Section 1  Schools and Education

Typical questions
• Have you got the latest school league tables?
• Where can I get advice on choosing a primary school?
• Are there any schools especially for children with specials needs?
• Who can I talk to about educating my child at home?
• I’d like to look at the Ofsted report for . . .

Considerations
This section looks specifically at the sorts of questions asked by parents and carers concerned about starting education either via schools or at home. Despite the decline in popularity of school league tables, such queries are still asked on a regular basis, as well as others concerned with the choice of schools in certain areas or for certain criteria. Ofsted reports provide useful information to parents, to teachers going for jobs and to others who need to know about the school. The main consideration is to keep sources up to date; in the current climate, there are many changes in education, so this is even more important. Also bear in mind that church-aided schools may be listed elsewhere. Both the Catholic Directory of England and Wales (Gabriel Communications) and the Church of England Directory give details of their church-aided schools. Other religious denominations also have schools and it is best to check relevant directories for details or to use the sources listed below. For more detailed enquiries, such as those concerned with legal requirements, it is advisable to direct the enquirer to recommended specialist resources which your library may have, or to organizations that offer specialist advice. The sources listed below are excellent and should answer or provide guidance on many of the regular and recurring enquiries. It would be useful to bookmark websites that you find particularly helpful.

Where to look
Schoolswebdirectory
www.schoolswebdirectory.co.uk
This contains 33,000 UK schools and colleges with 20,000 websites and allows searching by county, local education authority, name of school or postcode. It also includes independent schools. Excellent.
SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

**Sunday Times School Guide**

[www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/public/goodschools](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/public/goodschools)

A subscription service to a searchable interactive guide to the UK’s top 2000 primary and secondary schools.

Try also [www.schoolsearch.co.uk](http://www.schoolsearch.co.uk).

**Choosing a school**

For advice and guidance on choosing a school use [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk). Select Parents, then Schools, learning and development. Select as appropriate.

**Good Schools Guide 2011, Lucas Publications**

[www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk](http://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk)

A guide to over 1000 of the UK’s top schools, based on reviews from parents and publisher’s visits.

**Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) Reports**

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Some parents find it helpful to look at Ofsted inspection reports on schools they are interested in sending their child to. Ofsted inspection reports provide detailed information on schools, covering primary, secondary, independent, community and independent special schools. The reports cover the school’s effectiveness, it’s achievements and standards, the quality of provision and the school’s leadership and management. However, do check the date of the report; a lot can happen in three or four years. My advice would be to use the report as a tool to guide you when formulating questions that you would like to ask the school when you visit (if you get to that stage). This will enable points to be clarified, or weaknesses that have been addressed since the Ofsted inspection to be highlighted for you.

**Special educational needs**

**Good Schools Guide – Special Educational Needs, Lucas Publications**

This provides comprehensive information and advice on special educational needs (SENs) and UK schools. It includes the range of SEN conditions and the implications; the kinds of schools available; help inside and outside the classroom; the law; sources of help, and, importantly detailed reviews of 350 good schools for a range of SENs.

**Which School? For special needs, John Catt Educational, Annual**

A guide to independent and non-maintained schools and colleges of further education in Britain for pupils with sensory, physical, learning, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or dyslexia.
**Telegraph Guide to Special Educational Needs Schools 2011, Trotman**
A guide for parents/carers wanting to find a school for a child with special educational needs. Lists both private and state-run schools. Also covers areas such as the assessment and statementing of a child, as well as practical and legal issues involved in securing good provision.

**Gabbitas Educational Consultants (ed.) Schools for Special Needs, Kogan Page**

**Independent schools**

**Which School? Guide to independent schools, John Catt Educational, Annual**
A directory of over 2000 British independent schools; includes nursery, preparatory, junior and senior schools, day and boarding schools.

This provides detailed profiles on over 500 British fee-paying schools across the UK and Europe.

**Gabbitas Educational Consultants (ed.) The Independent Schools Guide, Kogan Page, Annual**
This gives detailed information on over 2000 schools.

Also look at the:

**Boarding School Association, www.boarding.org.uk**
In addition, parents often have anxieties and concerns about the whole process of their child starting school, either for the first time as a 4-year-old or a new school for whatever personal or family reasons. In addition, there is the transition of children from primary to secondary schools. There are many books that deal with coping with a new school. Below are a few suggestions, but you may find alternatives on your library shelves or in your local bookshop.


The interesting fact about this book is that the co-author Elizabeth Ishka is 12 years old and has moved school six times.
The law on education


For publications on aspects of education law and policies look at www.education.gov.uk/publications. Many are available to freely download.

Statistics and research

League Tables
   www.education.gov.uk/researchandstatistics

For other statistics and research look at www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway.

Websites and organizations

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
   1c Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London, N5 2DQ
   Advice line: Tel: 0808 800 5793
   www.ace-ed.org.uk
   This provides a wide range of publications, some of which are free to download. Excellent and well worth a visit.

BBC Schools
   www.bbc.co.uk/schools
   Learning resources for home and schools.

British Council
   www.britishcouncil.org

Department for Education
   www.education.gov.uk

Department for Education Northern Ireland
   www.deni.gov.uk

Education Guardian
   http://education.guardian.co.uk
   Excellent site.
Education Otherwise  
PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, PE34 3XN  
Tel: 0845 478 6345  
www.education-otherwise.org  
Provides support, advice and information for families considering home-based schooling.

General Teaching Council for England  
www.gtce.org.uk

National Curriculum online  
http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk

National Union of Teachers  
www.teachers.org.uk  
Excellent website for education issues and more.

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education)  
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Online Publications for Schools  
http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk

Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency  
www.qcda.gov.uk

RE Today Services  
www.retoday.org.uk

Scottish Executive Education Department  
www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education

Welsh Assembly Government  
http://new.wales.gov.uk  
Select Education and Skills.