

# The Year 2 Parent's Roadmap

## Everything You Need to Know Before OC Prep Starts

A free resource from Scholarly Training

For parents of Year 2 students in NSW

### **INSIDE THIS GUIDE:**

- How the OC test actually works in 2026
- The four skills your child needs (and which one matters most)
- Why most parents overestimate where their child sits
- The hidden gap between "doing well at school" and OC-ready
- 5 mistakes that cost families 12 months of preparation
- What top OC students all have in common
- The single most important thing to do in Year 2

## Why This Guide Exists

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If your child is in Year 2, you are sitting at one of the most important decision points in their academic journey. In roughly 12 months, thousands of NSW families will enter the Opportunity Class (OC) placement process for Year 4 entry. The families who perform best are not the ones who panic-prepare in Year 3. They are the ones who lay quiet, deliberate foundations in Year 2.

This guide gives you a clear, honest picture of what lies ahead, what your child needs to build right now, and how to approach Year 2 in a way that sets them up for success without burning them out.

*"The best time to prepare for OC is the year before everyone else starts preparing."*

## Section 1

# How the OC Placement Process Works

Opportunity Classes (OC) are specialised classes within select NSW government primary schools, designed for academically gifted students in Years 5 and 6. Students sit a placement test in Year 3 (typically around May) for entry into Year 4 OC.

## The 2026 OC Placement Test at a Glance

Component	Duration	Questions	What It Tests
Reading	30 min	40 questions	Comprehension, inference, vocabulary in context
Mathematical Reasoning	40 min	35 questions	Number, patterns, problem solving, spatial reasoning
Thinking Skills	30 min	30 questions	Analogies, patterns, logical deduction, sequences

### Key Facts for Parents

- The test is fully computer-based. Students answer on screen.
- Parents can nominate up to 2 preferred OC schools.
- A competitive score of approximately 85+ (74%+) is typical for placement.
- Results are released mid-year, with OC classes starting in Year 4.

## What This Means for Year 2 Parents

Your child will sit this test roughly 12 to 14 months from now. The skills being assessed (reading comprehension at speed, mathematical reasoning, abstract thinking) are not skills that develop overnight. They are built through consistent, daily habits over months. Year 2 is the ideal window to start building those habits without the pressure of an imminent test.

## Section 2

# The Four Core Skill Areas

Every OC-ready student has strength across four skill areas. In Year 2, your job is not to "coach for the test." It is to build genuine capability so your child walks into Year 3 with a strong foundation.

### Skill 1: Reading Comprehension

This is the single most important skill. Students who read widely and deeply develop vocabulary, inference ability, and reading speed naturally. In Year 2, your child should be reading independently for 20+ minutes daily, across fiction and non-fiction. They should be able to answer questions about what they read, make predictions, and identify the main idea.

### Skill 2: Mathematical Reasoning

OC maths is not about memorising formulas. It tests whether your child can reason through a problem. Year 2 students should be fluent in addition and subtraction to 20, understand place value to 1000, recognise patterns, and solve simple two-step word problems. Daily practice of 10 to 15 minutes makes a big difference.

### Skill 3: Thinking Skills (Abstract Reasoning)

Thinking skills test a child's ability to spot patterns, complete sequences, and reason logically without relying on learned content. These look like puzzles: shape rotations, mirror images, analogies, odd-one-out. This skill responds well to targeted practice, especially when started early.

### Skill 4: Writing Foundations

While writing is not tested in the OC exam directly, strong writing indicates strong thinking. Children who can structure a paragraph, use varied vocabulary, and express ideas clearly tend to perform well across all OC components. Focus on sentence variety, basic paragraph structure, and building a habit of writing.

### Section 3

## The Problem Most Parents Cannot See

Here is where things get tricky. Most Year 2 parents we speak to believe they have a reasonable sense of where their child sits academically. And for school-level work, they usually do. But the OC test is not school-level work.

The OC placement test is designed to differentiate the top 5 to 10% of students in the state. The gap between "doing well at school" and "competitive for OC" is much larger than most parents realise. A child who gets straight As in their Year 2 class may still be 12 to 18 months behind in the specific skills the OC test demands.

### Why Self-Assessment Fails at This Level

- **School grades measure different things.** Class performance reflects curriculum compliance, not OC-level reasoning. A child can top their class and still score below average on an OC-style reading passage.
- **Thinking skills are invisible.** Most parents have no way to assess abstract reasoning at home because it is not taught in schools. Your child may be naturally strong here, or they may have a critical blind spot. You cannot tell without structured assessment.
- **Reading comprehension is deceptive.** A child who reads fluently may still struggle with inference, authorial purpose, and vocabulary-in-context questions. Fluency is not the same as comprehension depth.
- **The constraint is hidden.** Every child has one area that is holding them back more than the others. Without a proper diagnostic, parents tend to spread effort evenly across all areas, which means the real bottleneck never gets the focused attention it needs.

*"The biggest risk in Year 2 is not doing nothing. It is spending 12 months practising the wrong things because you did not know where the real gap was."*

### What Does Effective Preparation Actually Look Like?

The families who get the best OC results do not follow a generic schedule. They follow a plan built around their child's specific constraint. That means they first identify exactly where their child sits across reading, maths, and thinking skills, then they invest their limited daily practice time (20 to 30 minutes is plenty at this age) on the area that will move the needle the most.

This is the difference between 12 months of productive preparation and 12 months of well-intentioned guessing.

## Section 4

# 5 Mistakes Year 2 Parents Make

**1****Starting with test papers instead of skills**

Drilling practice tests in Year 2 teaches pattern-matching without understanding. Build genuine reading, reasoning, and thinking ability first. Test technique comes later, in Year 3.

**2****Ignoring thinking skills entirely**

Many parents focus exclusively on maths and reading. But thinking skills make up a third of the OC test. Children who have never seen abstract reasoning questions can struggle badly. Start with puzzles, logic games, and patterns.

**3****Over-scheduling and creating test anxiety**

Year 2 students are 7 to 8 years old. Two hours of nightly tutoring can create anxiety and burnout before Year 3 starts. Short, consistent daily practice of 20 to 30 minutes is enough.

**4****Assuming the school curriculum is enough**

The NSW curriculum is designed for the general population, not OC-level challenge. Most OC content is significantly above grade level. Your child needs exposure to the type and difficulty of questions they will face.

**5****Waiting until Year 3 to start**

By Year 3, the test is months away. Families who start then often resort to intensive cramming, which is stressful and less effective than the steady approach you can take in Year 2. Starting now gives you the gift of time.

## Section 5

# Year 2 Benchmarks: Where Does Your Child Sit?

The table below shows what OC-competitive looks like at the end of Year 2. Read through it honestly. But here is the important caveat: **most parents overestimate where their child sits by at least one column.** That is not a criticism. It is a pattern we see consistently, because parents are comparing to classmates, not to the OC applicant pool.

Skill Area	On Track for OC	Needs Attention
<b>Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reads chapter books independently</li> <li>Retells a story in own words</li> <li>Understands words in context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reads only with help</li> <li>Struggles to recall main ideas</li> <li>Limited vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Maths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent in +/- to 20 (no fingers)</li> <li>Can do two-step word problems</li> <li>Recognises number patterns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still counting on fingers</li> <li>Struggles with word problems</li> <li>Patterns are unfamiliar</li> </ul>
<b>Thinking Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enjoys puzzles and logic games</li> <li>Spots odd-one-out patterns</li> <li>Reasons about why, not just what</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoids puzzles or gives up fast</li> <li>No exposure to pattern tasks</li> <li>Answers with gut feel only</li> </ul>
<b>Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writes 3-5 sentence paragraphs</li> <li>Uses varied sentence starters</li> <li>Can express a simple opinion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single-sentence answers only</li> <li>Repetitive sentence structures</li> <li>Reluctant to write</li> </ul>

### The Honest Truth About This Table

This table gives you a general sense of direction. But it cannot tell you the most important thing: which specific area is your child's biggest constraint, and how far behind the OC-competitive benchmark they actually are.

A child who "seems fine" in reading at home may be 6 months behind on inference-style questions. A child who is "good at maths" may have never encountered the multi-step reasoning the OC test demands. You cannot diagnose the gap from a checklist. You need a proper assessment.

**That is exactly what our free strategy call is designed to do.**

## Section 6

# What Top OC Students Have in Common

After coaching hundreds of OC students, we have noticed clear patterns. None are about raw talent. They are about environment and consistency.

### 1. They read voraciously

Top OC students read 15 to 25+ books per term across multiple genres. Their parents read with them and discuss what they read. Reading is part of daily life, not a chore.

### 2. They practise maths daily (not weekly)

A little every day beats a lot on weekends. Top students do 10 to 15 minutes of mental maths daily. It is baked into routine.

### 3. They have been exposed to thinking-style questions early

Through puzzle books, logic games, or structured practice, these children are comfortable with abstract reasoning by test day.

### 4. Their parents focus on process, not outcome

The families that produce the best results talk about effort, strategy, and improvement. They do not fixate on scores or rankings.

### 5. They started preparation in Year 2, not Year 3

Students who have a full year of consistent, low-pressure skill-building before Year 3 outperform those who start intensive prep later. You are reading this guide at exactly the right time.



## Your Next Step

You now know what the OC test looks like, what skills matter, and what the common mistakes are. That puts you ahead of most Year 2 families. But there is one thing this guide cannot do for you.

**It cannot tell you exactly where YOUR child stands.**

Is their reading comprehension genuinely OC-competitive, or does it just look good compared to classmates? Are they strong in maths reasoning, or just fast at arithmetic? Have they ever been exposed to the abstract thinking patterns the OC test relies on? And most importantly: what is the single biggest gap between where they are now and where they need to be in 12 months?

These are questions you cannot answer from a PDF. They require someone who has assessed hundreds of Year 2 students against OC benchmarks and can pinpoint exactly what your child needs to focus on.

### Free Year 2 Diagnostic Strategy Call

In a free 15-minute call with one of our learning specialists, we will:

- Assess where your child likely sits against OC-competitive benchmarks
- Identify the single biggest constraint holding them back
- Tell you whether your child needs structured support or is fine with home practice
- Give you a clear, honest answer on OC readiness (not a sales pitch)

We will tell you what we see. If your child is on track and just needs you to keep doing what you are doing, we will say that. If there is a gap that needs expert help, we will explain what that looks like. Either way, you will leave the call knowing exactly where you stand.

**BOOK YOUR FREE DIAGNOSTIC CALL**

*Limited spots available each week. We keep these calls small so every family gets personalised advice.*

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