



5 THINGS EVERY DORSET 11+ PARENT SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YEAR 5

Thinking about the 11+ can feel overwhelming, especially before the journey has really begun. The good news is that there is plenty of time, and the most important things are often not what parents expect.

Here are five things I wish every Dorset 11+ parent knew before Year 5.

1. Strong Foundations Matter More Than Practice Papers

Many parents worry about starting practice papers too late.

In reality, strong reading skills, vocabulary, number fluency and problem-solving ability are far more important than completing lots of test questions.

Children who understand what they are reading and can think flexibly about maths are often in a much stronger position than children who have simply completed hundreds of papers.

2. Reading Is One of the Best Forms of 11+ Preparation

Reading regularly builds:

- ✓ Vocabulary
- ✓ Comprehension
- ✓ Inference skills
- ✓ General knowledge
- ✓ Concentration

All of these are valuable for the 11+ and for secondary school beyond.

The best reading is often the reading your child actually enjoys.

3. Confidence Matters

Children perform best when they believe they can succeed.

Mistakes, tricky questions and moments of frustration are all part of the process.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is helping your child become comfortable tackling challenges and learning from them.

4. The 11+ Is a Marathon, Not a Sprint

Preparation works best when it is steady and manageable.

A few short sessions each week are usually more effective than trying to cram large amounts of work into weekends and holidays.

Consistency beats intensity.



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Helping children feel confident, capable and ready to thrive ♥



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5. Remember Why You're Doing It

The 11+ is simply one possible pathway. The aim is not to create stress or pressure but to give your child the opportunity to demonstrate their potential.

Whatever the outcome, the skills developed along the way—resilience, confidence, vocabulary, reading and problem-solving—will continue to benefit them long after the test is over.

Final Thought

The most successful 11+ journeys are rarely the ones with the most worksheets.

They are usually the ones where children feel supported, encouraged and confident enough to keep trying when things become difficult.

One step at a time is enough.

Helpful 11+ Resources

Looking for official information about the Dorset 11+? These websites can help you stay up to date with admissions, open evenings and school information.

Grammar Schools:

Bournemouth School for Girls <https://wearebsg.uk/>

Bournemouth School <https://www.bournemouth-school.org/>

Poole Grammar School <https://www.poolegrammar.com/>

Parkstone Grammar School <https://www.parkstone.poole.sch.uk/>

Recommended Practice

Remember: no website or practice paper can replace strong reading habits, vocabulary development and mathematical reasoning. The best preparation starts with secure foundations.

♥ Kelly Garlinge

Qualified Teacher | AQA Examiner | Founder of Write Path Tuition