

How to Identify the Best Schools in the Area

Finding a school for your children can be one of the most difficult and daunting decisions you have to make when moving home. With so many points to consider such as curriculum, location, religion, transport and cost of uniform, we have compiled a helpful guide to finding the most suitable school for your children and you.

	Where To Start	
Infant		Primary
State	Secondary	Private

A good place to start finding where your local schools are is to read the admissions to primary schools booklet or secondary school admissions booklet which you can download from www.kentadmissions@kent.gov.uk or telephone 01622 696565 to receive a copy via post. The booklet contains:

- Advice to parents about deciding which school they feel is most suitable.
- Specific information about the schools and their admission criteria.
- Information about the admissions process and the admissions criteria for Kent's community schools.

All aspects of the admissions process are covered on the website with useful, frequently asked questions and answers from parents.

If you are moving into the area or are planning to do so you will need to telephone the schools to establish if they have a vacancy in your child's year group. If the school is unable to offer you a place you can contact the admissions team for help and advice.

Other useful sources to locate local schools are:

- Yellow pages
- www.finder.co.uk
- www.schools-search.co.uk
- www.privateschools.co.uk
- Local Library
- Thanet District Council

Choosing A Short List!

You can view OFSTED reports and performance tables on line to give you a clear picture of how each school is performing.

www.ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofes.gov.uk

Telephone schools to obtain a brochure or prospectus.

Look at the schools' websites.

Speak to people who already have children at the school.

Points to consider

- Location
- Size of school and classes
- Religion
- OFSTED reports
- Curriculum
- Admission requirements
- Facilities
- Private or state school
- Discipline
- Exam results
- Transport

School Visits

Once you have a short list of schools make arrangements to meet the Head Teacher and visit the school. Take note of:

1. The Pupils. How they look and behave.
2. The Head Teacher's. How do they deal with your questions? What interest do they show in YOUR child?
3. The Staff. Qualifications. Appearance and attitude.
4. Discipline. Is it stricter or more relaxed than you would expect.
5. Curriculum. Will your child have adequate help at their level of learning.
6. Exam Results. How existing pupils perform.
7. Outside Activities. E.g. Breakfast club, after school activities, school outings.

Once you have selected a school you can either apply direct to the school or on line at Kent Online Admissions.

Uniform

When you have chosen your school you will need to purchase the uniform. The local shops for Thanet are:

National School Wear Centres
107-109 Ramsgate Road, Margate,
CT9 4BL
Tel: 01843 293555

Hewson Uniform Shop
10 Harbour Street, Ramsgate,
CT11 8HA
Tel: 01843 594736

How to Identify the Best Pre Schools

There are a number of different pre-school facilities in Thanet depending on your needs and the age of your child.

- Childminders
- Crèches
- Dry Nurseries
- Nursery Schools
- Holiday Schemes
- Out of School Care
- Pre School Play Groups

Where to start looking:

The Children's Information Service lists registered child carers inspected by Ofsted.
08000 32 32 30 kentcis@kent.gov.uk or kentadmissions@kent.gov.uk

www.nurserysearch.co.uk Simply select the postcode in which you need to find a nursery school and all local nurseries and pre school playgroups are listed with contact information, a map and ratings.

www.ufindus.com

www.thanetearlyyears.org

www.childcarelink.gov.uk

www.childcareplaces.co.uk

www.localife.co.uk (general guide to Thanet life and businesses)

Yellow Pages

Local Library

Once you have selected a list of possibilities, phone suitable nurseries to find out if they have space for your child and arrange a visit. Find out if there are any restrictions as some nurseries do not offer care for children or babies under two.

Arrange a Visit

Ensure it is during times when the carers are looking after other children so you can get a feel for the environment and how the carers interact with the children. Take your child along with you to see how they react to the school, carers and other children. Talk to other parents of children at the nursery.

Points to Consider;

- Suitability
- Location
- Cost
- Availability of spaces
- Rules and Regulations
- Equipment and rooms
- Do their times fit into your schedule?

Once you have chosen a nursery get your agreement in writing with details of pay, hours, conditions, arrangements for sickness, holiday pay, notice periods and check if you are entitled to government vouchers for pre-school care. There can be no room for misunderstanding at a later date if an agreement is signed.

To ease your child into nursery life, book a trial session or stay with them for a short while on their first session. It will also give you a good insight into the running of the school.