



Kent Education Network - The impact of the eleven-plus and grammar school education in Kent

Kent is the largest fully selective local authority in the UK with 33,000 children attending 32 grammar schools and 65,000 pupils attending 67 'high schools,' effectively secondary moderns. Around 15,000 children every year are judged by the eleven-plus, with the council setting a 21% test pass rate, and awarding another 7% of grammar school places through an appeals process.

The problems with education in Kent are:

1. Social advantage determines eleven-plus success.
2. Failing the eleven-plus gives children poor school choice and less opportunity of attending a good school.
3. Many secondary modern schools give children a worse educational experience than they would find in a mixed-ability schools.
4. The eleven-plus does not accurately judge children's potential and is flawed by test coaching.
5. Many parents are influenced by marketing messages and fear of a poor school and feel the need to pay for test coaching.
6. Disadvantaged children face challenges that mean they're unlikely to pass the eleven-plus.
7. Disadvantaged children achieve poor results in Kent schools.
8. High ability children attending non-selective schools underachieve in exams.
9. Kent's results for post-16 education show many children take less A level's than in other counties and with worse results.
10. Grammar schools in poorer areas have changed the purpose of academic selection and do not educate only high ability pupils.
11. The eleven-plus test is unregulated and unmonitored with cheating, rule breaking and unfair processes avoiding scrutiny.
12. Kent County Council do not manage education effectively because they fear highlighting problems with their education system.
13. The Department for Education and Ofsted do not make allowances for selective education meaning national policy does not always work in Kent.

1. Social advantage determines eleven-plus success

There are clear factors that predict eleven plus success, and social status and 'parental keenness' are as much factors for grammar school admission as a child's ability.

A child is highly likely to reach a grammar school if :

- **They have parents who are ambitious for their child's academic future.**
 - *Parents register for the test when they have some confidence their child will pass, or are resilient enough to deal with a fail.*
- **They have a wealthy family background.**
 - *There is a clear correlation between the wealth of a community and eleven-plus pass rates. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (DBI)*

Tunbridge Wells is the least deprived area of Kent and here children have a 53% pass rate in the eleven-plus. Thanet is the most deprived area of Kent and children only achieve a 35% pass rate.

- **The child attends an independent school or Ofsted outstanding primary school.**
 - *The pass rate in Independent Schools is 68%, in state schools it is 41%.*
- **They attend a primary school with a head teacher that uses the appeals process.**
 - *15% of Kent primary schools provide almost half the 1,000 pupils a year winning places in Head Teacher Appeals. Many heads do not use this process, so the primary school you attend effects a child's likelihood of a grammar school place.*
- **They are tutored privately or have parents with time to practise with them.**
 - *45% of parents admitted to using a paid-for tutor in a 2013 Sevenoaks survey, with most areas of Kent offering tuition clubs at weekends or after school.*

A child is unlikely to reach a grammar school if:

- **They have parents with limited ambition for their child's academic success.**
 - *Many factors influence a parents decision to register for the test, they may decide there is no need, or that their child is unlikely to want an academic focus or to go to university.*
- **They are from a disadvantaged background.**
 - *Disadvantaged children statistically show lower attainment, just 68% of disadvantaged children achieve level 4 or above in reading, maths and writing, while 83% of non-disadvantaged children reach the same level. This attainment gap at primary school will effect eleven-plus pass rates for poorer children.*
- **They have English as a second language.**
 - *Kent's eleven-plus contains English and verbal reasoning papers which make it difficult for children with lesser English skills.*
- **They are a child in care.**
 - *Few children in care attend Kent grammar schools, less than 0.1% compared to 0.9% in Kent's non-selective secondary schools.*
- **They have Special Educational Needs.**
 - *0.002% of children in grammar schools have a Statement of Special Needs or an Education, Care and Health plan, compared to 2.34% of pupils in Kent high schools.*
- **They have dyslexia.**
 - *Kent's English paper may make it harder for dyslexic children to pass the eleven-plus. Approx. 80-90 children a year are allowed extra time in the Kent Test to compensate for dyslexia, but the British Dyslexia Association states 10% of pupils are dyslexic and 4% severely so. We would expect 600-1,500 children to need additional help. Many parents of bright dyslexic children may simply avoid the eleven-plus.*
- **They attend an inadequate or requires improvement primary school.**
 - *The Kent Test pass rate varies depending on the quality of school a child attends. The pass rate in Ofsted 'Outstanding' schools is 50%, the pass rate is 37% in a 'Good' school, but 32% in 'Requires Improvement' schools, and just*

23% in a school rated 'Inadequate.' The English & Maths test in the eleven-plus looks at literacy and numeracy skills, drawing on what children are taught in lessons. Poor teaching in some schools may affect children's chances of passing the eleven-plus.

- **They have a primary school head who does not use the appeals process.**
 - *Around 100 of Kent's 513 state primary schools do not use the Head Teacher Appeals process at all, despite this awarding 1000+ places annually.*
- **They have parents who do not assist them with test preparation.**
 - *Kent County Council says no preparation is necessary for the test, but GL Assessment who set the exam sell practice papers, and the council has a downloadable familiarisation booklet. Some parents will not use practise papers, download the help, or use tutors. Despite the council's assertion that practise is unnecessary we feel it cannot be a level playing field for any child taking the test without parental help.*

A child cannot go to grammar school if:

- **Their parents do not enter them for the Kent Test.**
 - *Kent grammar schools are socially selective because the nature of entry involves parental risk and requires parental ambition. Parents will avoid the eleven-plus test due to attitude. They may not enter their child if they have low ambition, poor prior experience with the test, or no interest in their child's education*
 - *Cultural factors also predispose some families to try harder for the eleven-plus. 70% of Kent secondary pupils with Chinese ethnicity, and 50% of Asian children attend Kent grammar schools, while 25% of Black British children and less than 1% of Roma children attend grammar schools. These cultural factors are difficult to overcome, but grammar schools effect school choice for children due to their family background and attitude to the test, not their intelligence or ability.*

Kent's education system excludes children from a third of state schools based on a decision that children cannot influence. A parent's decision about a test effectively prevents children accessing the highest rated schools in our county.

Social mobility is a problem because school places in the best schools are awarded to those with advantages already, whether this is wealth to pay for extra education, attending a high quality primary school, or parents with ambition to aim for a good university for their child.

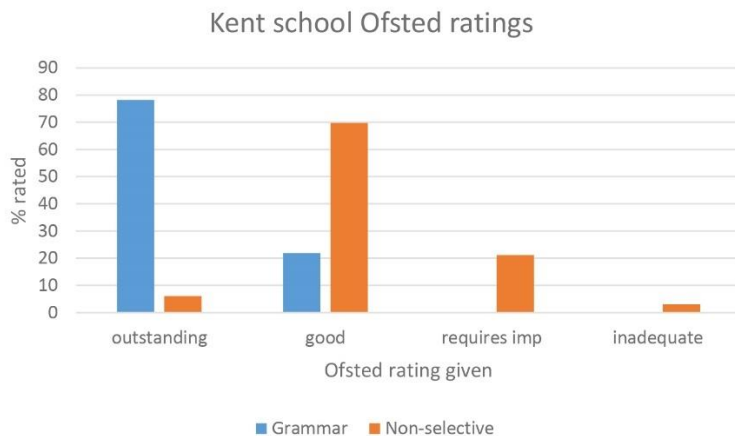
To operate so many state schools that a majority of pupils cannot enter seems inequitable, and to do so when there is a significant gap in quality between the grammar schools and non-selective schools shows a lack of concern for children's best interests.

2. Failing the eleven-plus gives children poor school choice and less opportunity of attending a good school.

When a child reaches secondary school age most families have a choice of 5 or 6 local schools. For a Kent child without an eleven-plus pass that choice shrinks. Two or three local schools will be grammar schools, one or two will be schools requiring faith for admission,

another may be a highly rated non-selective with a small catchment area based on distance, leaving many parents with a realistic ‘choice’ of only one or two unpopular or troubled schools.

Kent’s eleven-plus system offers a huge advantage for children who pass the test. Every child who passes the eleven-plus is assured of a highly rated school, with 78% of the grammar schools rated ‘Outstanding’ and the rest ‘Good.’ A fail in the Kent test means a child faces a 1 in 4 chance of a poor school, with almost no chance of attending an ‘Outstanding’ school.



Due to the limited number of poorer children attending grammar schools Kent’s disadvantaged children are overrepresented in poor quality schools. Only 69% of children who receive Free School Meals attend a ‘Good’ or better school. In comparison 83% of children whose families can afford to pay for lunch attend a ‘Good’ or better school.

3. Many secondary modern schools give children a worse educational experience than they would find in a mixed-ability schools.

Two tier education creates a divide in school quality, and in many ways a social divide in Kent’s secondary schools.

Here are some of the differences between Kent grammar schools and non-selective schools.

Kent grammar schools	Kent secondary modern schools
Typically 3% children from low income or deprived families. Few children with learning problems or Special Educational Needs.	Typically 30% of children from families receiving benefits or on low incomes. 8-12% of children need some Special Educational Needs support.
School trips offering a range of opportunities to go abroad, a review found grammar school children had opportunities to visit Cuba, the USA, Turkey, France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and India.	School trips offering opportunities to go to the UK, the only foreign destinations we found in a review were France and Belgium.
Many fun after school clubs on offer. A review found 14 Subject related clubs in grammar schools: Art Support, Cosmetic Biology, Biochemistry, CAD/CAM Club, French Club,	After-school clubs are focussed on extra school work. Teachers need to work extra hours in subject teaching to try to match the results of comprehensive schools.

<p>Spanish Club, Maths club, Spanish Skills club, French GCSE Club, Drama Club, German Club, Physics Club, Ancient Greek Club, Chemistry Soap Box. 31 Enjoyable clubs : Music Performance Workshop, Piano Workshop, Philosophy Club, Film Club, Girls Netball, Boys Football fixtures, Handball Club , Jazz Band, Saxophone & clarinet ensemble, Dragon's Den, Drama Club, Product Design Club, Boys Football training, Girls Football training/fixtures, Creative Geography, Music Orchestra, STEM-Science Club, Girls Netball, Boys Football, Life Drawing Club, School Magazine, Ukulele Club, String Ensemble, Choir, Keyboard Club, Programming Club, RPG Club, Chamber Choir, Debating Club, Badminton "Smash Up", Raspberry pi club.</p>	<p>24 Subject related clubs : GCSE History yr11 Homework club, Spanish Revision, English GCSE revision, GCSE History Revision, Business Studies Support, Art independent GCSE Coursework, Business Studies Homework club, BTEC coursework support, Textiles Club, Science Club, Drama Club, GCSE History Revision, BTEC Dance Rehearsals, BTEC Drama Rehearsals, Food tech, Yr11 Computer access (Coursework,) ICT KS4 Support, Year 11 Science Revision, BTEC/GSCE PE support, Maths Revision GCSE, Business Studies Support , GCSE History yr11, English GCSE revision 14 Enjoyable clubs : Climbing, Guitar Club, Basketball, Singing, Boys Dance, Badminton, Girls Dance, Open mic, Sax Session, Girls Basketball, Advanced Guitar Club, Table Tennis, Girls Netball, Prayer Get Together.</p>
<p>Almost always rated Ofsted 'Outstanding.' However it is not clear whether this rating is based on higher quality teaching or assembling easy to teach pupils.</p>	<p>Usually Ofsted Good at best, often 'Requires Improvement'. Comprehensive schools are <u>twice as likely</u> to receive an 'Outstanding' rating as a non-selective school in a selective area.</p>
<p>Typically 14% of pupils from the fee paying sector, up to a third of children in some West Kent schools.</p>	<p>Typically no pupils from independent schools.</p>
<p>Children travelling a distance to school, mostly in West Kent, with 2,712 (8.1% of places) taken by out of county pupils. Kent grammar schools have pupils travelling from East Sussex (565 pupils), Greater London (1,878) Surrey (71) and West Sussex (25.)</p>	<p>Usually children from the local community.</p>
<p>Talks from visiting speakers including authors, business leaders and politicians. It could be that speakers are arranged by parents or school alumni, or perhaps the prestige of the school helps attract visitors.</p>	<p>Rarely have prestigious speakers visiting.</p>
<p>98% gaining 5 GCSE at A-C, celebrated in local papers.</p>	<p>30-45% gaining 5 GCSE at A-C, rarely have success mentioned in local papers. May be written about in the press for failing to meet the government benchmark (40% GCSE passes) or for poor Ofsted ratings.</p>
<p>Established teachers, and more likely to have permanent staff for subjects where there are shortages. Eg. MFL, science. Research by Education Datalab at the request of Ofsted shows grammar schools have more highly qualified teachers who are more likely to stay in the school.</p>	<p>Greater use of supply teachers, less experienced teachers, often use less qualified teachers to offer subjects where teacher shortages apply. eg. MFL, computer science, science.</p>

Always offer three sciences, often a choice of modern languages, offer a full academic curriculum.	Less subject choice, more likely to offer vocational qualifications to suit lower attainer's needs. Only 26% of children in non-selective schools enter 5 Ebacc subjects (English, maths, two sciences, history or geography, and a language) compared to 39% nationally.
Broad choice of A levels, almost always an academic sixth form curriculum aimed at university entry.	Sixth form curriculum's typically offer a mix of BTEC and A level subjects. Some schools offer 2 A levels maximum, despite most university's preferring 3 A levels. Sixth forms cannot afford to offer a wide range of subjects, so academic subjects can be limited.

Potential problems with this divide:

- Both tiers of schools offer narrow curriculums based on the likely preference of the majority. Yet many grammar school students might enjoy an opportunity to study practical or creative subjects, while many secondary modern children would benefit from the option to study triple science, two languages or take 3 academic A levels.
- Opportunities in the local job market might be adversely effected by an employer's attitude to seeing 'grammar school' on a CV, with employees pre-judging a candidate based on their test result.
- There are significant recruitment problems in Kent non-selective schools. Two tier education means teachers choosing grammar schools, and there is no policy in place to correct this.

4. **The eleven-plus does not accurately judge children's potential and is flawed by coaching.**

Most Kent grammar schools contain 15-20% of children classed as 'medium attainers' based on their year 6 SATs scores. If the eleven-plus was accurately judging ability then we would expect close to 100% of grammar school pupils to be 'high attainers' based on SATs. It is possible that test coaching flaws the eleven-plus results, and we hear reports of tutors boasting that any child can pass the eleven-plus with enough preparation.

It is worrying that we have no accurate definition of 'high ability' when we divide school places, and a 2 hour multiple choice test will inevitably have a margin of error. GL Assessment provide confidence bands for all the tests they set, apart from the eleven-plus. They state 'For most of our tests the reliability values are in the region of 0.9.' The vast majority of Kent children who pass the test are a few marks around the pass mark, and allowing for this confidence level would mean more than a thousand children every year have an unreliable pass or fail rating in the eleven-plus.

High ability children as defined by SATs achieve Level 5+ in Reading, Writing and Maths. If we look at these able children in the 2015 GCSE cohort there were 1456 high ability pupils in Kent non-selective schools and 3644 high ability pupils attending grammar schools. Clearly

many 'high attaining' children do attend non-selective schools, where they may find no top sets to challenge them, less subject choice, and poor A level options meaning they are less likely to reach university. If there was a duty for all highly able children to be challenged in each school, then there should be no need for grammar schools. Schools are not held accountable for the results of high ability pupils specifically, and in Kent secondary moderns these pupils are at a disadvantage due to the schools containing many more pupils of average ability.

5. Many parents are influenced by marketing messages and fear of a poor school and feel the need to pay for test coaching.



Bus advert for a Canterbury prep school.

Parents worry about achieving a good school for their child, and many businesses take advantage of this. We see prep schools talk of their school fees as an 'investment' with a Kent Test pass at their establishment saving future fees on private secondary schools.

The 'Outstanding' Ofsted ratings for grammar schools drive anxious parents to work, or pay, for grammar school places by test coaching. Most Kent towns have at least one eleven-plus tutoring club at weekends or after school, and adverts for private tutors are easy to find. Prep schools adverts boast of their pass rates on buses and magazines.

Parents are driven by a fear that every point counts, they feel that if they don't pay for eleven-plus coaching their child will lose out to the competition. Eleven-plus forums are busy with year 5 parents discussing the best tutors, and even pre-school parents discussing primary school pass rates. We hear of parents on low incomes giving up their family holidays to pay for a summer tutor club ahead of the test in September. Parents, tutors and independent schools don't seem to believe the council's assertion that 'no preparation is needed.' One grammar school appeals advisor spoke of some parents test preparation this way, *'Some children are tutored from the age of five and some go to private schools focused on success at the 11 plus and are then tutored outside school as well. The latter examples are no childhood and in my view can almost add up to child abuse.'*

6. Disadvantaged children face challenges that mean they're unlikely to pass the eleven-plus.

The unfairness of the eleven-plus test is amplified for disadvantaged children. Studies show that by the age of 3, some toddlers might have heard 30 million more words in their home environment than others. The more words children know, the better they do in school, and realistically the more chance they have to pass an eleven-plus test based on verbal reasoning and English papers.

The attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their advantaged peers at primary school is 15 percentage points, this means many disadvantaged children are less likely to thrive in a test. They need every opportunity to catch-up by attending high quality schools that stretch them, but in Kent the message from their schools, through a test result, is that they cannot achieve success academically because their ability is fixed at ten years old.

One deputy head of a secondary modern wrote of his mentoring sessions with a disadvantaged family, “One of my pupils (who went on to get all As at GCSE) cried at a meeting when I told him what he was about to achieve (and so did his mum) because they both believed he was ‘thick’ due to the 11+. I wondered how many, unlike this resilient young man, had been unable to overcome that belief about his own ability.”

Kent’s grammar school system ‘loses’ high ability disadvantaged children with every step of the road to grammar school.

1. **Entering the test:** Looking at children that are classed as both ‘high ability’ in SATs and in receipt of Free School Meals we find **19.8% of this group did not take the eleven-plus** .
2. **Results of the test:** Looking at children classed as both ‘high ability’ in SATs and also in receipt of Free School Meals who enter for the eleven-plus test, we find **37% fail the test**.
3. **Applying to grammar school:** Looking at children in receipt of Free School Meals who pass the eleven-plus, we find **10% do not take up a grammar school place**.

The eleven-plus system seems inefficient at sorting even *highly able* disadvantaged children to the ‘correct’ school for their ability. Our research also highlighted that a number of disadvantaged children are entered for the test but score 0, either through absence on the day or a decision not to complete the test paper.

7. Disadvantaged children achieve poor results in Kent schools.

The vast majority of Kent’s disadvantaged children attend non-selective schools, and it seems many of these schools are troubled and achieving poor results. Kent has one of the worst attainment gaps in the country at 34 percentage points. In Buckinghamshire it’s 39. And, in Reading, it’s 40 percentage points. This problem in selective education areas was highlighted by Ofsted Chief Sir.Michael Wilshaw at a recent conference.

Kent lags behind the UK nationally in almost all measures for disadvantaged children, as can be seen in the following figures:

	Number of disadvantaged children (KS4 2015 cohort)	% of disadvantaged children making expected progress in English	% of disadvantaged children making expected progress in Maths	Average number of GCSE entries per GCSE pupil	% of disadvantaged pupils achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs or equivalent inc. English & Maths	% of disadvantaged pupils achieving grades A*-C in both English and Maths GCSEs		% of pupils achieving 5 GCSE (plus Eng & Maths)
Kent disadvantaged pupils - non-selective schools	3099	57%	41%	7.0	28%	31%	Kent all pupils - non-selective	42
Kent disadvantaged pupils - grammar+non-selective	3614	56%	44%	7.0	30%	33%	Kent all pupils - grammar + non-selective	57.4
All UK disadvantaged pupils		59%	50%	7.3	37%	39%	All UK pupils	57.1

8. High ability children attending non-selective schools underachieve in exams.

Many high ability children attend non-selective schools rather than grammar schools. If we look at these children's GCSE results, we see that those classed as 'high attainers' in SATs achieved far fewer GCSEs and lower grades than children of similar ability in grammar schools. There seems no perfect way to ensure all high ability children attend grammar schools, and the needs of highly able children in non-selective schools need to be considered in a grammar school system.

There seems to be little research into why high achieving children may perform better in grammar schools than comprehensives, and similarly there seems to be little understanding of why secondary modern pupils underachieve compared to pupils of similar ability in comprehensive schools. This pattern has been shown in many research studies, and our look at Kent's high ability children shows it clearly too.

Pupils in KS4 (GCSE 2014-2015)	# pupils with high prior attainment (SATs level 5) in year group	% high attainers	Average number of GCSE entries per pupil with high prior attainment	Average capped GCSE point score achieved	Average grade per GCSE	% pupils with high prior attainment achieving 5+ A*-C including both English & Maths
Non-selectives	1456	13.1%	8.7	326.8	C+	82%
Grammar schools	3644	78.4%	10.4	413.8	B+	97%
UK average						91%

9. Kent's results for post-16 education show many children take less A level's than in other counties and with worse results.

In almost all measures Kent's overall results match the national average, but broken down by school type, it is clear that our county's grammar school children do perform a little better than the national average, but our county's secondary modern children perform well below the national average. There is no 'overall win' for Kent's selective system.

Many children who fail the eleven-plus develop later and underachieve at both GCSE and A level, compromising their chances of reaching university. Kent's sixth form results are poor, possibly because non-selective sixth forms offer limited A level options and due to their intake have a focus on vocational subjects.

Non-selective pupils have an average A level grade of 'D' while Kent grammar school pupil's have an average A level grade of a C+. This means Kent overall matches the national average of 'C' at A level. Kent also regularly underperforms for the number of children achieving 3 A levels. In 2015 73% of children in Kent achieved 3 A levels, compared with 77% nationally. Just 31% of children who take A level's at non-selective schools achieve 3 passes.

There is no concerted effort to have a ‘second selection point’ at 16. Around 400-500 non-selective school pupils move to grammar school for sixth form, but many children prefer to stay in their current schools. It would be unpopular and politically sensitive to point out that non-selective sixth forms are not good enough for children who were incorrectly labelled ‘not academic’ in the eleven-plus but need to be challenged at age 16.

Post 16 education in Kent					
	% of A level students achieving at least 3 A levels at A*-E	% of A level students achieving at least 2 A levels at A*-E	% of A level students achieving at least 1 A level at A*-E	% of A level students achieving grades AAB or higher in at least 2 facilitating subjects	Average point score per A level entry expressed as a grade
Kent non-selective sixth form pupils	31.5	62.8	96.8	1.1	D
Kent grammar school sixth form pupils	91	98	100	19	C+
UK average	77.2	91.5	99.6	11.8	C
Kent overall results	72.9	88.1	99.1	12.7	C

10. Grammar schools in poorer areas have changed the purpose of academic selection and do not educate only high ability pupils.

The Kent Test pass mark is set based on the scores of all children throughout the county, but due to the discrepancy between the scores of children in affluent areas and poorer areas some less affluent districts of Kent do not qualify enough children to fill their grammar school places. This has led to five grammar schools setting their own entry tests which are easier to pass, with 78% of children entered passing.

The places in these grammar schools are taken by high proportions of ‘medium attainment’ children (as judged by SATs) and even a few ‘low attainment’ pupils. These are not grammar schools in the way most people consider them, they are effectively schools that do not teach low ability children. The impact on other local schools has not been properly reviewed, but non-selective schools in these areas contain 40-50% of pupils classed as ‘low prior attainment,’ which is far higher than a typical school and must change the teaching and subject offering.

No questions have ever been asked about changes to academic selection in these areas because grammar school education is not monitored effectively. We feel they segregate children with no obvious purpose, as clearly they are not specialist schools for high ability

children. One of these grammar school's Ofsted report recently claimed, "Those who enter the school with above-average attainment, do not make the same rapid and substantial progress as their lower- and middle-attaining peers." So this school is segregating pupils based on a claim to serve high ability pupil's needs but is not achieving it's supposed aim.

Arguably these schools are more socially divisive than regular grammar schools because entry is more about parents applying for the test than it is about the child's ability. These schools are popular, but they raise questions about the definition of 'grammar school ability'. Children in Thanet grammar schools are achieving places, while children of just the same ability a thirty-minute drive away are told they are 'not suitable for grammar school' when they take their eleven-plus.

11. The eleven-plus test is unregulated and unmonitored with cheating, rule breaking and unfair processes avoiding scrutiny.

Here are some examples of problems caused by a lack of oversight in eleven-plus school admissions.

- **Test cheating.** Around 4,000 children take the Kent Test from outside the county, and in a recent council meeting a head teacher who runs a test centre for these children said cheating was taking place because children were not identified properly. The council's only action was to request children wear school uniform. This is not an effective measure to prevent friends or brothers and sisters taking a test instead of a ten year old.
- **Mismanagement of the eleven-plus test.** Medway is a small local authority which commissions its test privately, but they did not apply their own formula for assigning places correctly in 2015. Instead of selecting 25% children they mistakenly selected 21.7%, leaving children failing the test who were supposed to pass. They did not correct the mistake.
- **One school was told not to use an English paper, while others eleven-plus tests continue to use English papers.** Many schools set their own test and there is no check on the papers used. Inconsistent advice is given by the Office of the School's Adjudicator, with one school told it is unfair to have an English paper as this could be biased against EAL or dyslexic children, but Kent and other schools continue to offer English papers.
- **There is no proactive check for test bias.** Kent sets nearly 15,000 tests a year but do not routinely check for any bias, they do not routinely link the results to pupil data for EAL, ethnicity or socio-economic indicators to monitor the performance of vulnerable groups of pupils to make admissions fair. No one requires them to do this. The private company Kent use to provide tests do not do this either.
- **Parents don't know what the test judges, or what is fair.** Many Kent grammar schools set their own tests and no one checks these are fit for purpose, but parents trust them. Kent schools in deprived areas use both the council test, and a local test designed to be easier. This means children taking both tests are at an advantage for entry, and those parents who know the local test is easier are at an advantage for entry. This does not seem a fair system to decide places as nowhere is it ever stated which is easier.

- **Head teachers decide grammar school places, and their attitude to grammar school significantly effects school admissions.** The Head Teacher Appeals process checks around 2000 children a year who fail the eleven-plus but are nominated by head teachers as suitable to attend grammar school. This readjusts around 1,000 children who fail the test to gain a pass and ‘suitable for grammar school’ designation before parents are told the test results. There is no transparency to this process and some heads are keen to use the system, especially the heads of independent schools, where many parents pay school fees in expectation of an eleven-plus pass. Many Kent state schools do not nominate any children for reappraisal which means parents have more or less chance of a grammar school place based on the luck of the school their child attends. Parents are generally unaware that more than two thousands children currently attending Kent grammar schools failed the eleven-plus but won places this way.

A member of the appeals panel reported to KEN that this appeals process favours heads who make an effort with annotated notes. Independent schools have a significantly higher rate of winning places in this process, while one Kent primary school has had 60 children out of 80 re-assesed as 'grammar school eligible' through this process in the last 3 years, while most other schools have entered 1 or 2 children in the same time frame. No one is monitoring this process and it is clear that the schools who use it have more children ‘suitable for grammar school’ simply because they send in an appeal form.

- **A curriculum based eleven-plus is all about a good primary school.** Kent’s eleven-plus uses elements of the year 5 curriculum in its tests, but no one has looked at whether a test based on taught subjects is fair to children unfortunate enough to go to a school with poor teaching. If this was the case then the a poor primary school would be more likely to lead to a poor secondary school. Our review of test pass rates shows that Outstanding primary schools qualift 50% of children taking the eleven-plus, while ‘Inadequate’ primary schools qualify just 23% of test entrants for grammar school. It seems likely that children in the best primary schools have more chance of passing the test.
- **School closures are caused by problems with the system.** Kent County Council needs to maintain a balance of places by operating both grammar school and non-selective places, but it is not efficient to maintain a 5-10% surplus of places in two separate bodies of schools. In September 2015 there were vacant places at 11 of Kent’s 32 grammar places, and in September 2016 there were vacant places in 9 grammar schools. Yet grammar schools have been allowed to expand, resulting in 30% of secondary places now being selective, up from 25% five years ago. As grammar schools have prestige they simply choose to take pupils on appeal to fill places, meaning non-selective schools struggle to be viable.

In the last few years 4 Kent non-selective schools have closed due to fluctuations in pupil numbers, in two of these situations a new school will be needed again within three-four years. School closures causes disruption to pupils and upset communities, but they are less likely to happen in a school system where pupils are eligible to attend all schools. When non-selective schools close there is also a significant problem with most pupils

only able to be schooled in non-selective schools, not spread out to take places in the grammar schools which have spaces vacant.

- **Independent schools coach pupils, but state schools are barred from doing so.** Kent County Council disallow any state school from test practise, and the instructions sent to all participating schools state coaching is not permitted. They reserve the right to disregard test scores for pupils from any school when the instructions are not fulfilled, but they allow independent schools to prepare for the test. This effectively gives prep schools preferential treatment. Independent primary schools advertise their Kent Test pass rates as a selling point, while state schools are barred completely from practising for the eleven-plus test.

There is no one proactively checking to see that grammar school admission processes are fair, the only route to complaint is to the OSA in a specific window of the year. Parents trust local authority's to operate tests well, but in many cases their processes are unchecked and not transparent.

12. Kent County Council do not manage education effectively because they fear highlighting problems with their education system.

Kent County Council can not effectively manage Kent education because they have chosen a system many people dislike and they fear highlighting problems. They do not monitor the test fully, or talk of issues caused by the school divide when considering our county's poor results. The council's 80 page education policy vision does not once mention the secondary school divide or the purpose of a two tier system.

In a recent council meeting councillors suggested free test preparation should be given to all high-achieving disadvantaged pupils, yet they were told this would be 'diplomatically delicate.' It was pointed out this would, 'suggest that the Council does not have confidence in the effectiveness of its own process.'

A controversial education system needs proper oversight, but because it is politically sensitive Kent County Council are not best placed to oversee their system of choice.

13. The Department for Education and Ofsted do not make any allowances for selective education meaning national policy does not work in Kent.

Until recently the government set floor targets that said each school must ensure 40% of children pass five or more GCSEs. This target is exceptionally hard for Kent non-selective schools as nearly 30% of highly able pupils attend grammar schools. By the same token this target is of course ridiculously easy for grammar schools. This means grammar schools are not monitored, and non-selective schools are overly monitored simply due to the system operating in our county.

Kent County Council and other selective council's appear to have said nothing about the implications for our county. Kent (predictably) had more schools failing to reach targets than any other county. Our non-selective schools are full of failed pupils whose schools are

shamed in the papers as failures too. The DfE rarely considers that Kent's schools are different. The latest online league tables do not contain a flag to point out that secondary modern schools underachieve because their pupils are different, they are listed in the same way as grammar schools who are flattered by a top league position for simply selecting the pupils who pass exams.

Ofsted ratings clearly suggest grammar schools are 'Outstanding,' yet the National Association of Secondary Modern Schools say they are making no allowance for the very different pupils they choose. It appears that schools with high numbers of high achieving pupils are more likely to be rated Ofsted 'Outstanding' so the system is not fairly judging each school based on its very different pupils. The government is considering expanding grammar schools based on Ofsted ratings that appear to be flawed. Most comprehensive schools containing high numbers of middle class, high achieving, pupils seem to be rated 'Outstanding' too, but this does not make them better schools, it seems Ofsted may have a bias toward schools of this type.

Kent parents see the Ofsted 'Outstanding' ratings and are quite naturally drawn towards grammar schools. Sadly, parents who don't care about education don't bother with Ofsted ratings or the eleven-plus at all, and this perpetuates the problem of the social divide in our county's schools. It condemns children born to parents who don't care about education to an education with other children whose parents don't care about education, this lowers aspiration and creates unsuccessful schools. The sad thing is that children leaving these schools will grow up and perpetuate the problem for the next generation.

To create a mix of children with varied backgrounds and attitudes to education in our schools gives opportunities to all children. Some people believe that the most important lesson of education is that hard work can achieve results, but a grammar school system sends the opposite message. It is a message that some children are born gifted, and judged gifted at age ten years old. This is not a message in tune with modern education theory.

Any child can work to develop their learning, even those whose parents don't care much about school. It is much harder to achieve this in a system that tells children ability is defined in a one-off test.

In conclusion

In Kent it is clear that high-achieving pupils in grammar schools do a little better than average, and pupils in non-selective schools appear to do a little worse. No one seems to know quite why this should be, though the reasons could be:

- Better teachers are drawn to grammar schools, leaving lower quality teachers in non-selective schools.
- Grammar school pupils feel confident they can succeed and excel due to this confidence, while on-selective pupils believe they will not succeed and underachieve due to a lack of confidence.

- Grammar schools contain a disproportionate number of well behaved pupils who wish to learn, non-selective schools contain a disproportionate number of pupils who believe there's little advantage to learning.
- Grammar school pupils excel in achieving results in a test based system, non-selective schools contain pupils who do badly at getting results in tests and exams.
- Grammar schools contain many pupils who have parents who support education and encourage hard work and ambition, non-selective schools contain many pupils who have parents who don't think education matters and do not believe educational goals are worth striving for.
- Grammar schools contain few disadvantaged pupils, who statistically have an achievement gap which will affect schools results, non-selective schools contain high proportions of disadvantaged pupils, who statistically have an achievement gap meaning poor school results.

There is a clear disadvantage to those not selected in Kent's school system, and we feel these children matter. It is impossible to have two tier education without a disparity of opportunity. Kent's school system has 'premium' schools and many unloved secondary moderns.

It is reckless to expand a system that is not working to other parts of the country.

Questions:

Our questions are as follows:

- 1) Is it acceptable that we allow preferential treatment in our school system to children of higher ability? At best this reduces school choice for any child of average ability. If the aim is to stretch high achieving children then what other methods have been considered?
- 2) There is recent evidence that more qualified teachers choose grammar schools in selective areas. Is there any plan to compensate for this effect in areas like Kent?
- 3) There is an urgent need to monitor or regulate the eleven-plus, but this is not in the green paper policy. The test is run by profit making companies, and individual schools and councils are keen to cut costs rather than prioritizing accuracy, plus no one checks for test bias. There is also no proactive monitoring of grammar school admissions or transparency around the process. Eg. Kent County Council did not report recent serious cheating allegations to the OSA. A prep school aggressively marketed its 94% pass rate but the ASA said it was lying when we reported the fact it was actually 54%. Problems occur when test results are not transparent.
- 4) Are there any plans to consider the needs of high achieving children in secondary modern schools? Our evidence shows many high ability children attend Kent secondary modern schools where they underachieve in schools mostly catering for low and medium ability children. These children often have no option to study 3 science subjects and stay in sixth forms that may only offer them 2 A levels.

5) We can not see how this plan fixes “house price admissions” are there alternative methods being looked at to solve this issue? Admissions cause serious problems in Kent because popular grammar schools and popular non-selective schools operate on proximity to a catchment area. In a recent study the biggest house price rises were near popular grammar schools. <http://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/globalassets/documents/media/press-releases/lloyds-bank/2016/160905-house-prices-and-schools-final.pdf> Admission to a school in Kent means parents with no test pass, no faith, and not buying a house in the catchment area of a highly rated school, have extremely limited options and this creates ‘sink schools’

7) How can it be fair that 82% of all grammar schools are rated 'Outstanding' but only 4% of secondary modern schools in Kent achieve this Ofsted rating? It is not equality of opportunity to give an outstanding school only to those who pass a test. Secondary modern schools throughout the UK are half as likely to be rated Outstanding as comprehensive schools.

8) The government says that 'secondary modern schools' will not be created by plans for new grammar schools. However we urgently ask that they define a new name for a school type that lacks high ability children. These schools in Kent have no official name, no designation by the DfE, and this makes it hard to talk about them and to study data and results for them to compare them to other school types. Anyone can study grammar schools with data freely obtained on the DfE website, but no one can easily look at 'non-selective-schools-in-selective-areas' simply to check results for this type of school. It would help to be able to do this before the green paper consultation ends. If the government’s plan goes ahead these schools will certainly need monitoring closely, they are not at all the same as comprehensive schools because they do not contain a full range of abilities.

Supporting evidence:

Sir.Michael Wilshaw on problems caused by academic selection in Kent.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/sir-michael-wilshaws-speech-to-the-festival-of-education>

Dr.Michael Collins, On the history of IQ and aptitude testing :

<http://kenteducationnetwork.org/2016/06/on-the-history-of-iq-and-aptitude-testing-with-specific-relation-to-the-kent-test/>

KCC education policy http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/6217/Education,-learning-and-skills-vision-and-priorities-for-improvement.pdf

More Than Exams comparison of grammar school and secondary modern after school clubs:

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-committee/purpose-and-quality-of-education-in-england/written/27424.html>

Education Datalab review of teacher differences in selective areas:

<http://educationdatalab.org.uk/2016/06/inequalities-in-access-to-teachers-in-selective-schooling-areas/>

Soaring rate of Kent grammar school offers to private school pupils :

<http://www.kentonline.co.uk/kent/news/soaring-rate-of-kent-grammar-sch-a64932/>

What I have learned about grammar schools :

<https://blog.rmceducation.com/2016/08/30/what-i-have-learned-about-grammar-schools-and-selection/>

Peter Read, school appeals advisor, on 'abusive tutoring':

<http://www.kentadvice.co.uk/component/k2/item/785-talk-at-national-tutoring-conference-the-kent-11-plus-test-was-changed-to-make-it-less-susceptible-to-coaching-what-happened-next.html>

Medway Test not fit for purpose:

<http://www.kentadvice.co.uk/peters-blog/news-a-comments/item/868-medway-test-further-details.html>

OSA report on the use of English papers in the eleven-plus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/altrincham-grammar-school-for-boys>