**For children starting Reception in September 2027**

# Choosing a primary school in Derbyshire

Written by South Darley C.E. Primary School for families choosing a school anywhere in Derbyshire.

You may already have a favourite school. You may be wondering which ones to visit. Think of a time your child came home full of stories. What had made their day? Keep that in mind as you look around.

**Still finding schools? Start here. Already have schools in mind? Turn over and pick a priority.**

## Which schools could work for us?

Find your normal-area school. Alongside the schools you know, look up one you haven't considered in the Derbyshire school directory. It might be across town, in a nearby village or close to someone who helps with collection. Try the journey at school-run time.

You can name a school outside your catchment or across a council boundary. Apply through the council where your child lives. If a school has more applicants than places, its admissions rules for 2027 determine who gets priority. A normal-area address doesn't guarantee a place. Choose which schools to visit and which need a quick call first.

## What can we learn before a visit?

| | |
|---|---|
| **School website** | Look for a Reception timetable or a recent newsletter. What do children get to do on an ordinary day? |
| **Ofsted reports** | Find one observation about early years. Check the inspection date. You could ask the head, "What would I see if I visited now?" |
| **DfE school results** | Check the year group and how many children took part. In a group of ten, one child changes a result by ten percentage points. Year 6 results tell you about an older group. |

## Applying in Derbyshire

For Derbyshire County Council, list up to three schools in your genuine order of preference by **midnight on 15 January 2027**. You'll be offered the highest preference available to you. Offer day is **16 April 2027**. Derby city has its own application.

Apply for a place or find the route for an existing education, health and care plan (EHCP). Considering a later start?

Derbyshire admissions

On paper? Scan the code for Derbyshire admissions. To look up a school, use reports.ofsted.gov.uk or search GOV.UK for "Find and compare schools".

# What matters to your child?

Pick one or two things you'd like to explore. These are words you can borrow on a visit, by phone or by email. If something else matters more, start there.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Learning and challenge** | Look at the school's reading page. Ask a Reception teacher, "Could you show me a book a child might bring home and tell me how you choose it?" |
| **Settling in and making friends** | If your child takes time to join in, ask someone who knows the playground, "What happens at lunchtime if a child wants to play but doesn't know how to join the game?" |
| **Behaviour and getting along** | Read the school's behaviour policy, then ask a teacher, "How do you help children learn to get along, and how would you deal with bullying if it happened?" |
| **Support for my child** | The school's SEND information report names the person who coordinates support. You could tell them what already helps. "At nursery, a picture helps my child follow the next step. How might that work here?" |
| **What children get to do as they grow** | Pick something in a newsletter that caught your child's interest. Ask the head, "I saw the older children making music. When do children first get to try it, and what can they do later on?" |
| **Making the week work** | If you need wraparound care, ask whoever takes bookings, "We need Thursdays until half past five. When will we know whether there's a place for a child starting Reception?" |

## Afterwards, what stays with you?

Use these lines for each school. Include your child's words. If two schools appeal, what would you gain or give up by choosing each?

**School visited** _____ **Date** _____

**Something we saw, heard or checked**

**Why it matters to our family**

**One answer that could change our minds**