



MAGDALEN COLLEGE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT DAY SCHOOL FOR BOYS 7 - 18 AND SIXTH FORM GIRLS

What to expect at 11+ Day



THE 11+ and PRE-TEST

What should I do if I have a question?

If you have any questions or concerns before the actual test day, please feel free to contact the Registrar (01865 253430 or email registrar@mcsoxford.org).

Which tests will I take?

You will sit three tests: English, Maths and Verbal Reasoning:

English

The English test lasts one hour, and you will be asked to complete two composition questions, one fiction and one non-fiction. There is a choice of questions within the fiction and non-fiction sections. Attention is paid to spelling, punctuation and handwriting, as well as to the content of your responses, your ability to write lucidly and effectively, and your creativity and flair.

Mathematics

The Maths test lasts one hour, and is based on Level 5 of the National Curriculum. Calculators are not permitted. You will write your answers on the paper.

Verbal Reasoning

The Verbal Reasoning test lasts 45 minutes. It is a paper-based test, and you write your answers on the paper. There are no multiple-choice questions. Before the test starts, you will have the opportunity to work through sample questions and answers with a member of staff, and to ask if you have any queries.

"The food you gave us was very good!"

"The test conditions were very quiet and it was easy to concentrate on the tests."

"The school made it easy and told us what we had to do. They made it seem like not such a big thing"



What else happens on the day?

At the start of the day, we all meet in the dining hall, where refreshments are served. You will be given a colour-coded name badge and meet the staff and prefects who will look after you during the day. There is no special meaning to the colour-coding. We will try to put you in a group with someone you know.

"First of all, we went into the dining hall and got different coloured badges, to show our groups."

"I liked the way there were breaks in between the tests. It was really nice to have a complete break before the next test – it lets your mind relax. I chose cricket."

"I chose to go to the computer room. It was calm and quiet."

"There were lots of people in the same situation as me – not knowing anyone else. I remember meeting one of my friends at the test day."



There are two breaks: a short break after the first test, and a longer lunch break after the second test. These breaks give you the chance to relax between the tests, to have something to eat and drink, and to visit the bathroom. In the second break, you can take part in one of the activities you have chosen (don't worry if you've forgotten which activity you picked, we'll have a list for you). The activity session is not part of the selection process – it's just a chance for you to meet staff and prefects, make some new friends and have some fun!

How will I find my way around the school?

At the start of the day, you will meet your group leader, a member of staff, who will look after you and show you around the school site during the course of the day. You will be able to recognise your group leader from the colour of his or her name badge. Each group is also accompanied by two or three prefects, who will help show you around and are happy to answer any questions or deal with any worries or concerns you have.

How can I prepare for the tests?

Our tests are designed to allow us to assess your potential, not simply academic attainment. You don't need to have any special coaching for the tests. Sample English and Maths papers are available on the school website to give you an idea of the format of the papers and the type of questions that will be asked. We don't publish Verbal Reasoning papers as we do not own the copyright. Sample papers are available from booksellers such as Blackwell's and W H Smith.

"There was no problem finding our way to the tests. The prefects were really nice and helped show us the way. All our tests were in the same room with the same teacher."

"I couldn't have got lost. I was with the others and we were escorted all the way."

AT INTERVIEW

Who is invited to interview?

Invitations to interview are based on performance in the written tests, and most boys are invited back to MCS for an interview. You will hear whether or not you have been invited to interview by email from the Registrar. If you have been invited, the email will include further information about your interview, including practical details.

What to expect at the interview

The interview lasts about 30 minutes. As part of the interview, you will be able to talk about a topic of your choice; you should bring something with you which you would like to talk about, for example a souvenir, a small object or photo. After that, you will be given some time to look carefully at a short passage of text or a poem, and you will then be asked to read it aloud and to answer questions about it. The discussion may cover matters such as style, tone, structure and the intention of the author. We are particularly interested in your ability to empathise with the texts, recognise subtle meanings and investigate linguistic connections and themes explored in the passages.

The interview also covers your hobbies and extra-curricular activities, as well as work at school and academic interests.

What is the purpose of the interview?

The interview allows you to talk about your interests and passions, and to show us what matters to you both within school and beyond. We will be hoping to get a glimpse of what makes you tick and what makes you excited.

The discussion helps us to see beyond your performance in the written tests and to assess your ability to learn. By discussing a short text, you will have the chance to demonstrate your ability to understand a written text and to interpret a writer's meaning.

We want you to be yourself in the interview. The interviewer will do his or her best to make you feel at ease, so that you can be yourself and show us your skills and interests as best you can.

"I really enjoyed the interview. The interviewer helped me relax. It was like a chat really. MCS was the only school where I didn't feel nervous in the interview."

"It was nice to start by talking about my object. It gave me the chance to talk about something I wanted and share my knowledge, rather than just answering questions, and it helped me get to know the interviewer."

"I went in nervous but came out thinking I'd done my best and that I'd really enjoyed it. It is quite enlightening to talk about yourself to someone you don't know."



"I liked doing the comprehension. I had enough time to read the passage two or three times. It is easier to say what is in your mind than to write it."

"The comprehension didn't feel like a test. When the interviewer gave me the passage, he said it didn't matter how long I took to read it."

Ask if you do not understand a question, and listen carefully to the guidance your interviewer offers. Even if you find a question difficult, do your best to say what you think.

Are extra-curricular activities taken into account?

Discussion of extra-curricular interests and activities forms a significant part of the interview, and your ability to contribute to the varied extra-curricular life of the school is an important factor in the selection process.

Who will interview me?

You will be interviewed by one member of a team of MCS staff. You may well have already met your interviewer at the entrance tests.

"I think they are looking for our verbal skills and our character and the way we are as people, our ability to socialise."

"I think the interview was trying to find out if I was intelligent and an open minded student and someone inquisitive who likes to learn."

"I think the interview was trying to see if I would fit in at the school – whether I could express my ideas clearly and if I was a nice person and generally intelligent. There's no one type of Magdalen pupil so the interview shows if you are an independent person."

"The interview was really good fun. He [the interviewer] made me feel calm and relaxed."

"The interview is to find out who you are as a person. The teachers are just trying to make you shine and they want to help you do your best."

"The interviewer was interested in all the things I do inside and outside school, like cricket, and debating and the school newspaper. Magdalen has lots of clubs so that kind of thing is very important."

"The interview was comforting, because my interviewer was really nice to me and always smiling."



THE REGISTRAR'S TOP TIPS



- Try to enjoy the day
- Read the questions carefully
- Do your best
- Ask: there are lots of people around to help
- Talk to pupils from other schools
- Have fun
- And... relax!