



ST PAUL'S SCHOOL  
Est. 1509



WESTMINSTER  
SCHOOL

24 September 2018

Dear Head,

St Paul's School and Westminster School have decided jointly that from September 2021 the 13+ entry to both schools will not be conditional upon passing the Common Entrance examination. Offers to boys will be conditional upon continued good conduct and academic progress at their existing prep school, including an unreserved reference of support from their school in Year 8. This condition ensures that boys will arrive at St Paul's or Westminster at 13+ with the subject knowledge, academic skills, attitude and work habits that are essential to their ability to settle and benefit from the education we provide at this age. An offer subject to confirmation of good progress from the feeder school is also the system deployed by US Universities.

This decision has been made as a direct response to concerns expressed to us by prep school heads about the sustained pressure upon pupils, parents and teachers between National Curriculum Year 5 and Year 8 under the current admissions structure, and the associated emphasis upon testing and examinations over a long period of time for such young children. We have consulted widely with the experienced heads of those schools, and they share our belief that this change to the system will release the pressure on their young children. It will also create more flexibility and time for prep schools to adapt their Years 7 and 8 curriculum to their own strengths and to incorporate more independent study and project work.

The Admissions assessment for the two schools will continue as at present, based upon an ISEB online pre-test during Year 6, and subsequent interviews, assessments and school references. Both schools recognise that some children develop later than others, so both will maintain reserve lists and assess boys on these lists towards the end of Year 7 and beginning of Year 8, and then make additional offers at that stage which are not conditional upon examination in Common Entrance.

It is essential that boys enter St Paul's and Westminster fully prepared for the 13+ curriculum. The Common Entrance curriculum remains a very good preparation for entry, and so schools that continue to follow the CE curriculum entirely will be preparing their pupils well: if a prep school chooses to enter their pupils for the CE examination, that is a matter for the school alone. For prep schools that choose not to follow the CE route to examination at 13+, we will supply outline syllabuses for each subject that cover the main requirements. While these requirements do follow the CE curriculum in many ways, they also provide a framework that will allow schools to adapt their curriculum in ways that are rigorous but inspiring for the pupils. An outline has already been shared with some prep school heads, and will be developed and supplied to all feeder schools over the coming year together with a stimulus practice paper for each subject with material support from St Paul's Juniors and Westminster Under School. We will also be designing further ways in which we can provide useful support to our feeder schools to help them gauge the suitability of their adapted curricula and of future students.

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This new approach reflects the reality that for most London schools the CE examination has become an exit exam rather than a genuine entrance examination, and that a strong bond of trust exists between St Paul's, Westminster and their feeder schools to the benefit of the pupils and their parents. That trust, together with the steps outlined above and on-going open dialogue, will ensure that the prep schools are preparing their boys well for entry to our schools. It will also help identify those boys who are later developers and who will be reassessed for an offer of a place from our reserve lists. And it will also ensure that boys whose work declines after a Year 6 offer are flagged by the feeder school and may be redirected to a school better suited to their qualities.

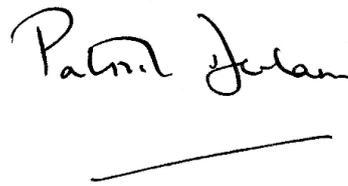
There are further details to follow and on some of these issues of detail St Paul's and Westminster might adopt slightly different positions, but we will inform you of these in due course and good time. Both schools will continue to offer scholarships through the St Paul's Scholarship Examination and Westminster's Challenge. We continue to ask Heads to advise parents about the standard of these examinations, and they should not be regarded as a substitute for Common Entrance.

The principle of jointly removing CE examination as a requirement for entry is established. Please could you furnish your key staff with the main principles of our decision and procedures. We will send further details regarding our outline syllabi and accompanying support materials in due course. If you have any questions, please contact our admissions department. We think this is good news all round, and clear messages and understanding among key staff will help enormously when the news breaks in reassuring staff, pupils and parents that this is the case.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Mark Bailey  
***High Master, St Paul's School***



Patrick Derham OBE  
***Head Master, Westminster School***