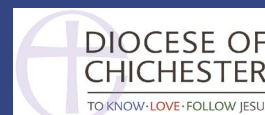




Ditchling (St Margaret's)
CE Primary and Nursery School
ADMISSIONS GUIDE 2026/27

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



WELCOME TO DITCHLING

Thank you for choosing Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School for your child's education.

We hope your child will enjoy their time here and look forward to working together to help them achieve their full potential.

We are an inclusive community where Christian values empower us. With God's guidance, we work with confidence and wisdom to inspire a love of learning for the future. We are ambitious for our pupils and want them to achieve excellence in all aspects of life.



CONTACT DETAILS

School office:
01273 844130
office@ditchlingsch.co.uk

School address:
Ditchling (St Margaret's) CE
Primary and Nursery School
Lewes Road
Ditchling
East Sussex
BN6 8TU

School Nurse Team:
0300 123 4062

Head Teacher
Miss N Elliott

**Your child's teacher
(Reception class):**
Mrs C Game



Inclusion Leader (SENCO):
Mrs Sayers

To contact Mrs Sayers please
call the school office on
01273 844130 or email
office@ditchlingsch.co.uk

Chair of Governors:
Mr Forman

To contact Mr Forman please
call the school office on
01273 844130 or email
chair@ditchlingsch.co.uk

OUR VISION

Our vision is that every pupil will reach their full potential within a caring Christian environment which enables all to flourish.

Together we will:

- **Persevere** when times are challenging
- Show **respect** to all those around us
- Above all, be **kind** to one another 'living life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)

We hope you and your child will share in our vision throughout their time at Ditchling.

Living life in
all its fullness

John 10:10



PERSEVERANCE

We want our pupils to achieve excellence in all areas of school life. We will provide a balance of both challenge and loving support to build confidence and wisdom. We want our pupils to thrive as lifelong learners and persevere in times of difficulty.



RESPECT

Our school is founded upon an understanding of Christian love. Pupils will learn how to build strong relationships and learn to live well together. They will learn to behave with dignity and to respect people of all diversities.



ABOVE ALL KINDNESS

At Ditchling, we place kindness at the centre of our school. We believe that teaching the value of kindness is a vital part of childhood education. We want to be embraced by a community that models kindness to those around them.

"Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure."

Proverbs 4:25–26

"Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves."

Romans 12:10

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

Ephesians 4:32

TERM DATES

Term dates 2026/27		
Term	Starts on	Ends on
Term 1	2 September 2026	23 October 2026
<i>October half term</i>	<i>26 October 2026</i>	<i>30 October 2026</i>
Term 2	2 November 2026	18 December 2026
<i>Christmas holiday</i>	<i>21 December 2026</i>	<i>1 January 2027</i>
Term 3	4 January 2027	12 February 2027
<i>February half term</i>	<i>15 February 2027</i>	<i>20 February 2027</i>
Term 4	22 February 2027	26 March 2027
<i>Easter holiday</i>	<i>29 March 2027</i>	<i>9 April 2027</i>
Term 5	12 April 2027	28 May 2027
<i>May half term</i>	<i>31 May 2027</i>	<i>4 June 2027</i>
Term 6	7 June 2027	22 July 2027

Inset Days 2026/27

Wednesday 2 September 2026

Monday 2 November 2026

Monday 4 January 2027

Thursday 25 March 2027

Thursday 22 July 2027

www.ditchlingprimary.co.uk/information/diary-dates

Bank holidays

Friday 26 March 2027

Monday 3 May 2027

School day times

8:35am – 3:15pm

Wrap around care (optional)

Before school from 7:30am
or 8:00am

After school, finishing at
4:30pm or 5:30pm

See page 7 for more details.

RECEPTION – STAGGERED STARTS

It is our policy to admit Reception pupils in the academic year (1 September to 31 August inclusive) in which their fifth birthday falls.

To allow the Reception teacher time to meet all the pupils, and to give them the maximum opportunity to settle, the schedule below sets out our starting dates and times.

Please note, Wednesday 2nd September is an INSET Day.

Date	Pupils attending in the morning	Lunch	Pupils attending in the afternoon
Thursday 3 September 2026	Group 1	No lunch	Group 2
Friday 4 September 2026	Group 2	No lunch	Group 1
Monday 7 September 2026	Group 1	Group 1	Group 2
Tuesday 8 September 2026	Group 2	Group 2	Group 1
Wednesday 9 September 2026	Groups 1 & 2	Groups 1 & 2	Groups 1 & 2

Timings

Mornings only

8:35am – 12:00pm

Drop off on the playground and pick up at the front office

Mornings with lunch

8:35am – 1:10pm

Drop off on the playground and pick up at the front office

Afternoons only

1:10pm – 3:15pm

Drop off at the office and pick up from the playground

All day at school

8:35am – 3:15pm

Drop off and pick up on the playground

Your child's group will be communicated to you separately.

The vast majority of pupils attend school full-time from the beginning of the school year. However this will not be suitable for all children. We always work closely with parents to make a mutual decision about the right time for their child to attend full-time.

Following a discussion between you and the Phase Leader, you may wish your child to do mornings only initially. Together we can review this decision fortnightly.

It is important to recognise that some aspects of the curriculum or school events will be missed during any part-time schooling.

SCHOOL MEALS

Mid-morning snacks

Pupils in the infants are supplied free-of-charge with a piece of fruit or vegetable for a snack.

Pupils across the school can bring in a healthy snack for mid-morning. This could be fruit, vegetable or sandwich/sausage roll. Please do not send your child in with crisps, chocolate biscuits, chocolate covered rice cakes etc. for their snacks.

We encourage pupils to bring a drink of water in a **named plastic bottle**, to be available throughout the day.

Milk

Milk is free for all pupils aged under five and those entitled to free school meals. Milk is subsidised for pupils aged five and over when you register with *Cool Milk*.

www.coolmilk.com

No nut policy

As we have pupils in the school with severe nut allergies we ask that parents **do not include nut products in snacks or packed lunch boxes.**



Your co-operation is appreciated to ensure the safety of our pupils.

Lunch time meals

Hot lunch time meals are freshly cooked in school and are always of a high standard.

All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to free school meals, through the government's *Universal Infant Free School Meals* initiative.

Pupils in Years 3 and above may have hot lunches for £3.06 a day.

Pupils who are eligible for *Pupil Premium* funding are entitled to a free school meal when they are in Key Stage 2. If you think your child may be eligible please speak to the School Administrator in the office who can advise you.

Please book your child's meal through Parent Pay (log in details will be sent to you). The current menu is available on Parent Pay, or directly from Chartwells.

www.chartwells.co.uk

Drinks of water or milk are available – or pupils may bring their own drink.

Packed lunches

If you choose to provide your child with a healthy packed lunch please clearly name their lunch box.

We promote healthy eating in school as this is important for health and wellbeing,



therefore your child's lunch should reflect this and include a range of fruit and vegetables with one dessert item.

You may include a drink but please ensure the lid is on securely. No fizzy drinks, glass bottles or confectionery should be included. Water is always available to pupils.

ParentPay

ParentPay is the school's cashless system for booking school meals in advance. You can use the system to book and pay for lunch time meals up until 8:15am on the same day.

It is your responsibility to ensure your child's meal choices are booked in advance. Please note, it is helpful if your child knows what has been ordered for them each day.

You will be issued an activation code and username for ParentPay once your child has started school.

WRAP-AROUND CARE AND CLUBS

Wrap-around care is available at Ditchling to support busy families.

The Kudize Club run both our After School Club and Breakfast Club provision. Please see our website for full details on all options:

www.ditchlingprimary.co.uk/curriculum/wrap-around-care

You can book online with Kudize Club as and when you need to, or you can block book a term or whole year. Childcare vouchers can be used to pay for wrap-around care.

Times and prices for the current academic year (2025/26) are listed below.

Holiday clubs are also available and are held at The Windmills Junior School in Hassocks.

You can find out more about the Kudize Club on their website:

www.kudizeclubltd.com

Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club is available on weekdays during term time. Drop off is available any time from 7.30am. Pupils are offered breakfast, which can include cereal, toast, pancakes, fruit and yoghurt.

After breakfast, pupils can then choose activities to do until it is time for school. They are walked to their classrooms by a member of staff.

After School Club

The After School Club is available on Mondays to Fridays during term time.

The options available are:

- 3:15pm to 4:30pm
- 4:15pm to 5:30pm
- 3:15pm to 5:30pm

After School Club enables children to have a play date with friends, make new friends and take part in fun activities.

Pupils are free to choose their activities every day from a range of options each day. These may include arts and crafts, Forest School, Wii games, kinetic sand, Lego, cooking, board games or sports. If the weather permits, children are taken outside to play, if they want to.

This club includes a healthy snack such as fruit, vegetables or cheese with rice cakes, toast or crumpets.

Clubs

Each term a wide range of additional activities are offered to pupils through school clubs after school and at lunch times. Clubs are open to pupils according to year group.

Clubs vary each term but include Art Club, Cheerleading, Choir, Drama, French, Forest School, Lego, Reading Club and Robotics and Coding.

Sports clubs include Cricket, Netball, Football, Tennis and Tiny Tekkers multisports.

The clubs are run by experienced coaches, school staff and members of the community. Please see our website for more details: www.ditchlingprimary.co.uk/curriculum/clubs/

Breakfast Club Mondays to Fridays (term time) 2025/26	
Time	Cost per session
7:30am drop off	£8.90
8:00am drop off	£5.80
After School Club Mondays to Fridays (term time) 2025/26	
Time	Cost per session
3:15pm – 4:30pm	£10.60
4:15pm – 5:30pm	£10.60
3:15pm – 5:30pm	£19.10

ARRIVAL, COLLECTION AND ABSENCES

Arrival

If you are able to walk your child/children to school, please do so. The arrival and collection of many pupils by car causes considerable congestion and risk. To avoid inconvenience to neighbours, and accidents, please park carefully and move off as soon as you are able. Alternative parking is available at the Village Hall or Recreation Ground.

Please ensure your child/children are punctual. Coming into class late not only disrupts your child's day, it also disrupts the entire class and provides an unsettled start to learning. Your help in avoiding this is much appreciated. Please see our Attendance Policy on the school website should you require further information.

Collection

Our school day finishes at 3:15pm. School gates will be opened from 3:10pm. Parents are asked to wait in the playground at the back of the school from 3:10pm until the class teacher lets pupils out.

Please supervise any pre-school children to ensure that pupils working in the classrooms are not disturbed and that the risk of an accident occurring is reduced. The school gates are not opened until 3:10pm for this reason.

If you are unexpectedly delayed please telephone the school, if possible. Pupils will

be taken to the school office to wait.

Always let us know if your child is to go home with a different person. Please do so by contacting the School Office in advance or letting the Teaching Assistant on the door know. Teachers will not release pupils to known adults unless they are expected to be collecting that child. These circumstances cause distress to the pupils and adults involved so please let us know in advance.

Please provide an up-to-date list of responsible adults who are permitted to collect your child from school. If there are changes to this list, please also inform the office.

Absences

Please notify the school by telephone, *Studybugs* app, or in person, as early as possible on the first day of your child's absence. Please include details of your child's symptoms.

School office:
01273 844130

The School Administrator will follow up absence that has not been notified to us by 9:30am. This is in the interest of child safety. Please help us to keep such calls to an absolute minimum.

Pupils can come to school if they have a cold – please send them in with tissues.

Pupils should stay at home for 48 hours after the last episode, if they have a tummy bug.

Absence can be agreed for reasons other than illness, e.g. hospital appointments. Please provide a copy of the letter or appointment card at least two weeks before the appointment.

Absence from school without good reason, or any evidence, is recorded on a child's record as unauthorised absence.

Withdrawal from learning during term time

Any absence from school, whether authorised or unauthorised, has a detrimental effect on a child's education. Therefore, only in very exceptional circumstances is the Headteacher able to authorise a child's leave of absence during term time.

In exceptional circumstances you may complete a *Withdrawal from Learning* form and arrange a meeting to discuss this with the Headteacher prior to returning the form to the Headteacher. This will then be considered against criteria determined by the Governing Board (as reflected in the Attendance Policy). Any withdrawal from learning should be applied for at least 14 days before the period in question.

FIRST AID AND ILLNESS

Illness and accidents at school

If your child is taken ill during the school day, or has a minor accident, they will be treated in school in accordance with the First Aid Policy (see website) by a qualified First Aider.

In the event of a more serious accident or illness at school, we will inform you as soon as possible.

All first aid incidents are recorded in accordance with the policy and GDPR.

Your contact details

When a child is unwell at school it is sometimes necessary to contact his/her parents and it is therefore vital that we are able to contact parents during the school day in the case of illness or an emergency.

Please provide us with your telephone number (landline and mobile) and also the telephone number(s) of a friend or relative who would be able to collect and care for your child if s/he is unwell and you are unavailable.

Please always notify us of a change of address or contact number (landline and mobile), or changes to your family doctor.

Medicines

If it is essential for your child to be given prescription medicine in school the School Administrator will do so once you have signed a form of authorisation. The medicine must be handed into the school office in its original labelled prescription packaging.

If your child needs an inhaler, this should be in the original box, prescription labelled and given to the school office. Ideally you should provide one to be kept in class and a spare for the office. As pupils get older, we encourage them to take responsibility for their own inhalers.

Please note we are not allowed to administer homeopathic remedies or non-prescription medication.

School Medical Service

All pupils will see the school Nurse, either in the term they turn five years old or the following one. Pupils are screened for vision, hearing, height and weight.

Should you ever have any concerns about your child's health or development, the school Nurse may be contacted via the school office.

School office:
01273 844130

office@ditchlingsch.co.uk

School Nurse Team:
0300 123 4062

UNIFORM

We believe in the advantages of a simple, smart uniform. It helps to promote a sense of belonging and saves you from wrangles over what your child should wear.

Naming items

With all pupils wearing similar items, it is vital you name all items of your child's clothing, even second-hand uniform, with the correct name. Please clearly name all articles of clothing and check names are still visible every term.

Buying items

School sweatshirts, cardigans and book bags are available to order online from:

www.brigade.uk.com/parents

These can be delivered to school for collection to avoid paying postage.

Shoelaces

Please teach your child to tie their shoelaces at the earliest opportunity. This may take longer for some children to learn than others.

Book bags

Due to limited peg space, children in Reception should only have book bags – not rucksacks. A drawstring bag, containing spare clothes, can stay at school if necessary.

Winter uniform

- White shirt or polo shirt
- Grey trousers, shorts, skirt or pinafore
- Navy school sweatshirt or cardigan (with or without logo)
- Navy school fleece
- White or grey socks
- Grey or black tights
- Sensible black shoes (not trainers or boots), with Velcro, lace or buckle fastening

Summer uniform

- White shirt or polo shirt
- Grey shorts, blue gingham/striped dress, or grey shorts playsuit
- White ankle socks
- White, blue, brown or black sandals may be worn in warmer weather, but pupils should wear white socks with them
- Blue sunhat – to be brought in every day



PE and Games

Pupils need to be able to change for all PE and Forest School activities for their safety and hygiene.

All items of clothing must be clearly named and be in school every day.

Indoor PE uniform

- Navy blue shorts
- White short-sleeved t-shirt

For indoor PE, dance and gymnastics pupils will be in bare feet.

Outdoor PE uniform (summer)

- Navy blue shorts
- White short-sleeved t-shirt
- Socks
- Black plimsolls or trainers (Key Stage 1)
- Black or white plimsolls or trainers (Key Stage 2)

Outdoor PE uniform (winter)

- Plain navy tracksuits/ jogging trousers are advised, with socks (not tights)

PE bag

- Drawstring bag

Please put PE kit in a named, drawstring bag (separate to your child's Forest School clothing). We ask that you use drawstring bags as there isn't enough room in the cloakroom for rucksacks.

Forest School

All Forest School pupils are allowed to get dirty, therefore please supply old clothes for your child to wear during Forest School sessions.

All items of clothing must be clearly named and be in school every day.

Please note, the thickness of clothing will depend on the season. Thin layers are best for warmth and can always be removed if your child is too warm.



Clothing checklist

- Wellies (the whole of the foot must be enclosed)
- Socks, including an extra pair for cold days
- Long trousers with elasticated bottoms (no shorts)
- Long sleeved top (no short sleeves)
- Waterproof jacket or thicker waterproof coat
- Waterproof trousers
- Sun hat/winter hat

- Gloves and scarf
- Drawstring bag

Please put Forest School clothing in a named, drawstring bag (separate to your child's PE kit). We ask that you use drawstring bags as there isn't enough room in the cloakroom for rucksacks.



Hair

Hair that is shoulder length or longer should be tied up with a white, blue, grey, brown or black hair elastic or scrunchy at all times. Narrow, plain Alice Bands or hair clips of the same colours may be worn.

Jewellery

Jewellery should not be worn at school, including any form of bracelet or necklace.

If earrings are worn they must be small studs or sleepers. These must be removed for PE or covered with micropore tape, which must be supplied by parents.

BOOKS AND READING

Book bags

All pupils need a book bag on entry to the school. These can be purchased from:

www.brigade.uk.com/parents

As well as being used for transporting your child's book and reading diary between home and school, and keeping books in good condition, it is used for occasional letters and other learning. It is vital that you check the book bag on a **daily basis**, even as your child gets older. Please avoid putting your child's water bottle in their book bag.

Reading at home

Pupils will visit our library, with their class, on a regular basis and are allowed to borrow books to share with you at home.

Books will be accompanied by a record diary in their book bag. Please feel free to write comments in the reading diary, alongside the teacher's; this helps us monitor the progress your child is making at home.

There is guidance on using the Reading Diary on our website: www.ditchlingprimary.co.uk

Books will be changed on a regular basis only if your child returns his/her book.

A record is kept of library loans by your child using Libresoft. It is your responsibility to ensure that the book is kept in your child's book bag, and returned in a good condition.

In the event of a library book being lost, a period of two weeks is given for it to be returned. After this, a £5 fine is payable to the school in order for us to replace the lost book.

Toys

If your child has a 'security' toy, which s/he needs to bring to school when they first start, they are allowed one small pocket-sized toy for playtimes. However the school cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage. We would expect this to be a short term arrangement as pupils are generally not allowed to have toys in school.



COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Parents are kept informed of all events by means of email, *Studybugs*, or letters sent home via 'pupil post' (with the youngest child in each family).

Newsletters are sent home regularly via email and *Studybugs*. Newsletters and letters are also posted on the school's website. Please check your email regularly to aid communication.

Ditchling is an open school; we welcome you in. There are open sessions during the year when you can come and see your child's work; and you can arrange to speak to the class teacher, Phase Leader, or Headteacher. Teachers are often involved in other activities before and after school (such as preparation for learning, extra-curricular activities, or staff meetings), therefore if you want to be sure of seeing someone please make an appointment via the school office.

Please let your child's teacher know by telephone, letter or email (to the school office) if you or your child has particular worries about school. Please also keep us informed of anything that might affect your child's behaviour, wellbeing or general progress.

Parents' Evenings

There are Parents' Evenings in the autumn and spring terms. Research shows that where parents and schools work together, pupils are happier and learn better. We trust you will help us with this.

ParentPay

ParentPay is the school's cashless system for booking and paying for school meals (see page 6) and activities.

ParentPay is also used to confirm your child can attend school trips and to make payments. Permission is requested on a trip-by-trip basis. Exceptions to this are trips involving walking in the local area.

ParentPay can also be used for parents to offer to assist on trips.

You will be issued an activation code and username for ParentPay once your child has started school.

Studybugs

We participate in a Sussex-wide NHS public health project called *Inspire*, which aims to improve treatment of asthma in children. The project uses a free absence-reporting app called *Studybugs*.

You can read more about the *Inspire* project at: www.everychildisdifferent.org/inspire

You can download the *Studybugs* app at: www.studybugs.com

As well as helping to improve the treatment of asthma, *Studybugs* also helps us track what illnesses are going around, in order to improve children's health. It is a convenient, efficient and secure method for reporting

absence – so it should make life a little bit easier all round.

Whether or not your child suffers from asthma, it would be appreciated if you could download the app, or register on the *Studybugs* website, and this system. When using it, please state the reason for any absence, including details of symptoms.

We also send other messages via *Studybugs* direct to your phone.

Tapestry

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception class) all have a profile on *Tapestry*.

The *Tapestry* software is used to record your child's learning, achievements and participation in activities. Teachers and parents can communicate with each other via *Tapestry* and parents can upload 'wow' moments that have happened outside of school to share with their teacher.

You can find out more about *Tapestry* at www.tapestry.info

Instagram

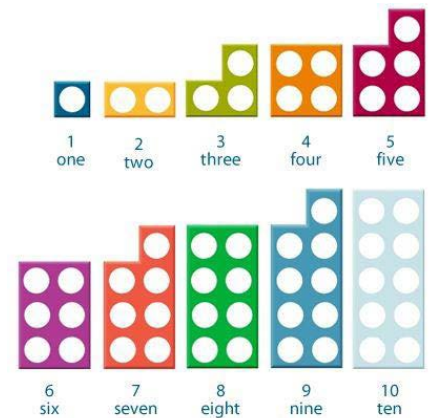
You can now follow us on Instagram @ditchlingprimarynurseryschool where we post news and useful information for parents. www.instagram.com/ditchlingprimarynurseryschool

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

Below are some suggestions for preparing your child for school.

- Talk to your child and listen to them. Ask them questions and make sure they can talk well and answer questions. Expect an answer from them. Encourage them to know their full name and address.
- Have books in your home and put aside a quiet time every day to share them. Talk about the pictures in the book, the characters, their feelings, what they like and what might happen next.
- Give them plenty of opportunity for imaginative play.
- Play games to encourage sharing, taking turns, and to experience losing and winning.
- Continually practice saying please, thank you and excuse me.
- Give them plenty of practice with pencils, crayons, paints, scissors and glue.
- Children are expected to put on and take off their coats, jumpers and shoes. The simpler the fastenings the better they are to avoid frustration – Reception pupils are rarely able to tie shoe laces!
- Children will need to be able to go to the toilet independently. Please don't forget to practice hand-washing for 20 seconds afterwards as an infection control measure.
- When eating lunch at school, all pupils use a knife and fork. Please try to encourage your child to sit still at the table and encourage him/her to use a knife and fork at home before starting school.
- Talk to your child about school. Your child will be invited to spend some time in school during the Summer term.
- Children can use name strips to practice recognising and writing their names.
- Encourage your child to count and recognise numbers 1 to 10.
- It would be really helpful for your child to have a set of 1-10 Numicon at home. A box of Numicon shapes 1-10 can be purchased online.

Numicon shapes 1-10







Ditchling (St. Margaret's) CE Primary and Nursery School
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01273 844130

office@ditchlingsch.co.uk
www.ditchlingprimary.co.uk
www.hurst.education

 @ditchlingprimarynurseryschool

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



'Living life in all its fullness' John 10:10