

CHOOSING A PRIMARY SCHOOL



Giving
disabled children
a brighter future

CONTENTS

Pg 3	Choosing the right primary school
Pg 4	How do I choose a school?
Pg 4	Before visiting the school
Pg 5	Visiting the schools
Pg 5	When you have chosen a new school

Choosing the right primary school

Every parent wants to make sure that their child settles happily into a new school. The move from part-time to full time education is an important stage in your child's life.

If your child has SEN (Special Educational Needs) needs there may be other things you want to consider when you are choosing a new school.

There are **two** important things to remember about moving to full-time education:

- Schools are not allowed by law to have more than 30 children in a class per teacher if the children are under 7 years of age, unless there are special circumstances.
- If your child attends a mainstream school nursery this does not guarantee there will be place in the school. The Local Authority has strict rules about allocating school places.

Most children with SEN will be able to go to their local mainstream school. They will be taught with children of their own age. They will receive extra help from their class teacher or some other special help provided by the school. Some children may need more specialised support.

You should complete the Admissions form and put down at least two but preferably three schools. Places are allocated according to the distance from your home to the school. If there are more requests than places, the local authority will use the Oversubscription Criteria. The criteria can be found on your Local Authority's website.

How do I choose a school?

It is important to think about your child's needs when choosing a school. There are a number of things you might want to think or ask about when you are looking at schools, to help you make your decision.

- ▶ Visit at least two schools so that you have something to compare
- ▶ Start with local schools
- ▶ Does the school already have all the things your child needs or can they be developed
- ▶ Try to keep an open mind until you have looked at all the possibilities and spoken to the professionals

Before visiting the school

Make a checklist of all the things that are important to you and your child. This will help you to ask the right questions.

Look at the school's website for the school SEN policy, governors' annual report on SEN, school prospectus, anti-bullying policy and behaviour policy.

Gather up to date copies of relevant information about your child, such as their Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan, any educational psychology advice and copies of individual education plans.

Visiting the Schools

Try to look around the schools you have chosen, talk to members of staff and meet with the school's SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator).

Questions to think about and ask when visiting:

- ▶ How is SEN provision organised in the school?
- ▶ Has the school experience of children with the same/similar needs as your son or daughter?
- ▶ What additional adult support is available?
- ▶ How does the school deal with bullying?
- ▶ How will the school communicate with you about your child and his/her progress?
- ▶ How does the SENCo communicate information about individual pupils to teachers?

When you have chosen a new school

When you have chosen a new school it is important to let your child's Nursery staff know. They will arrange transition visits to the new school so your child will feel more confident about the move.

To get help on choosing a secondary school read our 8 tips for transitioning to secondary school [here](#).