

admissions (most pupils put up for the 11-plus are privately tutored in verbal and non-verbal reasoning) and tutors are increasingly being asked to also help comprehensive pupils with Oxbridge interview prep.

One-on-one tuition is expensive, but feels affordable in comparison to the £25,000 average annual private school fees and the £45,000 it costs for boarding school. The price of a private tutor varies hugely depending on their experience, the age of the pupil and the location, but the average is about £80 an hour. Demand for tutors is often most intense in age groups preparing for school or university entrance exams.

Emily FitzRoy has firsthand experience. She sent her daughter Constance to a state primary in Shepherd's Bush in London, which she describes as "excellent".

Unable to find an equally good senior school in the area, she turned to the private sector, but quickly realised what a minefield the entrance exams were.

"It is so competitive and the state system has no support for 11-plus and far fewer exams in general," she says. "Verbal reasoning is a big part of independent school testing but it doesn't exist in the state curriculum. I honestly don't know how you do those exams from a comprehensive without tutoring – it gave both Constance and us confidence in an area that was totally unfamiliar."

As it happens, some private secondary schools favour state primary-school pupils because they know these children have not been "prepped" for the exams, says Chloe Berry, Constance's tutor and a former teacher who specialises in the 11-plus. "But," she adds, "lots of comprehensive kids now have professional parents who are spending a lot of money on tutors – it's very uneven as that much extra help is going to make a dramatic difference."

Increasingly, though, this is true for all pupils – whether they went to a prep school or not. "Tutoring is essential to writing a good entrance exam," says Will Orr-Ewing, the founder of Keystone Tutors. "The reality is that children are either having 18 months of tutoring, or the parents are doing it themselves. Yes, there will always be some kids at the top of the intelligence graph who will be fine but, for a medium-level child, tutoring is something families have to start prioritising well over a year in advance of exams."

This applies equally to parents hoping to get their children into independent or grammar schools. "The curriculums are exactly the same," says Delafield. The skills are also the same, although entrance exams to grammar schools are more likely to be multiple choice.

"It is only the most prestigious private schools that demand an even higher level," Delafield explains. "Whereas grammar-school pupils are expected to be at the top end of Year 6, a school like Westminster will expect pupils of the same age to be at Year 8 level."

When it comes to older children, and particularly those applying to Oxbridge from comprehensives, tutoring is equally invaluable.

"We do a lot of work on Oxbridge for kids in state schools, and the key difference is that they



'Tutoring is essential for an entrance exam': Keystone's Will Orr-Ewing

often haven't been exposed to much intellectual content outside of the system," says Orr-Ewing. "Our job as tutors is to introduce them to content you get all the time in the independent sector."

This includes guided reading outside the syllabus, preparation for Oxbridge-specific tests in subjects like history and PPE and an introduction to debate and thinking creatively in an interview situation. "I don't think my son would have got into Oxford without it," says Jessy Jones, who

or three years of content in a couple of months – a blockage is there and suddenly it clicks." However, he believes that a summer tutor is "too intense" and argues that most children shouldn't have more than one or two hours a week to prevent them becoming overwhelmed.

Burn-out, increasingly, is a problem – and is particularly true in younger age groups. The tutoring industry is rife with stories of three- and four-year-olds, like the little girl Hook assessed, being overly prepped for entrance exams for hothouse primary schools. As a result, Hook will no longer tutor children of that age as she believes it is too detrimental to their mental health.

Berry, who works with children aged nine to 11, is similarly attuned to this issue. "Parents have the understandable desire to give their child the best chance, but sometimes they get pushed a bit too far. If you're a parent, you need to be conscious that they have enough down time and that whoever you use as a tutor has some integrity."

Both she and Hook emphasise the importance of choosing tutors for younger children with a background in education and some formal experience of teaching – and talk about how graduates with little experience or understanding of the system will be particularly unsuited to working with anyone under the age of 14.

"Not every child needs tutoring and not every well-educated adult will be able to tutor," agrees Emma, a teacher at a London day school who says that more than half her class is being given extra lessons – some unnecessarily. "Parents assume that they're doing the right thing, but, unless children are very far behind or prepping for a big entrance exam, they often do better playing in their free time."

And yet, as the industry expands to encompass more pupils every year, after-school activities are increasingly likely to mean more work rather than a kickabout in the park.

"As soon as some parents in a class get a tutor, others follow suit as they don't want their child to be at a disadvantage," agrees Orr-Ewing. "That's the thing with tutoring – once people discover how powerful it is, it's quite hard to go back."

Some parents favour intense summer learning and ask tutors to come away with them

sent both her children to a local comp but set aside £8,000 a year for tutoring. "The three years he and his sister spent having weekly extra-lessons with their excellent tutor gave them confidence – all children need some highly focused, specialised teaching but nobody gets it in the state sector."

Some parents see the benefit of intense summer learning and ask tutors to join them on holiday – and certain education specialists argue that this is a particularly fruitful time for additional reading, investigation and research.

"Cramming after school isn't particularly enjoyable for children unless they have the time and energy," says Charles Bonas. "I think it's much more effective to have a residential tutor who comes to stay. It's the Evelyn Waugh style of tutoring, which died out but is coming back – the tutor lives with the family and engages in talk and debate and, depending on the age of the child, creative play."

For Bonas, live-in summer tutors are an increasingly important part of his business. But, while it is popular among high-net-worth families, this particular style of teaching is still relatively rare across the industry in general.

Orr-Ewing agrees that children don't necessarily learn in a linear trajectory. "My experience suggests that they can absorb two

Stephen Doig Man Friday



Love Island lad, Home Counties Humphrey or on-duty dad: which style cliché applies to you?

We're into summer proper, with vast swathes of us taking to our deckchairs at home and abroad. I, for one, am creaking towards a break in southern Italy and contemplating what to pack for a sweltering two weeks. Of course, what to wear on holiday – from Puglia to Port Talbot – is a universal quandary, but it does seem to cause the most confusion among us British men. Whether foraging for a Corona amid the wildlife of the San Antonio strip or stalking the artisanal hotdog stand at a Cirencester foodie festival, we tend to fall into four categories...

LOVE ISLANDER WANNABE Perhaps more the attire of your son rather than your good self, but the effect of Instagram and certain reality TV shows has changed the game slightly in terms of what men wear on holiday. For this hashtag-happy guy (#blessed), there's not a Zara shirt he doesn't like, nor a pair of white trousers he won't force himself into, the tighter the better. He's been down the gym and he's happy to show off what David Lloyd gave him. Micro shorts? Tick. Brightly hued shirt undone to here? Tick. Gel-slicked hair and tattooed sleeve? Tick. Just accessorise with an Aperol Spritz – he's just discovered them – and a cheeky bit of banter, babes.

FORMER FESTIVAL-GOER We don't mean the Gen Zedder festival-goers of today, in their oversized Billie Eilish sweaters and £4 kombucha (they don't do alcohol), but the Founding Fathers of the festival movement who are now dads in their 40s. These OGs (that's "originals" in Gen Z talk) were doing bucket hats, Adidas stripes and cargo trousers the first time around while watching Blur and Oasis. And that's a nostalgic

L-R: Jay Younger, Noel Gallagher, Prince Michael of Kent, Chevy Chase

style formula they tend to stick to today. The uniform is: North Face bucket, blouson jacket, cargo trousers and a Billabong printed shirt with sandals. He might be a dad of two with a mortgage, but deep down he's that 1990s freethinker on his way to his first Glasto epiphany.

ON-DUTY HOLIDAY DAD You can forget your man bags and crossbody paraphernalia; the only accessory that downtime dad needs is his plastic A4 wallet filled with the family's passports, plane tickets and printouts of the hotel address. With great power comes great responsibility. Holiday dad is all about function and form; cargo shorts with pockets filled with toll passes for the Autostrada, a gilet in a similarly practical vein filled with mosquito spray and walking maps, topped off with a wide-brimmed hat and bifocal lenses. The shoes are orthopaedic and built for exploring early Etruscan sites at dawn, bleary-eyed family a few paces behind. Squint and it could be an outfit from any hifalutin Paris catwalk, but it's entirely built for purpose and entirely his own.

HOME COUNTIES HUMPHREY His summer season sticks to a regimented schedule; Lord's, then Ascot followed by Wimbledon, and onwards to Henley. And his summer wardrobe reflects that in glorious, noble form; a stout morning suit from Favourbrook (grey, never navy), seersucker blazers for the men's finals and rowing jackets with club ties (Henley Rowing Club stripes only, since you ask). If he must venture abroad, it's to Provence where the swaying lavender complements the pink of his linen shirts nicely, paired with a crisp pair of white chinos, a panama and a solid pair of boat shoes. With socks, obviously; no baring of ankles thank you. He's not an animal.



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