

Picking a School for Your Child

Choosing a primary school for your child can come with a mixture of emotions excitement for the future, sadness for the loss of their baby years and anxiety over picking the right school. To help you we have put together a guide on selecting the most appropriate school for you and your family.

You should start by asking yourself the following questions:

1. In your opinion, what are the five most important things a school should have?
2. How far are you willing to travel? Are you using public transport? Is there an appropriate tube or bus route? Or do you want a school within walking distance of your home?
3. What are your child's key talents and skills? Which schools will foster these?
4. Does your child have any additional needs or learning difficulties? Which schools will offer the most support?
5. Do you want your child to go a single gender or co-educational school?

Once you have established your position on the above, you can start researching schools. This is when you should start being very specific on your vision for your child's education. After all, it shapes their future character, opportunities and prospects:

1. Does the school have a strong curriculum of core subjects i.e. maths, English and science?
2. Does the school have a programme for either gifted or talented or under achieving students?
3. Does the school provide extra circular activities? Do these come at an additional cost? Can you afford them? Do they offer any financial support?
4. Does the school have a particular approach to learning, what are the ethos and values of the teachers? Do they align with your own?
5. What is the homework policy? Do you feel the expected hours are too little, just right or too much?
6. What size are the classes? Will your child get enough individual attention?
7. How will my child's progress and achievement be assessed? Are there high expectations for assessments and could this affect my child's mental health?
8. How do the school reward or punish certain behaviours? Do you agree with their approach?
9. What does the school do to develop character and citizenship?
10. Is the school safe? Do it have adequate security measures? What are their policy on drugs, alcohol and lethal weapons?

11. Does the school have an emergency plan for local and national emergencies?
12. How does the school notify parents of emergency closings?
13. Do the children have access to facilities such as a library, canteen and or after school club?
14. What additional expenses and fees are likely to arise? Including uniform, books, fieldtrips etc...
15. What is the application process like? Are you likely to be accepted?

Once you have clarified the above, you can start booking school visits. School visits are important as it gives you a feel for how the school beyond how it is described on paper. You can search for specific schools via My School Open Days; <https://www.myschoolopendays.co.uk/>.

Additional Sources:

<https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/choosing-a-school>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/sep/16/multiple-choice-teachers-choose-school-child>

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/four-steps-selecting-school-your-child>

<https://metro.co.uk/2018/01/09/how-to-choose-the-right-primary-school-for-your-child-7206615/>

<http://www.gettherightschool.co.uk/howtochoosetherightschoolforyourchild.html>