

Choosing a school

Every family has different reasons for choosing a school, so think about what is important to you and your child. You can visit as many schools as you like, but always make an appointment. Be honest with the school, talk about your child's strengths and what support you think they need. You will need to ask if the school has a place in your child's year group.

Things to think about before visiting a school

- Would you like to visit in school hours when children are in class?
- Will it be helpful to take your child with you?
- Do you want another adult to come with you?
- Can you talk to other parents and children about the school?
- How will your child get to and from school?
- Would you like to meet the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO)?
- If your child has an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) you may wish to take a copy with you.

Things to look for on a school visit

- Do you feel welcome? Is the school happy to answer your questions?
- Are the children happy? Are they helpful and friendly?
- Is the school clean and orderly? Do the classrooms look like places where children can learn?
- Are the displays current and interesting and showing work of different abilities?
- Do the staff seem interested in the children and treat them with respect?
- How do the children move round the school? Are they orderly, considerate and polite?

There are several standard documents that the school should have and should be available on the school website:

- The school brochure
- The special educational needs policy
- The behaviour policy
- The bullying policy
- The Governors annual report to parents

Questions you *may* like to ask

- How are children with SEN supported? (In the classroom, individually or small groups?)
- What experience does the school have of your child's particular special educational needs?
- How does the school make sure that **all** staff are aware of every child's special educational needs?
- How many children would be in your child's class and how many adults would there be?
- Are the children in mixed ability groups?
- How will the school check and review your child's progress and how would you and your child be involved?
- How much homework is your child expected to do?
- How does the school involve parents and communicate information to you?
- How will your child be supported at break times and lunchtimes (e.g. quiet area, buddy system etc.)
- What will the school do to help your child settle in when they start?

Other things to think about after your visit

Did you feel that the staff have a positive attitude towards the children, were willing to make the most of children's strengths and help them through their difficulties?

Did the school make you feel that they treated parents as partners in a team, working together for the benefit of the children?

**If you would like to talk about anything to do with this leaflet, please contact us on
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