

Choosing a school

Deciding which school you would prefer your child to attend is an important decision and if your child has special educational needs (SEN) there are extra things you will need to consider.

All schools will be able to give you:

- a school prospectus;
- the most recent Governors annual report to parents;
- their SEN policy;
- other policies such as their behaviour or bullying policy;
- their home-school agreement;
- the Ofsted Inspectors' report on the school.

Reading through the information will give you an idea of what the school is like and help you identify any areas you want to find out more about.

Finding a school that suits your child

You need to think about whether you want to take your child with you on the first visit (you could discuss this with the school). You may also want to take someone with you; they can help in discussing your impressions afterwards.

- Visit at least two schools so that you have something to compare.
- Visit the school of your choice more than once.
- If the school does not already have all the things your child needs, they could probably be developed.

Before you visit the school

- Make a list of all the things that are important to you and your child. This will help you ask the right questions (use our SEND IASS parent checklist for suggestions).
- Arrange an appointment with the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO). You may also like to meet the year head if it is a secondary school.
- Decide if you want someone to go with you, eg, a friend, or someone from SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.
- Sort out any relevant information about your child's special educational needs, eg, their statement, any reports or recent individual education plans.

Some questions you might want to ask:

- How many pupils would be in my child's class?
- What will the school do to make sure that all staff knows about my child's individual needs?
- Does the school have experience of helping children with similar needs to my child?
- What opportunities do staff have for training on SEN issues?
- How does the school celebrate the success of pupils with special needs?
- How would I be involved in planning for my child's needs and reviewing his/her progress?
- How does the school manage children with challenging behaviour?

- Does the school have an anti-bullying policy, and how is it monitored?

Children with EHC plans

If your child has an EHC plan, then advanced planning is essential. You will need to start looking at the next school you want your child to attend, when your child is in Year 5 in primary school. This will then enable you to have meetings with the secondary school's special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) and will allow time for a well planning transition to the secondary school. Contact the local authority's SEN department on 01983 823412 who will be able to give you further information.

If you need further information, please contact

SEND Information, Advice and Support Service 11 Orchard Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1JZ.

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