

# School Selection

Want to get your child into the 'best' school? **Katie Krajs** and **Lorrae Jaderberg** offer their advice...



**M**any parents come to us wanting to know how to get their child into the 'best' school. First of all, we recommend parents to start considering their options by the end of year 3, so that they have time to navigate through the possible obstacles and can plan ahead.

How do parents decide what the best school is for their child? Research the school; check it out online. Speak to other parents and teachers, look at league tables, Ofsted reports and university places. An essential step is to go and visit the school during a typical working day. All will give you an understanding of the school, whether you feel that it would be a positive environment and the right place for your child.

When choosing possible independent schools don't just think in terms of academic level, consider the pastoral care being offered as well. Some children like being a big fish in a small pond; others prefer being a small fish in a big pond. Each child is different, so when considering what the best school is, you need to think in terms of 'best school for my child' rather than 'best or most academic school'.

Once you have identified the schools that you think would be most suitable, you need to be realistic. These schools have entrance exams and interviews. It is important to fully prepare your child for these challenges. With this in mind, at Jaderberg Krajs we support children to achieve places at the schools that would be right for them, and for many this will result in needing some preparation, support and tutoring.

In our view tutoring should only be introduced to enable the child to understand the exam requirements, learn any new curriculum that is required and then showcase their best in the examinations. Children need to be assessed in order to ensure their innate ability is appropriate, their tutoring journey will be bespoke and effective and that it will be a positive experience.

Tutoring for the 11+ and 13+ is expensive and can be an emotionally

draining journey for both parents and children. We never recommend embarking on this journey if we do not feel it is suitable for a child and that the end goal was achievable. If a child is reaching their full potential, but not at the entrance exam level, then we recommend to parents not to sit these exams, not to have their child tutored, and to look at alternative schools that would be more appropriate.

Many very bright children who go to state primary schools are not successful at common entrance due to lack of preparation, rather than ability. Curriculum areas examined are generally not taught in state schools until secondary level, as they are not part of the national curriculum. Therefore, to enable 11+ children to prepare for these exams, they will need outside specialist curriculum support and exam strategy preparation, practice and fine tuning.

Schools are keen to ensure they make the 'right' offers to the 'right' children for their school. So, what makes a Channing girl? What makes a UCS boy? Each school is different. Some say they prefer children to be stronger in maths than English; for others, it is the other way round. Many schools say they are looking for bright, engaging, independent thinkers.

That is why part of the selection process is the interview stage. For some schools this can be a twenty minute session; for others it's a half-day session with only half of the candidates sitting the exam being asked for an interview, and only half of those being interviewed offered a place. Our advice to parents is to ensure that children are confident and prepared. They need to show a genuine desire to go to this school and demonstrate through extra-curricular activities and hobbies that they can contribute fully to the life of the school.

Our advice? Do your homework early and ensure that your child has the right preparation to take the opportunities available to achieve a place at the right school; a school where your child will be happy, where they can thrive and reach their full potential.



Education experts **Katie Krajs** and **Lorrae Jaderberg** are the founders of **JK Educate** [www.jkeducate.co.uk](http://www.jkeducate.co.uk), offering a range of tutoring and education consultancy services.