. For example, a pupil born on 20/12/2010 and tested on 13/11/2021 will be 10 years and 10 completed months old (he/she would not be 10 years and 11 completed months old until the 20/11/2021).

Standardised age scores (SAS) (a measure of a pupil's standing compared to the national sample) are then calculated per assessment paper per pupil based on standardisation tables for the particular assessment. This is done using the raw score and age in completed months. Valid Standardised Age Scores range from 69 to 141 per paper. The standardised score achieved by each pupil in both papers are then added together to give his / her combined total Standardised Age Score, which will range from 138 to 282.

Finally, grades and cohort percentiles are calculated using the combined total Standardised Age Scores.

6.0 Timetable

The Entrance Assessment will be held on **Saturday 13th November 2021** and a Supplementary Entrance Assessment will be held on **Saturday 11th December 2021**. The Supplementary Entrance Assessment will be held at a number of specified regional Assessment Centres and not necessarily the Assessment Centre which had been assigned to a particular pupil for **13th November 2021**.

In the event that it is not possible to hold the Assessment on 13th November 2021, a contingency date of 11th December 2021 will be used.

Appendix 1: Format and Specification of the 2021-22 PPTC Entrance Assessment

A guide for parents and teachers (published 17th May 2021)

This guide outlines the steps that PPTC and GL Assessment have taken, following input from parents and teachers, alongside discussions with GL Assessment in order to make the 2021-22 English and Mathematics Entrance Assessment papers more accessible than ever before.

The key to making the papers more straightforward has focussed on two different approaches – one for English and one for Mathematics.

Reducing the level of complexity in the English paper has largely been achieved through changing the format of the paper.

Reducing the level of complexity in the Mathematics paper has been achieved through reducing the content of the KS2 Mathematics Specification which will be assessed.

The English Entrance Assessment paper

2020-21

- *The paper had 6 sections – 3 reading passages each followed by comprehension questions; 1 punctuation section; 1 spelling section; 1 general section.*
- *The reading sections could be taken from: 19th, 20th or 21st century fiction; non-fiction; or poetry.*
- *Some questions had 4 answer options and some questions had 5 answer options.*
- *Some reading passages had more questions than others.*
- *The number of spelling questions was different to the number of punctuation questions.*
- *The paper had 60 questions.*
- *The paper lasted 60 minutes.*

2021-22

- ✓ The number of sections in the paper will be reduced from 6 to 4.
- ✓ There will be 2 reading sections, instead of 3, both followed by comprehension questions.
- ✓ One reading passage will be fiction or non-fiction and the other reading passage will be poetry but none of the passages will be from 19th century literature.
- ✓ Although the reading passages can be fiction, non-fiction or poetry there will be no 19th century fiction.
- ✓ The overall length of the reading material will be reduced by around 30%-40% compared to previous Entrance Assessment papers; i.e. reducing the number of reading passages does not mean increasing the length of the passages.
- ✓ Instead of some questions having 4 answer options and some having 5, every question will have 5 answer options.
- ✓ Both reading passages will be followed by 16 comprehension questions.
- ✓ There will be 9 punctuation and 9 spelling questions.
- ✓ There will be no general section - requiring knowledge and understanding of literary or linguistic terms, e.g. glossary or index.
- ✓ The number of questions in the paper will be reduced from 60 to 50.
- ✓ The paper will last 50 minutes instead of 60 minutes.

The Mathematics Entrance Assessment paper

2020-21

- The paper had 45 questions.
- The paper lasted 45 minutes.
- Every question had, A-E, answer options.
- The specification of topic areas essentially covered the whole of the Key Stage 2 N.Ireland Maths Curriculum.

2021-22

- ✓ The paper will have 45 questions.
- ✓ The paper will last 45 minutes.
- ✓ Every question will have 5, A-E, answer options.
- ✓ Some topic areas which have been assessed in previous years will not be assessed in the 2021-22 Entrance Assessment.
- ✓ Some topics areas have been simplified by removing more challenging parts of the topic.

For clarity, the table below indicates topic areas which will NOT be included in the Assessment and limitations in some topic areas.

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- Probability and likelihood will **not** be examined.
- There will be **no** questions on cube numbers.
- There will be **no** questions involving negative numbers.
- Averages will be **limited** to mean i.e. there will be **no** questions on mode or median.
- Calculation of perimeter and area are included but calculation of the volume of cubes and cuboids is **not**.
- Questions may be asked on 2D shapes but **not** on 3D shapes.
- Metric units for length, mass and volume will be **limited** to cm, m, km (length), g, kg (mass) and ml, l (volume).
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