

AQE Parent and Candidate Update June 2020

AQE Limited is committed to focusing on the needs of children and their parents and to ensure that post-primary transfer is child-centred, manageable, fair and enables pupils from all sections of society to reach their full potential. We are determined to do everything in our power to ensure the highest possible level of welfare and wellbeing for our children amidst the difficult and stressful circumstances we all face today.

We are also very aware that the current P6 pupils have not been in school since March and, as a result, there has been a major disruption to the school year. We greatly appreciate the excellent work that primary school teachers have been doing to support their P6 pupils' learning during the period of home schooling together with the wonderful efforts of parents and carers.

The Common Entrance Assessment (CEA) is produced in Northern Ireland by a team of professional educators who are well acquainted with the circumstances of young people sitting the assessment, including the specific current difficulties arising from the coronavirus pandemic. With this in mind, over the past months the team has been reviewing the questions to ensure that they are accessible to all of the pupils, enabling them to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. We want to reassure parents and pupils that for this year's P6 cohort the assessment papers have been deliberately designed both as to content and length so as to take account of disruption caused by the pandemic.

Our three-paper assessment, with the best two counting towards the final score, has been designed to minimise pressure on young people and to allow for an under performance in one paper to be discounted. Parents should also be assured that in calculating standardised scores young people are matched against the others who have sat the same assessment and who have also had their education affected by school shut downs. Of course, if parents feel that their child has been affected by especially unique circumstances this year they should gather appropriate supporting evidence which would allow them to make a special circumstances claim when they are completing the post-primary transfer form early in 2021.

In order to provide additional resources to support P6 pupils, AQE is providing copies of past papers and answers. These are available to all pupils, free of charge, and can be downloaded from the AQE website.