

# Should Your Child Attend a Selective School If They Barely Qualify?

Considerations for Parents Making Educational Decisions

"It's better to be a big fish in a small pond than to be a small fish in a big pond"

Based on insights from an educational specialist

# **The Central Question**

"If my child just scrapes into a selective school, should they attend?"

A question that many parents face when their child qualifies for a selective school, but is near the bottom of the admission rankings.

# Why This Matters

This decision significantly impacts your child's academic journey, selfesteem, and future opportunities.

Based on experience with thousands of students over the past decade

# What We'll Explore

The benefits and challenges of selective schools, and how to determine what environment will best support your child's development.



# **The Expert Recommendation**

"I personally think it is not a good idea to scrape into a selective school."

- **Exceptions to Consider**
- Child didn't do much preparation for selective tests
- ✓ Didn't prepare enough but has untapped potential

- When to Be Cautious
- X Child worked extremely hard just to qualify
- × Already pushing the limits of their abilities

"It's better to be a big fish in a small pond than to be a small fish in a big pond."

# **Challenges of Being in the "Bottom 50"**



### **Extreme Competition**

Top selective schools are intensely competitive environments. Students who just barely qualify must work exceptionally hard just to keep up with their peers.



To differentiate between high-performing students, top schools set internal assessments at a much higher level than standard HSC requirements.



#### Higher IQ Requirements

Today's top selective schools typically require students to have an IQ of 130+ (top 1%). A decade ago, students could get in with 110-120 IQ levels.



## **Psychological Impact**

Being consistently in the lower ranks affects self-esteem, well-being, and can create unnecessary stress. It's "not a pretty sight" to be in the bottom 50.



### Real-world Example:

Some students have transferred from one selective school to another, only to transfer back because they couldn't handle the increased pressure and competition.

# The Changing Landscape of Selective Schools

Then vs. Now

#### 10 Years Ago:

- ✓ Lower entry requirements (110-120 IQ sufficient)
- Less intensive preparation needed
- More accessible with basic preparation

#### Today:

- Higher entry requirements (130+ IQ needed)
- Extensive preparation essential
- Near-perfect scores required for top schools



## **Better Alternatives**

#### Schools Ranked 11-20:

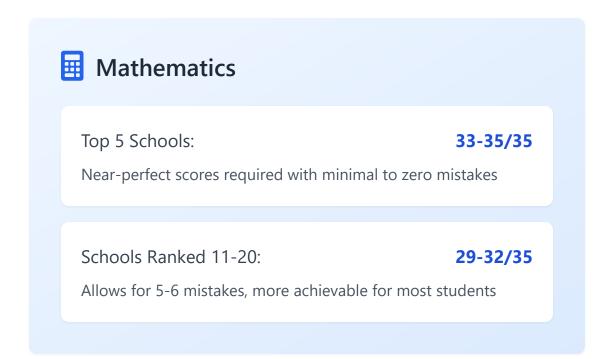
A "more palatable" option for many students with reasonable requirements.

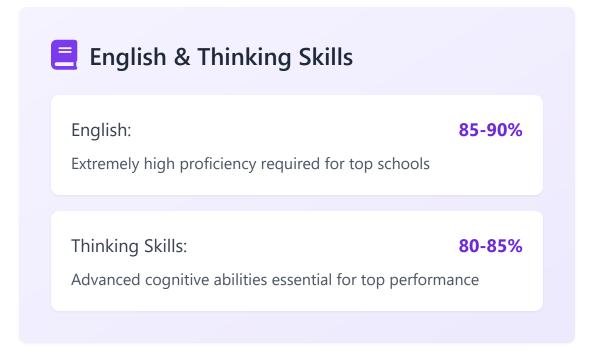
- ★ Less pressure, still excellent education
- Room for 5-6 mistakes on assessments
- Retter balance of challenge and support

Expert advice: "There are way too many parents aiming for the top five schools" when schools ranked 11-20 offer excellent opportunities with less extreme competition.

# **Performance Requirements for Top Schools**

What scores are needed for top selective schools today?





**Key Insight:** 

"To get into a top five selective school, you need to be very well trained and very accurate. It's not possible with just natural intelligence alone."

# **School Selection Based on Student Performance**

Results from a representative mock test provide guidance on appropriate school targeting

# Assessment Findings from 500+ Test Participants

Based on a selective mock test open to both Year 5 and Year 6 students, with results analysed and mapped to the 2024 selective school test requirements.



Top 100 Rank

**Top 5 Schools** 

Very good chance of getting into the most competitive selective schools



Rank 100-150

**Schools Ranked 11-20** 

Excellent schools with more balanced competition and support

Rank 150-250

**Schools Ranked 20-30** 

Strong academic environments with achievable entry requirements

Below 250 Rank

**Schools Ranked 30-50** 

Solid selective schools with supportive learning environments



#### **Expert Recommendation:**

"Schools ranked 11-20 are much more palatable to most parents and students. The process of getting into these schools is not as tricky, but they still offer excellent education."

# **Be Realistic About Your Child's Abilities**

Finding the right balance between challenge and support for your child

# Finding the Right Balance

Parents often either push too hard or don't push enough. Find the middle ground that respects your child's actual abilities and potential.

## Track Academic Progress

Monitor your child's academic performance to understand their genuine potential and appropriate school level. Look for patterns rather than isolated achievements.

#### A Avoid Outdated Information

Be cautious of basing decisions on experiences from several years ago. The selective school landscape has changed dramatically in recent years.

# O Aim Appropriately

Most children with moderate training are capable of accessing schools ranked 11-30. Top 10 schools require both exceptional ability and intensive preparation.

"Be a little bit more gracious with your children. Understand what their actual levels are. There's no point forcing a child into an environment where they'll struggle unnecessarily."

## Key Insight:

The right school environment allows your child to thrive academically while maintaining good self-esteem and well-being. Being above average in a midtier school is better than struggling at the bottom of a top school.

# **Decision-Making Framework**

How to make the right selective school decision for your child



- Use standardised assessments
- Consider IO and natural abilities
- Evaluate genuine work capacity

- Weigh the Environment
- Consider competition intensity
- Assess emotional support available



- Value self-esteem and confidence
- Consider stress management
- Aim for academic enjoyment



#### The Ideal Position

Aim for your child to be in the top half of their chosen school rather than the bottom quarter of a more prestigious school.

## Positive Outcomes When Right-Matched

- ✓ Higher confidence and academic motivation
- ✓ Better HSC scores from appropriate challenge level
- ✓ Leadership opportunities within peer group

## **Negative Outcomes When Mismatched**

- × Decreased self-esteem from constant comparison
- × Anxiety from excessive academic pressure
- X Lower relative HSC performance despite good school

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# **Key Takeaways: Making the Right Decision**

Final guidance on selective school decisions for your child's future

#### Remember

- Position in class ranking matters more than school prestige for a child's wellbeing and academic development
- ✓ Today's top selective schools require both exceptional natural ability (130+ IQ) and intensive preparation
- Schools ranked 11-20 offer excellent education with more reasonable entry requirements

#### **Actions to Take**

- → Assess your child's genuine abilities through standardised mock tests
- → Target schools where your child is likely to be in the top half of the cohort
- → Balance academic ambition with consideration for your child's mental wellbeing

"The goal isn't just getting into a prestigious school. The goal is finding an environment where your child can thrive academically, develop confidence, and enjoy their educational journey."

— From experienced educators

