

What do I need to consider?

The application process enables parents and carers to express a preference for any primary school in Devon or elsewhere and we will do our best to meet your preference. You may want to look at information which has been published about our schools to help you make your decisions.

Each school may have a website and prospectus and you can get a copy of this direct from the school. We would advise you do this for any school you are considering as one of your preferences. You may also want to know some specific information about a school and there are some details about all our Devon primary schools from page 21, including school website addresses.

You can look at published reports of recent school inspections at www.ofsted.gov.uk

You can contact the Department for Education on **0870 000 2288** for 2011 school achievement and attainment tables. www.dcsf.gov.uk/performanceables

School Admissions Code

The management of school admissions comes under the requirements of legislation and the government's **School Admissions Code 2010**. A revised Code is anticipated to come into force in 2012. This would affect the admissions process for 2013-14.

Different types of primary schools

You may be aware that a number of schools have recently converted or are in the process of converting to become **academies**. Other schools are being established across the country as **free schools**.

Both academies and free schools are independent of the local authority but are available for admission for children without paying fees. They are non-maintained independent schools funded by the state.

If you wish to apply for an academy or free school, you should do so using the same form as an application for a maintained state school. In its first year for admissions, a free school may decide not to take part in the co-ordinated admissions scheme application process. Please contact the Admissions Team if you have any questions about academies or free schools.

Throughout The First Step, any reference to school should be read as school or academy.

When Should my Child Start School?

Statutory school age

Your child must be in full-time education by the start of the term following their fifth birthday, but this does not mean that they have to be in education before then.

Being in education does not necessarily mean being in school – you may decide to educate your child at home. The Admissions Team can advise you on the process. From September 2011, schools in all areas including Devon must offer admission for the beginning of the September term following a child's fourth birthday. This may have been called a single point of entry previously but is better thought of as a Single Offer Point.

Options for parents

When you are offered a place for September you have the following options:

1. full-time admission to Reception
2. part-time admission to Reception up to the statutory school age
3. part-time attendance at a pre-school setting while deferring a place in Reception

You may not take a part-time place in Reception AND a free part-time place in a pre-school setting. Neither can you take a free full-time place in a pre-school setting. You could arrange for additional pre-school hours but you would have to pay for them.

Early admission

Admission is no longer generally offered earlier than the official offer date of September. Admission earlier would be in the preceding academic year when the child was still 3 years of age.

Deferred admission

As a parent, you have the right to defer your child's admission until the statutory school age, at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday, even though you will have been offered a place for the previous September. This is a decision for you as a parent to make. We would advise you to take all factors into account including the advice of the headteacher at the school and other educational professionals.

If you wish to defer admission, you must inform the headteacher of the school which has been allocated. **That place will be held open up to the start of the term after your child's fifth birthday within that academic year** and will not

be offered to another child. If you do not let the headteacher know and your child does not start on the date offered, the place may be withdrawn and offered to another child.

Child's 5th birthday	Can defer until
1 September - 31 December	January, the start of the spring term
1 January - 31 March	January OR April, the start of the summer term
1 April - 31 August	January OR April OR the next September with a fresh application for a Year 1 place.

Summer-born children cannot automatically defer admission and enter school in a Reception class in the following September. Parents must make an application for a Year 1 place after the summer half-term in 2012. **It is possible that this class may have been filled during the Reception year. A place will not have been reserved.**

If you wish to defer, you must still apply as normal online at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline or on the Devon Common Application Form by the deadline of **15 January 2012** and, after a place is offered, you must inform the headteacher that you wish to defer. Your child's place at the school will be kept open for them to join at the later date.

Delayed admission

You may wish your child to start an **academic year later than normal** but still enter at the Reception stage. Such an arrangement must be supported with social, medical or educational evidence. A place will not be guaranteed a year in advance. Please contact the Admissions Team

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for further information. It is advisable to submit an application on time while your request for delayed admission is considered.

Designated or catchment areas

All addresses in Devon are served by a Primary and Secondary School, sometimes called a 'designated' or 'catchment' area. This means that children who live in this area will have a higher priority for a place at the school but does not guarantee admission. If you are not sure whether you live in a school's designated area you should get in touch with the Education Helpline **0845 155 1019** who will be able to advise you. Alternatively you can check online by visiting www.devon.gov.uk/schoolareamaps

Making your decisions

It can be helpful to estimate your chance of being offered a place at any particular school. On page 18 you will see a table of information which tells you about admissions in 2011.

Your local school could be filled by 'positive' preferences. If you do not express a preference for your local or designated school on time then it may be possible for your child to be allocated to a school with vacancies situated some distance from your home. If this happens any transport arrangements will be your responsibility.

Other local authority areas

If you live in Devon but near to the border of another Local Authority (LA) area, for example, Plymouth, Torbay, Dorset, Somerset or Cornwall you may decide that you want to make a preference for a school in that LA area as well as, or instead

of, a Devon school. If this is the case, as a Devon resident you must still complete the Devon Common Application Form which is in this booklet or apply online at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline

Please note that there is one area of Devon where the designated primary school is in another Local Authority. This lies to the north of the Plymouth City Council area. The designated primary school is Mary Dean's Primary School.

When we receive your application we will contact our colleagues in the neighbouring LA to tell them about the school(s) in their area you have expressed a preference for. They will consider your application alongside the others that they receive. They will then let us know their decision.

We will write to tell you about the primary school place we can offer your child, even if it is in a school in another LA area.

If you do not live in the Devon LA area but you would like a place in a Devon school, you should complete the application form available from your 'home' LA. They will then tell us that you would like a place in a Devon school. You may get details of their schools and admission arrangements by contacting:

Cornwall

- **0300 1234 101**
- admissionsandtransport@cornwall.gov.uk
- www.cornwall.gov.uk/admissions

Torbay

- **01803 208908**
- pupil.services@torbay.gov.uk
- www.torbay.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Dorset

- **01305 221060**
- admissions@dorsetcc.gov.uk
- www.dorsetforyou.com/schooladmissions

Plymouth

- **01752 307166**
- primary.admissions@plymouth.gov.uk
- www.plymouth.gov.uk/primaryadmissions

Somerset

- **0845 3459122**
- schooladmissions@somerset.gov.uk
- www.somerset.gov.uk

Admissions to other Local Authority Schools may require the completion of a separate Supplementary Information Form for consideration under specific oversubscription criteria. Please contact the relevant school or Local Authority for further information.

Schools which make their own admissions decisions

Some primary schools in Devon are Academy or Voluntary Aided status schools. This means that, even where they are maintained by the Devon County Council (DCC), the governing body of the school can decide on their own admissions. Sometimes they have different ways of prioritising applications.

There is further information about Academy, VA, Foundation and Trust schools on page 14. You should read this carefully if you would like to make a preference for one of these schools. Alternatively you can contact the Education Helpline on **0845 155 1019** who will be able to help.

If your child has severe educational or social needs, he or she may delay admission to the Reception class for an academic year, joining when other children of the same age would be moving to Year 1. Please see the section on Delayed Admission on page 6.

Exceptional social, medical or educational reason

If you feel that your child has exceptional social, medical or educational needs which require attendance at a particular school, you must tell us about them. There is space to do this on our online application form at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline or on the Devon Common Application Form in the booklet.

Any exceptional reason for preferring a particular school must be supported by evidence from a professional person, for example, a doctor for medical reasons or a social worker for social reasons.

We will decide whether we feel the reasons you have given really are exceptional. Examples would be the recent death of a parent or the child acting as carer where family stability is critical.

We would not expect more than two or three of these cases in any year. If you have any questions or are unsure whether your child's needs are exceptional, please contact the Admissions Team by telephoning **0845 155 1019**. Further information is available at www.devon.gov.uk/admissions-2012-protocol-exceptional.pdf