



What to Focus on in May? A Calm, Strategic Guide for 7+, 8+, 11+ and 13+ Parents

May is a pivotal month in the UK entrance exam journey. Whether your child is preparing for the 7+, 8+, 11+ or 13+ exams, this is the point where preparation begins to shift from learning content to refining performance. It can feel intense—but it doesn't need to be overwhelming.

At Success Index (www.successindex.co.uk), we aim to provide a *quiet, clear space* away from the noise of entrance exam stress—helping you make informed, confident decisions.

Here's what to focus on this month.

Begin Mock Exams Early and Thoughtfully

May marks the start of the mock exam season, and this is one of the most important steps in effective 11+ preparation and beyond.

It's essential to:

- Book mock exams early—places fill quickly across reputable providers
- Use a range of providers, not just one
- Plan a mock exam timetable running through to September

You can explore guidance on this here:

<https://www.successindex.co.uk/mock-exams/>

Mock exams are often misunderstood. They are *not* about chasing high scores. Instead, their real purpose is to:

- Familiarise children with the exam environment
- Reduce anxiety in unfamiliar settings
- Build stamina and focus over longer papers

By exposing your child to different venues, invigilators, and formats, you are preparing them for the unpredictability of real entrance exams.



Understand Your Child's Academic Position

By May, you should be developing a clear picture of:

- Your child's current attainment level
- Their strengths and weaker areas
- How they compare to the expected standard for selective schools

Mock exams, alongside school feedback and home practice, provide valuable data. Use this information calmly and constructively.

If you're unsure how to interpret performance or next steps, our guidance hub can help:

<https://www.successindex.co.uk/11-plus-advice/>

Remember: every child progresses differently. There is no single "correct" timeline.

Review and Refresh Your Resources

A common mistake in entrance exam preparation is relying too heavily on one set of materials.

In May, take time to review:

- Are your current resources still challenging enough?
- Has your child become too familiar with a particular format?
- Are they exposed to a range of question styles?

Using varied materials ensures children develop flexible thinking, which is essential for exams like the 7+, 8+, 11+ and 13+, where question styles can differ significantly between schools.

[Explore recommended resources in our resources section.](https://www.successindex.co.uk/resources/)

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Introduce Past Papers (Carefully)

May is the right time to begin incorporating past papers into your routine.

These are invaluable for:

- Building confidence
- Understanding real exam structure
- Practising time management

However, approach this thoughtfully:

- Some children are ready for timed conditions
- Others benefit from a more supported, untimed approach initially

There is no universal rule. The key is to match the approach to your child's confidence and readiness.

Use the May Half Term Strategically

The May half term is short—but extremely valuable.

This is an ideal time to:

- Book targeted short courses
- Arrange extra tuition sessions
- Focus specifically on areas of weakness

Rather than overloading your child, aim for focused, high-impact support.

[You can explore structured learning support in our courses section.](https://www.successindex.co.uk/courses/)
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Research Schools and Key Dates

Alongside academic preparation, May is also the time to get organised with the practical aspects of school applications.



Make sure you:

- Clearly understand your target schools
- Check exam registration deadlines
- Book open days and school visits
- Keep all dates recorded in a single, clear calendar

Missing a deadline can be far more stressful than any exam preparation challenge.

[Start your school research. \(https://www.successindex.co.uk/schools/\)](https://www.successindex.co.uk/schools/)

[Download our useful recording sheet \(https://www.successindex.co.uk/open-days\)](https://www.successindex.co.uk/open-days) for school visits to stop them all merging into one!

The entrance exam journey—whether for 7+, 8+, 11+ or 13+—can feel busy and competitive. But progress in May is not about doing *more*. It's about doing the *right things, calmly and consistently*.

At Success Index, we believe preparation should feel:

- Structured, not chaotic
- Informed, not overwhelming
- Supportive, not pressured

If you need a clear, reliable place to guide your next steps, you'll find everything in one place on <https://www.successindex.co.uk/>

You don't need to navigate this alone—and you don't need to follow the noise.