

Studied expressions

Reporters from Children's Express tell of the pressures of exams.

Ahmod Kibria, 11, is in Year 6 at Globe Primary School in Bethnal Green, east London. He also sits his national curriculum tests next week.

I took the London Reading Test last October. You have to fill in the gaps and write out meanings of words. I think they were important because I like to use English. I'll do best at English in my SATs because I'm not quite as good at science and maths. I'm revising maths right now.

I'm bothered about the SAT exams because my teacher gives me so much homework. Really hard maths - five or six pages. I'm nervous and that's that. I worry that my nerves may make me do badly.

I normally spend one-and-a-half hours on it every night. I'm getting all this work for nothing and then I've got to do the exams too.

My friends who wrote their SATs last year said it was really hard. My parents are hoping I do well. They aren't pressurising me, but they do worry.

Taking my SATs should be good practice for my secondary school exams, but at the moment I'm not really confident. I'm nervous and that's that. I worry that my nerves may make me do badly. I feel like I haven't done enough studying on some of these hard subjects. If I don't do well, I will feel bad about myself."

Berrisford Brissett, 11, is in Year 7 at Phoenix School in Shepherds Bush, west London. She took the Year 6 national tests last year, while a pupil at Eilerslie School.

I think that my SATs were good practice last year. I'd done a test once in infants and again in Year 6.

They weren't that important to me because I knew I'd be getting harder ones when I started secondary school.

I didn't feel over-pressured, but I did worry that I wouldn't be able to do it. We had to revise - on the body and science - and they gave us sheets to take home. It helped a little because I read about things I didn't really know about.

I told myself I get what I get, whatever grade it is'. I was worried about doing badly, but I got the hang of it.

My result was all right, but I thought I could do better. I got into a private school on my marks but it was too expensive to attend. You should do tests, but everyone should do the same one so it shows what your abilities are.

My teachers were good. They said just do as well as you can. Some of my friends were pleased that they got higher marks than me. I never asked them if they were nervous, but if they were, they forgot about it once they'd finished the test. I was nervous myself, but I never told anyone.

I was fairly pleased with my results. I thought, 'I've done well, so there's nothing more to do,' but I don't think we had enough revision. We hardly knew what to expect. If we had, I think I could have done much better. It would have given me more confidence.

Hannah Pearce, 10, is in Year 6 at Istead Rise County Primary School near Gravesend, Kent. She recently passed her 11-plus, and will take her key stage 2 tests next week.

I recently passed an exam to get into a grammar school. It's not totally fair to have to pass an exam in order to be accepted because some children could have a bad day because of nerves and do really badly.

Before I did my 11-plus last October, I wanted to be sick. I talked to my parents and told them how I felt and cried. I know loads of my friends cried as well. On the day before we were all really upset and nervous, but we kept it all bottled up and didn't feel very good. My parents said they were sure I would do fine if I did my best.

I think the 11-plus was more important than my SATs because it decides which school you go to. I think it would be a lot better if they didn't have it, because then you'd go to the same school as your friends, and nothing would separate you. Some people think that there are different standards at the schools, but I don't think so.

I don't think my SATs will be as bad. I think kids should sit these kinds of exams around the age of 12. It sometimes seems that when teachers say that the exams are really important and encourage you to do well, they just want to show that they are good teachers. Their pupils will get good marks and the Government will say, 'Oh, this school is good, they must have good teachers there'.

They're just tests... I feel like they're there to show the Government something, but they're not really showing me anything. The good bit about exams is that you know what you're in for, but the bad bit is trying to cope. At this age I think a lot of kids don't know how to deal with the pressure."

About the team

Editors Amina Kibria, 14 and Ching Lee, 14, interviewed Hannah, Ahmod and Berrisford for this article, which was published in the [Times Education Supplement](#).

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