

## State-maintained schools

### Planning ahead for primary school choices

Once you have read [options in primary education](#) you can start to make a list of possible individual schools. It is advisable to start thinking about this at least 18 months before your child would start. Remember that even if your child is placed in the nursery section of a primary school the same admissions criteria apply so admission is not guaranteed. However, if you already have made your decision, **and can be certain that your child will be accepted in the school of your choice**, you can conveniently skip this whole section.

### State-maintained schools

In England and Wales, 90 per cent of children are educated in state-maintained schools, the majority referred to as mainstream or 'ordinary' schools. Mainstream schools have a lot in common; they are all funded by the state, follow the National Curriculum and are regularly inspected by the [Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills \(OFSTED\)](#). In some areas separate infant and junior schools are offered, they are usually on the same campus or adjacent. Occasionally middle schools catering for the 9-13 age group are available, and less commonly there are now some all-age inclusive schools based around the same campus.

### Types of state school

**Only read this if you are concerned about what body has responsibility for running the primary school, you may just be interested in how the school delivers and can skip this section.**

Categories of state-maintained primary schools.

- **Community schools** - the commonest state school run by the local authority (LA), which employs the staff, owns the school land and buildings and has primary responsibility for deciding on pupil admission criteria.
- **Foundation** - the Governing Body owns the land, employs staff and is the admission authority with the LA. Usually there is some LA representation on the Governing Body
- **Voluntary aided** - owned by a voluntary body, usually religious, who appoint most of the governors. LA funded except for building and repair costs, which are shared between the Governing Body, LA and government. The Governing Body is the admission authority - with consultation again from the LA - and may prioritise practising members of the relevant religion.
- **Voluntary-controlled** - mainly religious or 'faith' schools, but run by the LA. The land and buildings are often owned by a charitable foundation, but the LA employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admission arrangements.
- **Community and foundation special schools** - cater for children with specific more complex special educational needs, such as physical or learning difficulties.

### Other state schools

- **Academies** - These are independent state schools sometimes established by sponsors from business, faith or voluntary groups in partnership with central government and local authorities. Primary schools may now apply for academy status although most academies are currently all-ability, secondary. Academy status can give individual schools freedom from the local authority and for Headteachers almost complete control over budgets, the curriculum, hiring staff, term times and the length of school day. Extra funding is provided to support the conversion to an academy. There is no selection of pupils but these schools are able to refuse admission to children who have been excluded twice or are regarded as 'challenging'. The first wave of new academies from 2010 will be drawn from schools rated as outstanding by OFSTED.

**'Free' schools** are schools which once the legislation is in place may be set up by parents and teachers.

**When can your child start attending a state primary school?**

**Reception Year: the school year in which your child reaches the age of five.**

**Your choices:**

- **to place your child for the Reception Year in a primary school**
- **to keep your child for the Reception Year in his current pre-school**

**Where can I find out more about state education?**

[Directgov: local authorities](#) (This has contact details of all local authorities and you can access details of the schools in their area)

[Edubase](#) (provides lists of all types of state schools in your selected area(s)).

[Schoolsfinder](#) (provides profiles for **all** schools in England).

[Teachernet: faith schools](#) (provides a general picture of the number and type of faith schools).