

Association for Quality Education

Background

AQE has been providing assessments for children in Northern Ireland since 2009. We have put the interests of the child at the heart of our practices and procedures.

We have very good schools in Northern Ireland, only some of which are selective. AQE want to ensure that those schools wishing to select using academic ability, and not social or economic standing, have the best information on which to make that judgement. The scheme of assessment which we use maximises the reliability and validity of the result your child achieves.

As professional educators with decades of teaching experience, we understand that examinations and assessments of any nature can be a daunting experience. It is also true that children, like adults, can have 'off' days.

In recognition of this and to be as fair and supportive as possible, the AQE offers three papers and will base the assessment on the two strongest papers.

To help with the preparations, we also provide past papers which means you and your child will know what type of questions will be asked.

As your child is used to normal classroom questions in mathematics and English, AQE decided to use the same type of questions in its assessment to ensure your child is familiar with the style of questions.

AQE Limited is a not-for profit private company that uses its income to provide the Common Entrance Assessment ('the assessment') for registered candidates, the result of which ('AQE score') can be used by the candidates for post primary transfer application to participating schools.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q 1. What is the AQE?

A. AQE Ltd was set up by a group of grammar schools as a Testing Agency to provide an AQE score for children who want to transfer to the participating schools.

Q 2. Why is AQE Ltd a private company?

A. AQE Limited is not under the control of any departmental or non-departmental public body, it operates as a not-for-profit private limited company.

Q 3. Does the AQE report to the Department for Education in NI?

A. No, AQE Limited is not under the control of any departmental or non-departmental public body, it operates as a not-for profit private limited company. The AQE reports to the 34 participating grammar schools that commission the assessment.

Q 4. Who funds the AQE?

A. AQE is funded by the registration fees paid by the parents of candidates taking the assessments, and contributions from participating schools.

Q 5. Who decides if an assessment is to proceed?

A. It is up to the participating schools to decide if they require an assessment in any academic year.

Q 6. What role does the AQE play in the assessment of children applying to start grammar schools in September 2022.

A. AQE's sole purpose is to provide the assessment which enables each candidate to receive an AQE score. We have no role in deciding what criteria any secondary school uses to select pupils if it is oversubscribed. The Department of Education (DE) and the Education Authority (EA) should be able to help you with the answer to this question. Please see the links below.

Q 7. Will the 2021/22 assessment be going ahead?

A. AQE and its participating grammar schools intend to initiate preparations for proceeding with the Common Entrance Assessment for the next academic year. However, this will all be kept under review due to Covid-19 and we will be continuing to engage with all relevant stakeholders with the aim of providing further details when known. The safety and well-being of the children continue to be our main priorities.

Q 8. Will this give enough time for the current P6's to prepare for the assessment?

A. The AQE Limited is a small private company and our role is to provide assessments which provide each child with an AQE score. The organisations which deal with the education of children in primary schools are the DE and the EA and we have provided links for them at the end of this document.

Q 9. What support is there for the children who sit the assessments?

A. We have provided free past papers on the website. The DE and EA should be able to help you with the answer to this question regarding teaching support. Please see the links below.

Q 10. Why doesn't AQE run the assessment in my child's primary school?

A. As a private company, AQE Ltd has no remit or authority over primary schools.

Q 11. Why can't teacher predicted scores be used for our children – much like they were used for GCSE and A Levels last year?

A. AQE's role is to produce assessments which provide each candidate with an AQE score. We have no role in deciding what criteria any secondary school uses to select pupils if it is oversubscribed. The DE and EA should be able to help you with the answer to this question. Please see the links below.

Q 12. How can I get to speak to someone in the AQE?

A. AQE Ltd will endeavour to deal with queries as quickly as possible, however, as a small company with limited resources it may take some time to respond. We have set up this page of questions and answers in order to let you have as much information as possible on the topics which arise. Please see the links for AQE below.

Links

AQE Limited

Tel: 028 90224002

Email: info@aqe.org.uk

Website: www.aqe.org.uk

Department of Education

Telephone: 028 9127 9279

Email: DE.DEWebMail@education-ni.gov.uk

Balloo Road
Rathgill
Bangor
BT19 7PR

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/>

Education Authority

Tel: 028 9056 4000

Contact Details for other EA Offices

Email: info@eani.org.uk

40 Academy Street,
Belfast,
BT1 2NQ

<https://www.eani.org.uk/>