

NOVA PARENT GUIDE

01

Independent School Entry

A practical guide for parents considering
7+ and 8+ admissions



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WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This guide is written for parents whose child is currently at a state primary school and who are considering a move into the independent sector at 7+ or 8+. It assumes no prior knowledge of the system. If you have never been through an independent school admissions process before, start here.

W E L C O M E

Before you begin

If you are reading this guide, you are probably considering whether an independent school might be the right next step for your child. You may have questions. You may feel uncertain about the process, the timing, or whether your child is ready. You are not alone, and you have come to the right place.

This guide is designed to answer the questions we hear most often from parents who are exploring independent school entry for the first time. We have written it in plain English, without jargon or pressure, because we believe that understanding the process is the first step towards making the right decision for your family.

Nova Education is a specialist provider of 7+ and 8+ preparation. Our tutors include experienced teachers and practising examiners who have helped many children successfully navigate the transition from state primary to independent school. We do not promise places. We do promise clear, structured preparation that builds both skills and confidence.

We hope you find this guide useful.

The Nova team

What this guide is, and is not

This guide is designed to inform and support parents who are considering independent school entry at 7+ or 8+. It explains how the system works, what to expect, and how to prepare your child without creating unnecessary pressure.

This guide is not a substitute for professional assessment, nor does it guarantee admission to any particular school. Every child is different, and every school has its own criteria. The information here is accurate at the time of writing, but we encourage you to verify specific details directly with the schools you are considering.

How to use this guide

You can read this guide from beginning to end, or you can dip into the sections that matter most to you right now. Each section stands on its own, though they do follow a logical progression from understanding the basics to taking practical steps.

At the end of each section you will find a short summary of key points and a suggested next step. We have also included a simple timeline checklist that you can print and keep.

01

What Are 7+ and 8+ Admissions?

The entry points, the timeline, and why schools use them.

The basics

7+ and 8+ are entry points into independent schools at two specific ages.

- 7+ means entry into Year 3, when a child is seven years old.
- 8+ means entry into Year 4, when a child is eight years old.

These entry points exist because many independent junior schools, particularly in London, do not take children at the traditional Reception or Year 1 stage. Instead, they offer places at 7+ or 8+, often to fill spaces that become available as some children move on to other schools or as the school expands its intake.

For parents whose children are currently at state primary schools, 7+ and 8+ represent a genuine opportunity to move into the independent sector. Every year, hundreds of children make this transition successfully. It is not unusual, and it is not reserved for a particular type of family.

Why schools use these entry points

Independent schools have used 7+ and 8+ entry for many decades. There are practical reasons for this. By age seven, a child's academic ability, concentration, and social development are easier to assess reliably than they are at four or five. Schools can see how a child reads, writes, reasons, and interacts with others. They can make more informed decisions about which children will thrive in their environment.

WHAT EXAMINERS ACTUALLY LOOK FOR

The assessment is designed to identify potential, not to catch children out

Schools want to find children who will benefit from what they offer and who will contribute positively to the school community. Understanding that changes how the whole process feels, for you and for your child.

The difference between 7+ and 8+

The main difference is timing. Both are entry points into the same kind of school, assessed in much the same way. What changes is the year group your child joins, and how many places are on offer.



Entry into Year 3

AGE AT ENTRY

Seven years old

ASSESSED DURING

Year 2, usually November to January

PLACES AVAILABLE

The larger of the two entry points. Most schools expand their intake here

COMPETITION

Strong, but spread across a bigger number of places



Entry into Year 4

AGE AT ENTRY

Eight years old

ASSESSED DURING

Year 3, on the same seasonal pattern

PLACES AVAILABLE

Usually a smaller intake, and offered by fewer schools

COMPETITION

Often more intense, because applicant numbers do not fall in proportion to places

Some schools offer both. Some offer only 7+. A few offer only 8+. You will need to check the admissions policy of each school you are interested in.

Which types of schools offer 7+ and 8+?

Not all independent schools use these entry points. Day prep schools and independent junior schools in London are the most common providers. Some highly selective day schools also use 7+ or 8+ as their main entry point. Boarding schools rarely use 7+ or 8+ for entry at this age, though some offer occasional places.

In North and North-West London, where Nova is based, there is a strong concentration of schools that offer 7+ and 8+ entry. We discuss how to build your school list in Section 2.

The timeline: a simple overview

Understanding the timeline is essential. Here is a typical pattern for 7+ entry, assuming your child is currently in Year 1 at a state primary school.

When	What happens
Spring or Summer of Year 1	Parents begin researching schools. Open days and visits take place.
Autumn of Year 2	Registration deadlines for most schools, usually September to November.
Late Autumn or early Winter of Year 2	Assessments take place, usually November to January.
February of Year 2	Offers are made. Parents accept or decline.

When	What happens
September of Year 3	Child starts at the new school.

For 8+ entry, the timeline shifts by one year. Registration and assessment typically happen during Year 3, with entry into Year 4 the following September.

IMPORTANT

These dates vary between schools. Some schools assess earlier, some later. Always check the specific dates on each school's website.

KEY POINTS FROM THIS SECTION

- ✓ 7+ and 8+ are standard entry points into independent junior schools.
- ✓ They exist because schools can assess children more reliably at age seven or eight.
- ✓ The process follows a clear timeline, beginning in Year 1 for 7+ entry.
- ✓ Every year, many children move from state primary to independent school successfully.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Start a simple list of schools you have heard of or are curious about. Do not worry about whether they are realistic at this stage. Just write down names. We will help you refine the list in the next section.

02

Which Schools Should You Consider?

Researching, visiting, and building a balanced list.

Starting your research

Choosing the right school is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child. It is also one of the most personal. What suits one family may not suit another. What impresses one parent may leave another cold.

The key is to research thoroughly and to visit schools with an open mind. Do not rely on reputation alone. A school's name or league table position tells you something, but it does not tell you whether your child will be happy and successful there.

How to research schools

School websites

Every independent school has a website, and most are comprehensive. Look for the admissions section, which should tell you:

- Whether the school offers 7+ or 8+ entry
- Registration deadlines and fees
- The format of the assessment
- The number of places available
- Bursary or scholarship information

Open days and school visits

Open days are invaluable. They give you a feel for the school's atmosphere, its facilities, and its staff. Take your child with you if possible. Watch how teachers and pupils interact. Notice whether children seem confident, engaged, and happy.

Ask questions. Good questions include:

- What is the school's approach to pastoral care?
- How does the school support children who find aspects of the curriculum challenging?
- What co-curricular activities are available?
- How does the school communicate with parents?
- What happens if a child is offered a place but struggles to settle?

Word of mouth

Talk to other parents. Parent forums, local networks, and school gate conversations can provide honest insights that websites cannot. Bear in mind, however, that every family's experience is different. One parent's disappointment may be another's perfect fit.

Independent Schools Inspectorate reports

ISI inspection reports are publicly available at isi.net/reports. The reports provide an independent assessment of a school's quality, covering academic achievement, pastoral care, leadership, and governance. They are worth reading, though they should be one factor among many.

What to look for in a school

Ethos and values

Does the school's philosophy align with your own? Some schools are highly academic. Some prioritise all-round development. Some are religiously affiliated. Some are fiercely competitive. Some are nurturing and gentle. There is no right answer, only the right answer for your child.

Size

A small school may offer more individual attention. A larger school may offer more facilities, more subjects, and more social variety. Think about what your child needs. A shy child may flourish in a smaller environment. A sociable, energetic child may need the breadth of a larger school.

Location and logistics

How will your child get to school? Is there a school bus? Can you manage the drop-off and pick-up times alongside your own work? Do not underestimate the importance of practical logistics. A brilliant school that is impossible to reach will create daily stress.

Academic results and destinations

Where do pupils go after leaving? If the school is a prep school, does it prepare children successfully for the senior schools you might eventually want? Ask for destination data. Most schools are happy to share it.

Co-curricular offer

Music, sport, drama, art, clubs, and outdoor education matter enormously to many children. A school that offers rich opportunities outside the classroom may develop your child in ways that pure academics cannot.

Reach, match, and safety schools

It is sensible to apply to a range of schools. Think in terms of three categories.

Category	What it means
Reach	Highly competitive schools, or schools you admire but are uncertain about. Worth applying to, but not to be relied on as your only option.
Match	Schools where your child has a realistic chance of a place, and where you would be genuinely happy for them to attend.
Safety	Schools where you are confident your child would be offered a place, and where you would be content for them to go if other options do not work out.

We generally recommend applying to three or four schools: one reach, two match, and one safety. This gives you options without creating excessive pressure for your child.

A COMMON MISTAKE

Applying only to reach schools

It is the most common error we see, and it is entirely understandable. Parents fall in love with two or three highly selective schools and apply nowhere else. If offers do not come, there is no fallback and very little time left to find one. A balanced list is not a lack of ambition. It is what allows you to be ambitious safely.

Day versus boarding at this age

At 7+ and 8+, the vast majority of children in London attend day schools. Boarding at this age is unusual and is a significant decision that requires careful thought about your child's maturity, independence, and emotional readiness. If you are considering boarding, we recommend extensive discussion with the school and with your child.

KEY POINTS FROM THIS SECTION

- ✓ Research thoroughly: websites, open days, word of mouth, and inspection reports.
- ✓ Visit schools with your child and trust your instincts about atmosphere and fit.
- ✓ Consider ethos, size, location, results, and co-curricular offer.
- ✓ Apply to a balanced range: reach, match, and safety schools.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Book open days at three or four schools that interest you. Even if you are not yet certain you will apply, visiting will help you understand what is available and what matters to you.

03

What Does the Assessment Actually Involve?

Subjects, formats, interviews, and what the papers really look like.

Removing the mystery

One of the biggest sources of anxiety for parents is not knowing what their child will face on assessment day. This section explains exactly what happens in most 7+ and 8+ assessments. Once you understand the format, you can help your child approach the day with confidence rather than fear.

The subjects typically tested

Most 7+ and 8+ assessments cover four areas:

- English, comprehension and writing
- Mathematics
- Verbal Reasoning
- Non-Verbal Reasoning

Not every school tests all four. Some test only English and Mathematics. Some include Verbal Reasoning. A smaller number include Non-Verbal Reasoning. You must check the specific requirements of each school you are applying to.

English

The English assessment usually has two parts.

Comprehension

Your child will read a passage, which may be fiction or non-fiction, and answer questions about it. The questions test:

- Literal understanding, what happened and who did what
- Inference, reading between the lines and understanding implied meaning
- Vocabulary in context, understanding what words mean within the passage
- Textual evidence, supporting answers with quotes or references from the text

Children are expected to write in full sentences, use correct punctuation, and answer the question that has been asked.

Writing

Your child will be asked to write a short piece, often based on a prompt or picture. Schools look for:

- Imagination and creativity
- Clear structure, with a beginning, middle, and end

- Accurate grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Varied vocabulary
- Legible handwriting

The writing task is not about producing a perfect story. It is about showing that your child can express ideas clearly and interestingly.

Mathematics

The Mathematics paper tests number, calculation, and problem-solving. Topics typically include:

- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Place value
- Fractions, at a basic level
- Measurement, including time, money, length, and weight
- Simple word problems
- Mental arithmetic

WHAT EXAMINERS ACTUALLY LOOK FOR

Marks are awarded for working, not only for answers

Schools want to see that children can apply mathematical knowledge to solve problems, not simply recall facts. Showing working is usually important, even when the final answer is wrong. Children who write nothing but a number leave marks on the table.

Verbal Reasoning

Verbal Reasoning tests a child's ability to understand and reason using words. Question types include:

- Codes and sequences
- Word patterns and analogies
- Odd one out
- Inserting missing words
- Alphabetical reasoning

Verbal Reasoning is not taught in most primary schools, so children who have not encountered it before may find it unfamiliar. The skills can, however, be developed with practice.

Non-Verbal Reasoning

Non-Verbal Reasoning tests spatial and logical reasoning using shapes, patterns, and diagrams.

Question types include:

- Identifying the odd one out in a sequence of shapes
- Completing a pattern
- Recognising rotations and reflections

- Understanding codes based on shapes

Not all schools include Non-Verbal Reasoning, but those that do are testing a child's ability to think logically and visually.

The interview

Many schools include a short interview or group activity. This is not an interrogation. Schools want to see whether your child can:

- Communicate confidently and politely
- Show curiosity and interest
- Listen and respond appropriately
- Work alongside other children

The interview may involve discussing a picture, talking about hobbies, or answering simple questions about themselves. It is usually friendly and informal.

Group assessment activities

Some schools include group tasks, such as building something together, discussing a topic, or playing a game. These are designed to see how children interact: whether they share, listen, contribute ideas, and behave considerately.

How assessments differ between schools

This is crucial: no two schools assess in exactly the same way. Some use written papers only. Some include computer-based tests. Some emphasise creativity. Some are more traditional. Some test in one day. Some spread assessments over several sessions.

Always read the school's admissions information carefully. If anything is unclear, telephone the admissions office and ask. They are used to answering questions from parents.

Sample question types

Below are a few illustrative examples of the types of question your child might encounter. These are not taken from any specific school's paper. They are simply intended to show the style and level of difficulty.

Subject	Sample question
English comprehension	Read this sentence: "The old house stood at the end of the lane, its windows dark and empty." What does the word "empty" suggest about the house?
Mathematics	A shop sells apples for 25p each. Sarah has £1.50. How many apples can she buy? Show your working.
Verbal Reasoning	Find the missing word. HOT is to COLD as FAST is to _____.

These examples are simpler than many real questions, but they give you a sense of what to expect.

KEY POINTS FROM THIS SECTION

- ✓ Assessments typically cover English, Mathematics, Verbal Reasoning, and sometimes Non-Verbal Reasoning.
- ✓ The interview and group activities test communication, confidence, and social skills.
- ✓ Every school assesses differently. Always check the specific requirements.
- ✓ Familiarity with the format removes anxiety for both parent and child.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Ask your child's current teacher whether they have seen examples of 7+ or 8+ papers, and read the assessment format published on the admissions pages of each school on your list. Simply seeing the format will make the process feel less mysterious.

04

When Should You Start Preparing?

The 12 to 18 month window, and why both extremes cause problems.

The ideal timeline

Preparation for 7+ or 8+ should ideally begin 12 to 18 months before the assessment. For 7+ entry, this means starting in the spring or summer of Year 1. For 8+ entry, it means starting in Year 2.

This timeline allows preparation to be steady, structured, and low-pressure. It gives your child time to build skills gradually, to identify and address gaps, and to develop confidence without feeling rushed.

What preparation means at different stages

Year 1, for 7+ entry: building foundations

At this stage, preparation is not about formal tuition or practice papers. It is about:

- Encouraging a love of reading
- Practising mental Mathematics in everyday situations, such as shopping, cooking, and car journeys
- Building vocabulary through conversation and stories
- Developing concentration and the ability to sit and focus on a task
- Building confidence in writing, even if it is just a few sentences

Year 2, for 7+ entry: developing skills

This is when preparation becomes more structured. Your child should be:

- Reading regularly and discussing what they have read
- Writing short pieces with attention to structure and accuracy
- Securing calculation fluency in Mathematics
- Beginning to encounter Verbal Reasoning question types
- Practising working within time limits

The final term: refining and practising

In the term before the assessment, the focus shifts to:

- Mock assessments under exam conditions
- Timing practice
- Reviewing weak areas
- Building exam-day confidence
- Ensuring your child is well-rested and calm

THIS IS THE SEQUENCE THE NOVA BOOKS FOLLOW

Our Developing Skills and Mastering Skills books are built around exactly this progression: foundations first, structured skills second, timed practice last. It is the reason we begin with discussion and vocabulary rather than with practice papers, and the reason timed work appears late rather than early.

Why starting too early can be counterproductive

Some parents feel they must begin intensive preparation in Reception or the first term of Year 1. This is usually unnecessary and can be harmful. Children who are pushed too hard, too young may:

- Lose their natural love of learning
- Develop anxiety about tests
- Burn out before the assessment even takes place
- Resent the process and resist further preparation

The best-prepared children are those who have built skills steadily over time, not those who have been intensively drilled.

Why starting too late creates pressure

On the other hand, leaving preparation until the autumn of Year 2 can create unnecessary stress. If significant gaps exist, there may not be enough time to address them properly. Your child may feel overwhelmed by the volume of work, and you may feel anxious about whether enough has been done.

The 12 to 18 month window strikes the right balance. It allows for steady progress without panic.

The difference between preparation and hot-housing

Preparation is structured, positive, and proportionate. It builds skills and confidence. It leaves room for play, rest, and other activities.

Hot-housing is intensive, pressurised, and often focused narrowly on passing a test rather than developing a child. It can produce short-term results but rarely leads to long-term success or happiness.

Nova's philosophy is firmly in the preparation camp. We believe that children who are well-prepared, confident, and resilient perform better than children who are merely well-drilled.

KEY POINTS FROM THIS SECTION

- ✓ Ideal preparation begins 12 to 18 months before the assessment.
- ✓ Early preparation is about foundations, not formal tuition.
- ✓ Starting too early can be as harmful as starting too late.
- ✓ Preparation should be steady and positive, not pressurised.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Look at where your child is now in relation to the timeline. If they are in Year 1, you have time to build foundations gently. If they are already in Year 2, a more focused approach may be appropriate. Either way, an assessment of your child's current position will help you decide what to do next.

05

Is My Child Ready?

What readiness actually means, and how to recognise it.

What readiness really means

Ready for 7+ does not mean your child is a prodigy. It does not mean they are ahead of every other child in their class. It means they have reached a level of skill, confidence, and maturity that allows them to attempt the assessment with a realistic chance of success.

Readiness is not a single point. It is a spectrum. Some children are ready early. Some need more time. Some are ready in Mathematics but need support in English. Some are academically ready but lack confidence. Every child is different, and that is entirely normal.

Key indicators of readiness

By the summer of Year 2, a child who is ready for 7+ should typically be able to do the following.

Area	What a ready child can usually do
Reading	Read age-appropriate books fluently and with understanding. Discuss characters, events, and meanings. Use context to work out unfamiliar words. Read a range of fiction and non-fiction.
Writing	Write several sentences or a short paragraph independently. Use capital letters, full stops, and basic punctuation correctly. Spell common words accurately. Write with some imagination and structure.
Mathematics	Add and subtract two-digit numbers. Know multiplication tables, at least 2x, 3x, 4x, 5x and 10x. Solve simple word problems. Understand place value, money, and time. Show their working.
Concentration	Focus on a single task for 20 to 30 minutes. Follow instructions carefully. Work independently without constant supervision. Cope with the idea of a test without extreme anxiety.

Common signs that a child may need support

No child is perfect in every area. It is normal to have strengths and weaknesses. However, there are some patterns that suggest a child would benefit from targeted support:

- Working significantly more slowly than peers
- Inconsistent performance, doing well one day and poorly the next
- Gaps in core skills, for example knowing times tables but struggling with word problems

- Avoiding writing, or finding it physically difficult
- Becoming distressed or anxious at the mention of tests
- Strong in one subject but noticeably weaker in another

If you recognise any of these in your child, do not panic. They are simply indicators that some focused help would be valuable. Most children who receive the right support make significant progress.

The importance of confidence and exam technique

Being academically able is not the same as being able to perform well in an assessment. Exam technique matters, even at age seven. Children need to:

- Read questions carefully
- Manage their time
- Check their work
- Stay calm under pressure
- Attempt every question rather than getting stuck on one

WHAT EXAMINERS ACTUALLY LOOK FOR

Technique often separates two children of equal ability

These skills can be taught. They are not innate. A child who knows the material but has never worked under timed conditions may underperform. A child who is slightly less advanced but has good technique may do better than expected.

When to seek a professional assessment

If you are genuinely unsure whether your child is ready, a professional assessment can give you clarity. A good assessment will:

- Evaluate your child's current level across all relevant areas
- Identify specific strengths and weaknesses
- Compare your child's performance to the standard required for competitive entry
- Give you clear, actionable recommendations
- Provide peace of mind, whatever the outcome

At Nova we start with a free consultation: a call with a senior tutor to talk through what you are seeing and give you an honest view, at no cost and with no obligation. Where a fuller picture would help, we also offer the Entrance Readiness Assessment, a full assessment costing £125. You receive a personalised written report, a one-page visual profile, three clear priority actions and a consultation with the assessor. The fee is credited in full against your first invoice if you go on to enrol within 60 days of that consultation.

KEY POINTS FROM THIS SECTION

- ✓ Readiness is about skills, confidence, and maturity, not genius.
- ✓ Most children have a mix of strengths and areas for development.
- ✓ Exam technique is as important as knowledge.
- ✓ A professional assessment removes guesswork and gives you a plan.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Read back through the readiness indicators above and note honestly where your child sits in each area. If you have concerns, or if you simply want clarity, a free Nova consultation will give you an objective view.

06

How Can You Prepare Without Pressure?

Everyday activities, mock assessments, and managing your own anxiety.

The parent's role

As a parent, you have enormous influence over how your child feels about the 7+ or 8+ process. Your attitude shapes their attitude. If you are anxious, they will sense it. If you are relaxed and positive, they are more likely to feel the same.

Preparation does not have to mean conflict, tears, or extra homework every evening. In fact, the best preparation often happens without your child realising they are being prepared at all.

Everyday activities that build 7+ skills

Reading together

This is the single most valuable thing you can do. Read with your child every day, if possible. Ask questions as you go:

- What do you think will happen next?
- Why did that character do that?
- What does that word mean?
- How would you feel if that happened to you?

These conversations build comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking without feeling like work.

Mental Mathematics in daily life

Use real situations to practise Mathematics:

- If this costs 45p and that costs 30p, how much is that altogether?
- We need to be there at 3 o'clock. What time is it now? How long do we have?
- If we cut this pizza into eight pieces and you eat three, how many are left?

This makes Mathematics relevant and enjoyable.

Writing for fun

Encourage your child to write for real purposes: shopping lists, birthday cards, short stories about their favourite characters, diaries, and letters to relatives.

Praise effort and imagination, not just accuracy. A child who enjoys writing will write more. A child who fears making mistakes will write less.

Building vocabulary through conversation

Talk to your child. Use interesting words. Explain what they mean. Ask your child to explain things to you. The more words a child knows and understands, the better they will perform in English and Verbal Reasoning.

Making comprehension practice enjoyable

Comprehension does not have to mean worksheets. After watching a film or reading a book together, ask comprehension-style questions naturally:

- Who was your favourite character, and why?
- What was the problem in the story? How was it solved?
- What would you have done differently?

This develops the same skills that formal comprehension tests require.

The role of mock assessments

Mock assessments are valuable, but they should be used carefully. They are most useful in the final two or three months before the real assessment, when your child has built the necessary skills and simply needs to practise performing under exam conditions.

A COMMON MISTAKE

Too many mocks, too early

One or two well-timed mocks, followed by calm discussion of what went well and what to practise, are far more effective than weekly testing. Frequent early mocks measure a child against a standard they have not yet been taught to meet, and the result is anxiety rather than information.

Managing your own anxiety

This is perhaps the most important part of this guide. Your child will pick up on your anxiety, even if you try to hide it. If you are constantly asking whether they have done their practice, or sighing when they make mistakes, they will feel pressure.

Here are some practical ways to manage your own anxiety:

- Remember that there is more than one good school. If your first choice does not work out, your child can still thrive elsewhere.
- Focus on effort, not outcome. Praise your child for trying hard, not for getting everything right.
- Talk to other parents, but do not compare. Every child develops at their own pace.
- Seek professional advice if you are worried. A tutor or an assessment can give you clarity and reduce your uncertainty.
- Keep perspective. Your relationship with your child matters more than any school place.

What to say, and what not to say

DO SAY

- *This is a chance to show what you can do.*
- *We are proud of you whatever happens.*
- *Just do your best. That is all anyone can ask.*
- *This is one school. There are many good schools.*

DO NOT SAY

- *You must pass this or we will be disappointed.*
- *All your friends are doing better than you.*
- *If you do not get in, you have let us down.*
- *This is the most important day of your life.*

Children who feel loved and supported, regardless of outcome, perform better than children who feel they are carrying the weight of their parents' hopes.

KEY POINTS FROM THIS SECTION

- ✓ The best preparation is woven into daily life, not bolted on as extra homework.
- ✓ Reading, conversation, and real-life Mathematics are the most effective tools.
- ✓ Mock assessments are useful but should be used sparingly and calmly.
- ✓ Your attitude as a parent is the single biggest factor in your child's confidence.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Choose one everyday activity to focus on this week: reading together, mental Mathematics, or writing for fun. Make it enjoyable. Notice and praise your child's effort. This is the foundation of all good preparation.

07

How Nova Can Help

Our philosophy, our programme, and how to take the next step.

Our philosophy

Nova Education exists to make the journey into independent school clearer, calmer, and more successful for families. We do not believe in pressure. We do not believe in hot-housing. We believe in structured, positive preparation that builds real skills and genuine confidence.

We do not promise places. We cannot control what any school decides. What we can promise is that every child who works with Nova will be better prepared, more confident, and more able to perform at their best on assessment day.

What makes Nova different

A managed, structured programme

Nova is not a directory of tutors. We are a specialist preparation provider with a managed curriculum built around 16 original course books written specifically for 7+ and 8+ admissions. Every programme follows a clear structure across two strands: English with Verbal Reasoning, and Mathematics with Non-Verbal Reasoning.

Expert tutors

Our tutors are qualified teachers, several of whom are practising 7+ and 8+ examiners. They understand not only what children need to know, but how assessments are marked, what schools are looking for, and where children typically lose marks.

Detailed reporting

We believe parents deserve to know exactly how their child is progressing. Our reporting system includes:

- A Session Note after every session, issued the same day
- A Progress Report at each review point in the programme
- A Mid-Programme Review to evaluate progress and set priorities
- An End-of-Programme Report, and a Nova certificate for your child

You will never be left wondering whether your child is improving. The evidence will be clear and specific.

A personalised approach

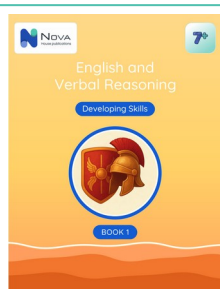
Every programme starts from a clear picture of your child, built through your consultation and, where a fuller picture would help, the Entrance Readiness Assessment. We then shape the programme around your child. We do not use a one-size-fits-all approach, because no two children are the same.

THE NOVA COURSE BOOKS

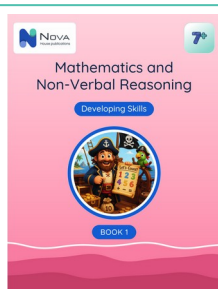
Written for these exams, not adapted for them

Everything described in this guide is taught through 16 original Nova course books, written for 7+ and 8+ admissions by tutors who mark these papers. The range covers both levels and both strands, English with Verbal Reasoning and Mathematics with Non-Verbal Reasoning, across two series. Developing Skills builds the foundations. Mastering Skills takes a child to competitive standard. Book 1 of each is shown below.

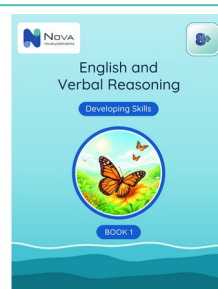
DEVELOPING SKILLS



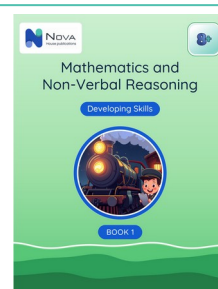
7+ English & VR



7+ Maths & NVR

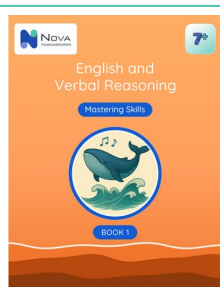


8+ English & VR

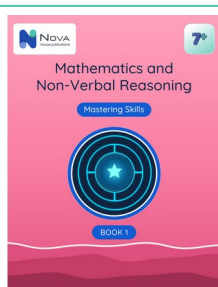


8+ Maths & NVR

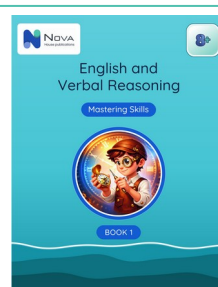
MASTERING SKILLS



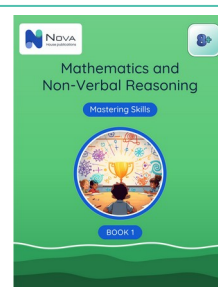
7+ English & VR



7+ Maths & NVR



8+ English & VR



8+ Maths & NVR

EVERYTHING INCLUDED

Course books and all programme materials are included in the programme fee. There is nothing extra to buy.

How the Nova programme works

Step	What happens
1 Initial consultation	We meet with you to understand your child's current situation, your target schools, your concerns, and your goals. This is a conversation, not a sales pitch.

Step	What happens
2 Entrance Readiness Assessment	Optional. A friendly, age-appropriate assessment of the areas that matter in entrance examinations, with a written report, a visual profile and three priority actions.
3 Programme design	Based on what we have learned about your child, we design a programme tailored to their needs. We agree the timetable, the tutor, and the focus areas with you.
4 Structured tuition	Your child works through a 20-session Nova programme with their tutor, building skills steadily. You receive a Session Note after every session.
5 Refinement and mock practice	As the assessment approaches we focus on exam technique, timing, and confidence, including mock assessments under realistic conditions.

In person, then online

The first three sessions of every Nova programme take place in person, in your home. Children settle faster and build a relationship with their tutor more quickly when the first sessions happen face to face. All later sessions are delivered online, with the same quality and structure.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Book a free consultation

If you have read this far, you are clearly taking your child's future seriously. That is a good thing. But you do not have to work everything out on your own.

We invite you to book a free consultation with a senior Nova tutor. We will listen to your situation, answer your questions, and help you understand whether now is the right time to begin preparation. If an Entrance Readiness Assessment would be helpful, we can arrange that too.

There is no obligation and no pressure. Just clear, honest advice from people who understand this process from the inside.

TO BOOK YOUR FREE CONSULTATION

novaeducation.uk/nova-tutorials

Or email contact@novaeducation.uk

We look forward to meeting you and your child.



ABOUT NOVA EDUCATION

Who we are

Nova Education is an independent educational publisher and online tutorial centre in London, providing everything from curriculum support in Years 2 to 6 to selective school entrance preparation.

Our 7+ and 8+ programmes are built around 16 original course books, written specifically for these admissions and taught by qualified teachers, several of them practising examiners. We offer structured preparation, detailed reporting, and a personalised approach that treats every child as an individual.

Our mission is simple: to help children perform at their best, with confidence, skill, and resilience.

Stay in touch

Even if you are not ready to begin tuition yet, we would like to stay in touch. We send a monthly email with tips, insights, and updates on the 7+ and 8+ landscape. You can subscribe at novaeducation.uk or follow us on Facebook.

SAFEGUARDING

All Nova tutors hold a current Enhanced DBS check and complete Nova's safeguarding induction before their first session.

This guide was published by Nova Education in September 2026. The information is accurate at the time of writing, but admissions policies and procedures change. Always verify details directly with the schools you are considering.

If you have feedback on this guide, or if there is a topic you would like us to cover in future, please let us know. We are always listening.

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