

# Getting ready to move to Secondary School

A guide for parents/carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities



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**To be read alongside the general admissions booklet for all children transferring to secondary school**



## How to choose a secondary school that will be right for your child?

### What can I do before visiting?

The best place to start discussing options for secondary school placement is in a multi professional meeting at your child's school, well in advance of making an application. It is often helpful to start these discussions in Year 4 so you can start to look at the possible options available and visit schools.

You can look at:

- The Secondary Schools Admissions Guide which can be downloaded from the Council website.
- School websites, which will have information about their 'Local Offer' (sometimes called a 'SEND Information Report') and their outcomes for children with special educational needs.
- School prospectus
- Recent OFSTED reports looking particularly at what they say about provision for children with SEND, which you will also find on each school's website

You may find it helpful to consider the questions at the back of this document and decide which are relevant for your child, so you can ask them when you visit.

**In 2016, Greenwich secondary aged pupils with special educational needs perform better across their 8 subjects than the average pupil nationally**

### When is a good time to visit?

All schools have admission evenings and days which are detailed in the Secondary Schools Admissions Guide. It may be helpful to do one visit without your child, so you can focus on your questions first and then visit again with your child. You may also want to make a visit

when the children are in school so you can see what it looks like then, as well as returning when you can to meet with staff.

Go and visit the schools, take your child, meet the SENCO. Talk about the sort of things that go on at the school. Get as familiar as possible. Work with ASD Outreach to make the transition as smooth as possible. Parent

**In 2016, almost 5% more Greenwich pupils with an EHC Plan or Statement of special educational needs achieve A\*-C in English and Maths compared to national**

### Who should I talk to and what should I ask?

At the back of this document are some questions developed by the SENDIASS service that you may want to ask when visiting the school, to support you in making your decisions. You can also ask for support directly from the SENDIASS Service, contactable via [sendiass@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) OR on 0208 921 6921. It is often helpful to write these questions down before visiting so you can remember when you are there and write the responses down so you can look back on them when you get home.

The most important initial action points were to ensure my child was familiar with his journey to school and the grounds of the new secondary school; given how much bigger it is in comparison to primary. Meet the support staff and building that trust with them so that my child knew who to turn to for help when needed. Parent

**In 2016, 100% of young people with an EHC Plan or Statement of special educational needs were in education, employment or training the year after they completed key stage 4**



When you visit it is important that you go and see the SEN Department and meet with the school SENCO, who should be able to give you lots of information about the school and how they support children with special educational needs. You can also look at their Local Offer Offer' (sometimes called a 'SEND Information Report') which should give you more information about this; all schools have one on their website. Some families say they find it helpful to visit with someone else, so they can discuss the visit afterwards.

It felt really important to find a school with an inclusive ethos, where all staff, from the head teacher to the dinner ladies, would make our son feel wanted, supported and accepted. We felt that this was the only way his mainstream placement could possibly succeed. Parent

## What are the secondary schools in Greenwich?

There are a range of different secondary schools in Greenwich to meet the needs of different groups of children. All Greenwich secondary

schools are very inclusive, and can meet the needs of most children, with the additional support delegated to them, and support from specialist Outreach services that are available. If you are choosing a school outside of Greenwich, it is important to check that the same services will be available to your child from the neighbouring Local Authority.

## Mainstream secondary schools

The Royal Borough of Greenwich has the following secondary schools (more details are in the general admissions booklet and in the individual school's prospectus). All schools have a Local Offer/SEND Information Report, which provides information about:

- What special educational provision is available?
- How it is organised?
- Outcomes for their young people with special educational needs

Detailed below is the accessibility information, and description for each school, to support you in knowing which schools might be suitable for your child.



School	Accessibility	Description
Ark Greenwich Free School	Partial physical access	Lift access and accessible toilets on all floors. There is no on-site parking
Eltham Hill School	Full physical access	Full physical access. Level-deck or lift access throughout the school. A hygiene suite
Hally Academy	Limited physical access	Partial and limited access only. Stairs throughout the building. Foyer accessible by wheelchair. Accessible toilet.
Harris Greenwich Academy	Partial physical access	Lift access to all floors. Sports hall with disabled toilet and shower
Leigh Academy Blackheath	Full physical access	The new permanent site will have full physical access
Royal Greenwich Trust School	Full physical access	Full lift access to all floors. Accessible toilets on all floors and accessible showering facilities by the sports hall. Three disabled parking bays. All areas of the school site are accessible to wheelchair users.
Plumstead Manor School	Partial physical access	Partial access to most of the site. The school premises incorporate a number of buildings with restricted circulation spaces in some areas. Lift access in most buildings provides level deck access to much of the accommodation. Hygiene suite facilities on site
St Mary Magdalene CE School	Full physical access	The permanent site is currently under construction. The temporary site has partial access. Contact the school for further information
St Paul's Academy	Full physical access	Full physical access throughout the school. Designated lift to access first floor. Accessible toilet facilities and a hygiene suite.
St Thomas More Catholic School	Partial physical access	Lift access to all floors. Lower school playground is fully accessible to wheelchair users and people with walking aids. Moveable ramp. Accessible toilets and showering/washing facilities. Disabled parking space

School	Accessibility Rating	Description
St Ursula's Convent School	Limited physical access	One accessible toilet. The school is not accessible for wheelchair users and has no specialist facilities
The John Roan	Full physical access	<p>Maze Hill Site: This site has a wheelchair ramp at all entrances. One passenger lift provides access to the first floor. There are accessible toilets in the main building</p> <p>Westcombe Park Site: This site is fully accessible for disabled students. The front entrance is ramped. There is a designated lift to all main teaching floors and a hygiene suite with accessible toilets</p>
Stationers' Crown Woods Academy	Full physical access	Full lift access to all floors. Accessible toilets in all blocks (27 in total). One accessible toilet and shower in the sports hall. Hygiene suite with a tracking hoist, hydraulic changing table, height adjustable wash basin, shower facilities and a toilet. Hygiene room with a mobile hoist, changing table, wash basin, shower facilities and a toilet. Seven disabled parking bays
Thomas Tallis School	Full physical access	Full lift access to all floors. Two hygiene suites. Accessible toilets in all blocks. Four disabled parking bays
Woolwich Polytechnic for Boys	Partial physical access	Wheelchair access throughout. One lift in the two-storey building. Three accessible toilets. One space with a hand basin, shower and toilet with grab rails
Woolwich Polytechnic for Girls	Full physical access	Full lift access to all floors. Disable toilets on all floors. One hygiene suite. Four disabled parking bays.

Our son needed to know the practicalities of transition; where he would go at the start and end of the day, who would support him, where the toilets were, what would happen at lunchtime and who would look after him if he was unwell. He needed to know these things prior to the start of the school time so he had time to process and understand the information.

**Parent**

### Mainstream secondary schools with specialist provision (units):

These are mainstream secondary schools with a resourced provision/s, also known as a DSP (Designated Specialist Provision). Pupils are on roll at the mainstream school, but will spend part of their day accessing the specialist resources from the DSP. Depending on the area of specialism within each DSP, different professionals will be on site to deliver specialist

support. There are a very restricted number of places available in each DSP (see below), and specific admissions criteria through specialist panels, so it is very important that you also include mainstream school preferences as well as a DSP, as places are always highly over-subscribed.

Applications for this type of provision need to be made in a different way to applying for a general secondary school place (see details below).

School	Area of specialism	Age range	Total number of places
Hally Academy	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	11 - 16 years	15
The John Roan	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	11 - 16 years	15
Thomas Tallis School	Specific Language Impairment / Autistic Spectrum Disorder	11 - 16 years	15
	Hearing Impairment	11 - 19 years	22
Plumstead Manor	Moderate Learning Difficulties (Girls only)	11 - 16 years	22
Stationers' Crown Woods Academy	Moderate Learning Difficulties	11 - 16 years	22
Stationers' Crown Woods Academy	Visual Impairment	11 - 19 years	8
Woolwich Polytechnic for Boys	Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Moderate Learning Difficulties	11 - 16 years	16

### Special school secondary provision:

These are special schools which can only be accessed by children who have an EHC Plan. Special schools have access to range of specialist professionals on site, such as Speech and Language Therapy, Physiotherapy etc., and have specialist teachers and education staff. All the provision is detailed on the school's individual web site and through their school prospectus, links are attached.

Places are very restricted in some schools, and criteria will be applied, including distance from the school, to make decisions about which school is allocated to your child. It is important that you look at all options, as you may not be allocated a place in the school that you have put as your first preference.

## 1. Charlton Park Academy

	Description	Accessibility
Charlton Park Academy	Severe/Complex Learning Disabilities 11-19 years 200 places	Full physical access. Physiotherapy department. Hydrotherapy pool. Several hygiene rooms

### What the Headteacher says:

Charlton Park Academy (CPA) is a Specialist Centre of Excellence, based in Charlton. We have an extremely experienced, friendly, stable and well trained workforce, and are a nationally recognised and experienced provider of high quality special educational provision. Our key role is to ensure that our students all make good or better progress and ensure that they are supported extremely well, effectively develop life skills and are well prepared for life after school. We have opportunities for extended school provision in our after school clubs and weekend clubs, supported by both parental contribution and social care funded personal budgets. We provide a small number of respite and residential places for the local authority for young people with highly complex medical conditions, including epilepsy and neurological conditions





## What families say:

Charlton Academy has been a lifeline for my son. He has been well supported and has a great relationship with his Teacher and LSA. He loves school and learning and is very happy there. His wellbeing is taken very seriously and he is very well looked after. As a parent I feel very supported. The staff are happy to help out with any concerns I have

Everyday my son is eager to leave home, he likes to go to school ... All staff work hard for the progress and happiness of this young person. Thank you for that



## 2. Willow Dene Secondary School (Oakmere Road)

	Description	Accessibility
Willow Dene Secondary	Severe/Complex Learning Disabilities 11-16 Years	Full physical access

### What the Headteacher says:

At Willow Dene Oakmere Road, we aim to capitalise upon the successes and achievements made throughout children's primary education, whilst expanding the offer to include the statutory requirements of the Key Stage 3 and 4 curricula and building personal identity. Many of our approaches & teaching are similar to those of our primary phase and are centred on class-based teaching delivered by a staff team who have positive relationships with the children and know their learning profiles. In our secondary phase an emphasis is placed on the local community and the wider world, moving children towards young adulthood whilst building upon their special interests and aptitudes.

## What families say:

We are overwhelmingly very happy with M and everything is brilliant for us. He loves coming to school and he sees his teachers as his friends, we are very very happy as parents. We wanted M to attend Willow Dene Secondary and we are thrilled that he is here. We are delighted with the opportunities offered to M, he is a school councillor and as a family we are very proud, we cannot thank you enough.



We are noticing a completely different child, he is more organised, trying to do more and helping. Every morning he is dressing himself and is now more independent and recognises dangers in the kitchen. He is more organised in school and more independent when returning from school, putting his coat and bag away and communicating that he wants his tea. He is happier at home and he is sleeping well now, which is making a big difference the next morning. He is doing really well and is doing better in everything that he does.

### 3. Kings Oak School

	Description
Kings Oak School	Social Emotional Mental Health 11-16 years

#### What the Headteacher says:

Our main role, condensed into one sentence, is to provide each pupil with the opportunity to have the best possible future. From the moment pupils enter the school that journey towards a positive future begins. We firmly believe that pupil progress is maximised when home and school work closely together. We like to feel that once a pupil comes to Kings Oak, this school becomes not just the pupil's school but also the school of the whole family. Our aim is to help Kings Oak pupils to enter the adult world of work, further education or training as well-balanced, informed adults who will benefit the community in which they live and work





## 4. Newhaven School Kings Park Campus

	Description
Newhaven School: King's Park Campus	Autistic Spectrum Disorder and mental health and/or challenging behaviour 11-19 years



### What the Head of Campus says:

At Newhaven King's Park we are fully committed to the Newhaven ethos and so believe in providing opportunities for students to become independent and well-rounded individuals ready to embrace all that life has to offer. We recognise that people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions are often disadvantaged in society and pledge to work hard to give our young people both the skills and abilities they need to get on in life but also to give them and their families the voice to speak out against inequality.



## How do I apply for a Secondary School place

Most children with Special Educational Needs will not have an EHC Plan and so will apply for a secondary school in the same way as any other child transferring to secondary school. (All details are included in the Admissions Guide to Secondary School in Greenwich.

### If my child does not have an EHC Plan but I would like to express a preference for them to go to a DSP (resourced base in a mainstream secondary school)

You still need to apply in the normal way for a mainstream school placement; to be sure that your child will have a suitable secondary school placement to attend if they are not successful in getting a place in a DSP. DSP places are very limited. Decisions about placement are made by a specialist Panel, and you may not be allocated a place, even if you request one. So that you can be sure your child has a school place somewhere, you must also follow the admissions process as above.

IN ADDITION, you can talk with your child's school SENCO about your child's needs. If it is felt appropriate, a multi-agency review meeting should be held at the end of Year 5 with all the professionals that are involved with your child. At this review meeting you can discuss your

child's needs and the possibility of a placement in a DSP with the involved professionals. If everyone thinks it could be an appropriate placement, then you can ask the school SENCO to submit a request for consideration at the secondary DSP admissions panel. It will be important that the school provide up to date information about your child's progress including the support provided by the school and the other services involved and any recent assessments...This will enable the Panel to make a decision based on the best available information.

### If my child DOES have an EHC Plan

Your child's school will need to hold a secondary transfer annual review in the summer term of Year 5, and at this meeting you will be asked to name 3 schools, in order of preference, for your child's placement in Year 7. The Local

Authority will consult with all of these schools on your behalf and you will be kept informed during this process if there are any difficulties with this process. You will hear about your child's placement at

The same time

as the general admissions. If you would like your child to attend a special school, your child will need to have an EHC Plan to be considered for a placement. If your child is currently under assessment for an EHC Plan, then you can discuss this directly with the Greenwich SEN Department. The Greenwich SEN Department will contact you again during the September your child is in year 6 to discuss your preferences, at this stage you are still able to change one or



all preferences. If you make less than three preferences the Greenwich SEN Department will select an alternative mainstream or special school (which is appropriate to meet your child's needs) to consult with.

You will be notified of your child's secondary placement around the 15 February prior to the September they will be starting secondary school. You will receive an amended Final EHC Plan naming the school placement. At this stage you will be given the opportunity to meet with an officer from Greenwich SEN Department and have the right of formal appeal if you remain dissatisfied with the decision.

### How to support my child to be ready for secondary school?

Moving to secondary school is a big change for all children and involves a lot more independence. You can help your child by supporting them in the following areas, so they are as ready as possible for this move.

Support your child with increasing independence about travelling. This may involve simply taking things around school etc or may be about starting to use buses and practising travel routes with support

Share your worries and concerns with school staff in both the current and receiving school, so they know what you think may be issues for your child. Remember you know your child best!

Use a calendar as a visual reference of time and a countdown to the changes with your child, so they can see the time approaching gradually

Reflect on successful past experiences involving new routines with your child, so they know they have managed change successfully before

Discuss moving to secondary school with your child and ask your child's school for resources to help you with this if it would be helpful.

Try to remain positive, particularly when discussing transition with your child

Ask your child's primary school if they will make a Transition Passport to take to the secondary school and circulate to staff

If your child has a diagnosis they don't know about, you may want to consider talking with your child about this.

**Will my child get assistance to travel to school?**

Parents and carers are the people responsible for ensuring their child attends school, and this may include making or assisting with travel arrangements to and from school and/or accompanying their child.

He wanted to practice the journey independently at primary school – it was one less thing to worry about when he went to secondary. Parent

The majority of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) do not receive travel assistance from Royal Greenwich. Wherever possible, it is expected that parents and carers of children and young people with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) will make arrangements for their child to attend school in the same way as for parents and carers of children and young people without an EHCP, as this is an important factor in developing the child or young person’s independence, social and life skills.

Travel assistance to and from school may be provided for children and young people with an EHCP who are unable to use public transport because of their special needs, or a medical condition preventing them from using public transport. Priority will always be given to travel assistance solutions that help develop travel independence skills to enable your child to lead an independent and healthy life, feel safe and secure, and achieve their full potential.

When you make your preferences for secondary school, in addition Royal Greenwich will consult with your local maintained school, if this is not one of your preferences. If the local maintained school feel that they can meet your child’s needs, but you accept the offer of one of your preferred schools further from your home your child will NOT qualify for travel assistance.

There is more information available about this on the Local Offer:

[Home to school transport](#)





### How will information about my child be transferred to their secondary school?

Two events are held every year in the first half of the summer term once your child's school placement has been decided to support vulnerable children to make a successful transition to their chosen secondary school placement. Secondary and Primary SENCOs attend both events to enable all the information about your child to be transferred between his/her primary and secondary school to make the transfer as successful as possible... The main focus of both these events is on the transfer of children without an EHC plan, as this group of children will not have an annual review to plan for this transition.

If your child has an EHC Plan they will also have a review meeting where the secondary school will be invited to plan for your child's transition.

### What opportunities will my child get to see their secondary school?

Most schools offer additional visits for children with SEND as well as the visit all children have before moving to secondary school. It is a good

idea for your child to take up this offer. Schools often set up additional activities, so the children learn about how to get around school, meet key staff, find out where toilets and lockers are etc. It would be a good idea if your child can take some pictures while they are there and make up a photo book with them to share and go through at home.

### What support is available to support my child in moving to secondary school from services/schools?

Most schools will attend annual review meetings for children who are transferring to their secondary school. Schools also attend the transition sessions set up by the Local Authority to discuss children moving in from Year 6 to 7. In addition, some services run summer schools set up specifically to support children with transition run by individual services e.g. Speech and Language Therapy and the Behaviour Support Service. These will be offered to your child directly if they are suitable to meet their needs. In addition, many schools run transition groups or work with children on an individual basis if they need support in this area, during Year 6.

## What Greenwich Children say...

Try to blend in, "act normal" and try to get to know people.

You've got to move on in life – you have to enjoy the years ahead.

If you are worrying that's ok, that's fine. You'll soon find out that you've been worrying for nothing because it's actually, really easy once you get to know about it.

I thought – OMG it's huge and I'll never fit it. It's actually gone really different. If anything, it's feeling small.

# Sendiass

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY INFORMATION ADVICE & SUPPORT SERVICE

### Checklist for Visiting New Schools

Advice on what to consider, ask and look for  
when visiting a new school.

Telephone: 020 8921 6921 and ask to leave a message for the  
Sendiass team.

**When you visit**

It's a good idea to ask to speak with the Special educational needs co-ordinator or sometimes called the inclusion manager.

**Things to consider before your visit**

- It might be more helpful to visit in school hours when children are in class
- Will it be helpful to take your child with you?
- Do you want another adult to accompany you?
- Are there other parents you can talk to about the school?
- Is the school easy to get to?

**Things to look for**

- Do you feel welcomed?
- Do the children and staff look happy? Are they helpful and friendly?
- Do the classrooms look like places where the children can learn?
- Does the whole school look orderly and under control?
- Are the corridors and toilet areas clean and tidy?
- How does the school celebrate diversity?
- Are the displays current and interesting and how do they include pupils of all abilities?

**About the school**

- Are all areas of the school accessible to your child or would adaptations be necessary?

- How many children would be in your child's class?
- How does the school help children to learn and be happy?
- How do they ensure the school is safe?
- How do they involve parents in school life?
- How will the school communicate with you about your child and his/her progress?

**Questions to ask about children**

As well as general questions about the school, you will need to ask about matters which are important to your child & yourself.

- How does the school arrange extra support for children who need it?
- Is the support usually provided in the classroom?
- How are the children helped to mix with other children?
- What does the school do to make sure that pupils and staff know about everyone who has different needs?
- How will the school involve your child in planning their learning and support?
- Are there any specialist therapies, facilities or curriculum adaptations that will benefit your child?



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