

Specification

Tests must be appropriate to a grammar school selection process for children at the start of Year 6 taking account as appropriate of National Curriculum expectations. They should (as far as possible) be made accessible to children with disabilities, and the contractor will be expected to provide a limited number (30) of test sets in simple modified formats (ie: as a minimum, enlarged font and tinted background) within the costing of the test order. Given due notice, the supplier should be able to offer other means of making tests accessible if required.

One set of suitable generic, reusable familiarisation materials to be made available for unlimited use by the Council for the duration of the contract without additional cost. These should include example questions and answer sheets, with a separate sheet for teachers or parents giving correct answers and a brief explanation of how the answer is arrived at. Familiarisation materials may be made available online or in MS Word format.

Two tests are required for each year of the contract, to assess children's ability in numeracy, literacy and reasoning skills. The contractor to propose how tasks are best disposed across the tests.

Approximate duration of each test between 40 and 60 minutes, to include brief practice exercises to introduce each section.

Content to be viewed and agreed by representatives of the LA in advance of production and final proofs to be supplied to the LA for approval before printing.

Test administration and marking materials to be provided. Bidders should quote separately for the provision of administration instructions in written and audio (CD) format.

Tests should be in multiple-choice format, each with a separate (unbound) A4 answer sheet, readable by optical mark reader machine. *Other formats will be considered, provided that bidders can guarantee that marking will be completed within required timescales.*

Where marking software is proposed it should meet the following technical requirements:

- Updates to client software should be deployed via the web and should require no technical expertise or additional software to apply
- Pupil data and school data should be imported into the system in CSV format
- System should allow at least three User Defined Fields on the Pupil record for recording Test Centre Details, ID number, etc
- Candidate number field must accommodate a ten digit number to link in with the core pupil identifier in the council's pupil databases
- All data transfers in and out of the authority (for standardisation, etc) must be encrypted and secured to the relevant standards

- Software must run in a 'standard' Microsoft Windows environment (i.e. Windows XP / Windows 7 or 8)
- The software solution must include any COM port replication (or similar) required to interface with Optical Mark Reading machines or scanners used by the Council.
- Marking solution must be able to interface with duplex enabled OMR / scanner if double sided papers are being proposed.

Raw scores for each test to be appropriately age standardised to take account of the full ability range. Bidders should specify how they would undertake an appropriate standardisation, and at what point standardisation tables could be made available to the County Council in electronic and print format.

Content in the main tests must be secure (ie: not available for purchase outside a defined educational market) and *all test items new to Kent each year*.

If it is necessary to compile Kent's tests from a pool or bank of suitable materials, these should not previously have been supplied to Admission Authorities in Kent or neighbouring geographical areas including:

- The London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Greenwich or Lewisham
- East Sussex
- Essex or Thurrock
- Medway
- Surrey

Quantity

The current requirement is approximately 13,500 sets of tests per annum, though this could rise or fall in the course of a contract, so any differential in pricing based on volume should be made clear in the bid. Indicative numbers will be notified to the Contractor as early in the process as possible, with a final figure given by an agreed date no less than 15 working days in advance of the delivery date

Materials to include:

Generic unlimited use practice materials as described above, plus:

Individual Test Booklets (2 tests)

Individual, OMR Markable A4 multiple choice answer sheets (2 tests).

Test Administration Instruction Materials and Marking manuals for the tests in proportionate quantities as agreed between both parties when final order numbers confirmed.

Software to enable overprinting and barcoding of answersheets for both tests.

OMR marking software for both tests, to be supplied no less than 4 weeks in advance of pupils taking the tests.

Support for the users of the marking software to be available by telephone during office hours and via e-mail during the marking period (approximately 10 days, normally in September).