

Choosing a School for a Child with Additional Learning Needs Secondary School



Before visiting the school:

- Look at schools recent Estyn report online
- Make a checklist of the things that are important to you and your child
- Possibly take someone with you for a second opinion
- Take relevant information with you regarding your child's educational needs/ requirements (E.g. statement, health advice and individual educational plans)
- Consider whether a guided tour of the school is appropriate, this preferably done during school hours
- Decide whether on the first visit your child goes along with you, the school would advise you on this.
- It is important to keep an open mind and any queries/ questions to ask when on visit or contact school afterwards.

How do I choose a school?

Finding a school that will suit your child's needs:

- Contact the Access and Inclusion Service for information on Special Educational Needs provision within RCT –they will provide you with details of the appropriate schools/Learning Support Contacts.
- Visit at least two schools to be able to compare
- Try to keep an open mind until you have looked at all the possibilities and spoken to all the relevant professionals
- Check whether the school already has available all the things your child needs or could the school be adapted to provide these things.

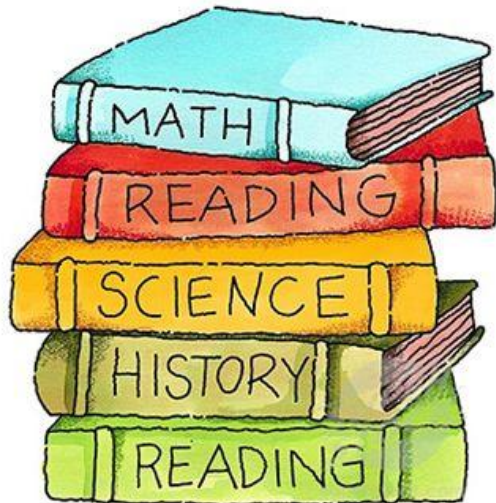
Other things to consider:

- Do you feel comfortable in the school?
- Do the children look comfortable and happy?
- If you or your child has any particular religious needs would they be met in the school?
- Does the school celebrate different religions and cultures?
- Does the school look under control?
- Are the schools displays current and interesting clearly showing the pupils work?
- Are the staff friendly and interested in the children in their care/class?
- Are all the facilities suitable for your child? (sensory room, swimming pool, playground, canteen, classrooms)

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Policy Questions:

- What is the schools policy on: Behaviour, equal opportunities and inclusion, giving medication, pastoral care, Special Educational Needs (SEN) –Ask for a copy of any policy in which you would like to see.
- How does the school organise extra support? Provided in a classroom, individually or small groups?
- How does the schools planned activities include all pupils e.g day trips etc?
- How does the ALNCo/SENCo communicate with teachers?



Sample Checklist:

- How is ALN provision organised in the school?
- Has the school got experience of children with the same/similar needs as your child? How did they work with them? How did they overcome any barriers?
- What kind of support would your child receive?
- What is the school behaviour policy? And how would this apply to children with ALN?
- How does the school involve parents in school life? How do they communicate?
- How does the school deal with bullying?
- Are there after school clubs? How would these accommodate a child with ALN?
- Transport to school?
- How does the ALNCo communicate with teachers?



When visiting your child's new school you may find some of these questions helpful. It may not be possible to ask all the questions- look through them and decide which ones are the most important for you to find out about. Possible questions to ask:

School Structure:

- How is the school organised? Age? Ability? Subject groups? How might this change as my child gets older?
- How many children would be in my child's class?
- How often would my child change class or move around the school?
- What time does school start and finish? Is it the same time every day?
- Does the school operate a weekly or fortnightly timetable?
- What support/supervision is available at break and lunch times?
- Does the school have a buddy system?
- How does the school assess work and monitor progress?
- How often are written reports sent home?
- How regularly would my child's progress be reviewed? Who would be involved? How will I be involved?
- Is there a special room/quiet area for pupils with SEN/ALN? Is a member of staff always available?
- Does the Learning Support Department have good ICT facilities?
- How is the work adapted for individual pupils? Does the school ensure this?
- Is there a breakfast club? Does it operate every day?
- Are there after school clubs? How would these accommodate a child/young person with ALN?
- Transport to school?
- Does the school offer alternatives to GCSE'S?
- Does the school have any links to colleges?
- What other services/professionals come into the school?
- Child/Young person Interests
- How will subject teachers be informed about my child's needs? (if appropriate).
- How will other children be helped to understand my child's special needs?
- How would the school get to know my child before he/she starts there?
- How would my child get to know the school especially in the first few days?
- Parental Involvement:
- How does the school involve parents in school life? How do they communicate?
- How does the school deal with bullying?
- Has the school got experience of children/young people with same/similar needs of your son/daughter? How did they work with them? How did they overcome any barriers?
- Who do I contact if I am concerned?

