

# Choosing a School

Choosing a school for your child can be a difficult process for parents, especially if your child has special educational needs. When visiting a potential school, you might want to consider some of the following questions.

## School Organisation

- How is the school organised? Into departments? By age? By ability By subject groups?
- How might the school's organisation change as my child gets older?
- How often will my child change class or move around the school?
- How many children will be in my child's class?
- When and how often are children taught outside the classroom?
- How does the school arrange extra support for children who need it?
- Is the extra support usually provided in the classroom, individually, or in small groups?
- What health or medical facilities does the school have?
- If your child has difficulty walking: Will all areas of the school be accessible to my child, or will adaptations be necessary?

## Staff Knowledge and Experience

- Does the school have any experience helping children with similar difficulties to my child?
- How many other children in the school have special educational needs? What kinds of needs do they have?
- How many staff are there in school? Teaching and Non-teaching special needs support staff?
- What training have staff had about special educational needs?
- How will the school ensure all staff know about my child's needs?

## Pastoral Care and Extra Curricular Activities

- How will the other children be helped to understand my child's special needs?
- How will my child be helped to make friends?

- How does the school help children to learn how to make the school a happy place? Does the behaviour system reward effort as well as success?
- What is the school's experience of bullying? How will the school prevent my child from being bullied?
- How will the school ensure my child can take part in all areas of the curriculum?
- How does the school ensure all children have an equal opportunity to take part in school trips?
- How will my child be encouraged to take part in out-of-school activities such as clubs and sports events?

## Assessment and Progress

- How is children's progress monitored and recorded?
- How regularly will my child's progress be reviewed? Who is involved in this?
- What happens if school staff feel my child is not making progress?
- What will happen if I feel my child is not making progress or if I have any concerns?
- What special arrangements exist for internal exams, tests, and SATs?
- What public exams can children take, and what is the success rate?

## Communication and Support for Parents

- How will I be involved in the individual planning for my child's special educational needs?
- How often are written reports sent home?
- How will I be updated about what is happening in school?
- How are parents involved in school life?
- Does the school produce newsletters for parents?
- What sort of support and guidance does the school offer parents?
- Is there a parents' group I can join?
- What arrangements are usually made for transport to and from school?
- How will staff get to know my child before they start at the school?
- How will my child get to know the school, especially in the first few days after starting.

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