



DITCHAM PARK SCHOOL

Where every child is known and valued

Prospectus

2024-2025





Headmaster's Welcome

We are a co-educational Independent School for children aged 2 to 16.

Situated near Petersfield, in the heart of the South Downs National Park, with spectacular views of the rolling Hampshire hills and south across the Solent as far as the Isle of Wight, we provide the perfect environment for your child to flourish.

We offer an outstanding education, which equips our pupils with excellent academic qualifications, skills and self-confidence.

I believe that children learn best and develop self-esteem when they are encouraged in a caring and supportive environment. Our school's relatively small size creates a genuinely friendly, nurturing environment where 'every child is known and valued'.

Small class sizes, excellent teaching, strong pastoral care and opportunities for personal development through sport, the arts and outdoor activities, set on our beautiful 16-acre site, are unique to the education pupils receive here.

We are proud of our pupils' academic progress and achievements. Pupils in Juniors will exceed expected levels of literacy and numeracy and our GCSE results are consistently impressive. GCSE success enables each of our pupils to move confidently onto their Sixth Form or College A-level studies and beyond.

I would be delighted to welcome you to visit, so that you and your child can meet pupils and staff at our friendly school, where our pupils are at the heart of all that we do.

Graham Spawforth (MA MEd)

Mission Statement and Ethos

Our mission is to nurture and encourage each child to learn and progress within a supportive environment, so they reach their potential and develop into confident young people, who go out into the world, with the skills and desire to improve it.

Our ethos where ‘every child is known and valued’ is founded on outstanding pastoral care, excellent teaching and an all-round approach to education.

Aims



Identify and develop each child’s interests and abilities

All children are unique and have a distinct blend of abilities and intelligences. We aim to find the best in every child through an all-round approach to education and by identifying and developing their abilities whether they are academic, sporting or in the creative arts.



Promote academic excellence

We seek to inspire within our pupils a life-long love of learning by creating a culture of innovative, dynamic and progressive teaching which ensures that, as our pupils learn, they are excited, curious and, like their teachers, passionate about their interests.



Provide an environment where pupils are happy and where they can flourish

We believe that our small size helps us provide outstanding pastoral care so each child is known and valued. Our physical environment, situated on a beautiful 16-acre site in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, positively influences behaviour, fosters an appreciation of our natural environment and encourages a sense of wellbeing.



Prepare pupils for the future

We aim to provide our pupils with the academic qualifications, knowledge and skills, including technological skills, to equip them for Further and Higher Education and to take full advantage of and to embrace the opportunities provided by technology. We aim to develop self-confident young people with Christian values, a growth mindset and the desire to shape the world for the better.



Connect with the community

We aim to develop strong links with our parents and the local community. We believe that an education at Ditcham Park School should be accessible to children from the local community.

School Site and Atmosphere

Our school is nestled in the heart of the South Downs, south of Petersfield, with breathtaking views across Hampshire and West Sussex to the Isle of Wight.

This outstandingly beautiful setting is home to 16-acres of playing fields, woodland, play areas and lawns. Our children thrive in the wonderfully spacious and open natural environment we offer here and the attention we give them.

Modern multi-purpose facilities surround the School's original Victorian country house. In recent years we have built four new Junior classrooms, a bespoke Nursery, a significant extension to our sports hall with fitness/activity suite, drama and dance studio, and a new catering facility.

At Ditcham, we provide a warm and caring family atmosphere, in which you can be confident your child will be taught, nurtured, understood and appreciated as a unique individual. Pupils rising 2 years to 16 years harmoniously share the same site and facilities, providing a seamless transition between each stage of schooling.

We believe that having the right support in place for pupils builds confident happy children, develops academic excellence and prepares them well for navigating their way through school life and on into the adult world.

Our highly-qualified and experienced staff know all the children and their families extremely well. Our teachers are committed to approaching the broad-based challenging curriculum in a stimulating and motivating way, so that each child achieves their potential.





Dragonflies Nursery

Our Dragonflies Nursery offers a welcoming, family atmosphere where your child will learn whilst having lots of fun.

We make full use of our glorious surroundings, whether that's for a bluebell or daffodil walk, a hunt for mini-beasts, or a visit to our friendly Ditcham Dragon. We also like playground fun, messy play, making potions and mud pies and jumping in muddy puddles.

Our small class size means that we can really focus on the interests of each child, while nurturing their imagination and creativity.

The curriculum follows Early Years guidelines with a focus on child-led play, with activities such as crafts and painting, singing, dancing and cooking. Drama, PE and Music lessons are provided by our specialist teachers.

Children are nurtured to develop social skills, independence and a love of learning, so that they go on to settle confidently and happily into school life.



Juniors

Our Juniors enjoy learning in bright and inspiring classrooms, with small class numbers, and make full use of our beautiful outdoor environment.

To complement the broad curriculum, a wide variety of trips and activities are arranged throughout the year.

Reception

Our Reception class, judged ‘outstanding’ in our last four inspections, offers a happy, warm and caring atmosphere where children are free to discover and learn at their own pace. Our specialist Early Years teachers give each child individual attention and make learning a positive and rewarding experience.



Year 1: Pre-Prep

Pre-Prep is an exciting and important year when your child moves to a slightly more structured routine. There are plenty of opportunities for play-based active learning in the classroom, as well as around our wonderful grounds.

Year 2: Prep

Our integrated creative curriculum uses different learning styles and experiences, encouraging children towards greater independence as they continue to grow self-esteem and feel a sense of achievement.

Year 3: Transition

This is the beginning of Key Stage 2, where pupils follow a more subject-based curriculum, with activities tailored to their academic level. They are encouraged to become independent learners, working to their full potential in a fun and caring environment.

Years 4 to 6: Lower, Middle and Upper Juniors

These are action-packed years, where our pupils will face a variety of exciting challenges. The creative approach to learning continues and the class-based teaching structure changes at Year 5 to one of specialist teaching within subject areas to support independent learning.

Pupils throughout Juniors, benefit from excellent teaching to ensure they remain active and engaged learners.

Children are introduced to Modern Foreign Languages from Nursery, as well as having specialist Drama, Music and PE lessons. Learning is further enhanced by using an increasing number of specialist Senior staff and facilities – ensuring a seamless transition to Seniors.

Our Juniors do not sit the entrance tests for Seniors and our pupils progress into their next stage of education with a love of learning and being creative, having made life-long friendships and wonderful memories.



Seniors

Ditcham Park Seniors provides both an environment and curriculum that are relevant to the times in which we live and designed to address the educational and developmental needs of each child.

We aim to provide a balanced, creative and wide-ranging curriculum throughout a child's education and recognise that children learn at different rates and in different ways. Our teaching aims to reflect this, and knowledge of our pupils informs our best practice both in terms of academic and pastoral provision, which remains at the heart of all we do.

Learning is supported with technology with pupils provided with Chromebook laptops and Google Classroom as an online learning platform.

Years 7 and 8: Forms 1 and 2

In addition to English, Maths and Science, all pupils in Years 7 and 8 study History, Geography, French, Spanish, Religious Education, Computing, Drama, Design and Technology, Art, PSHE and Physical Education. Additionally, every pupil takes part in a broad-ranging co-curricular programme where they participate in a range of creative, academic and sporting activities, as well as STEAM programmes. All pupils belong to one of four houses and enjoy a range of competitions and activities throughout each academic year.

Years 9 to 11: Forms 3, 4 and 5

We are pleased to offer a three-year GCSE programme at Ditcham Park School. This provides the time required for pupils to enjoy a rich learning experience that will enable them to achieve the highest levels at GCSE. All pupils follow GCSE courses in English, Maths and Science. As well as this 'core' curriculum, pupils are able to choose four additional subjects from the 13 'option' subjects available. These include: Art and Design, Business, Computer Science, Design and Technology, Drama, Geography, History, Latin, Music, PE, RE, French and Spanish. In addition, pupils participate in timetabled games lessons and weekly PSHE sessions. The school provides comprehensive careers and further education guidance, particularly for those pupils in their final years at school. Opportunities include: visits to Sixth Form providers; a visiting speaker programme; support with interview and application processes. Throughout Key Stage 4, our pupils continue to enjoy a rich programme of extra and co-curricular activities.



Pupil Progress and Academic Achievement

Pupils in all year groups enjoy a broad curriculum with a focus on Science, Technology and Creativity.

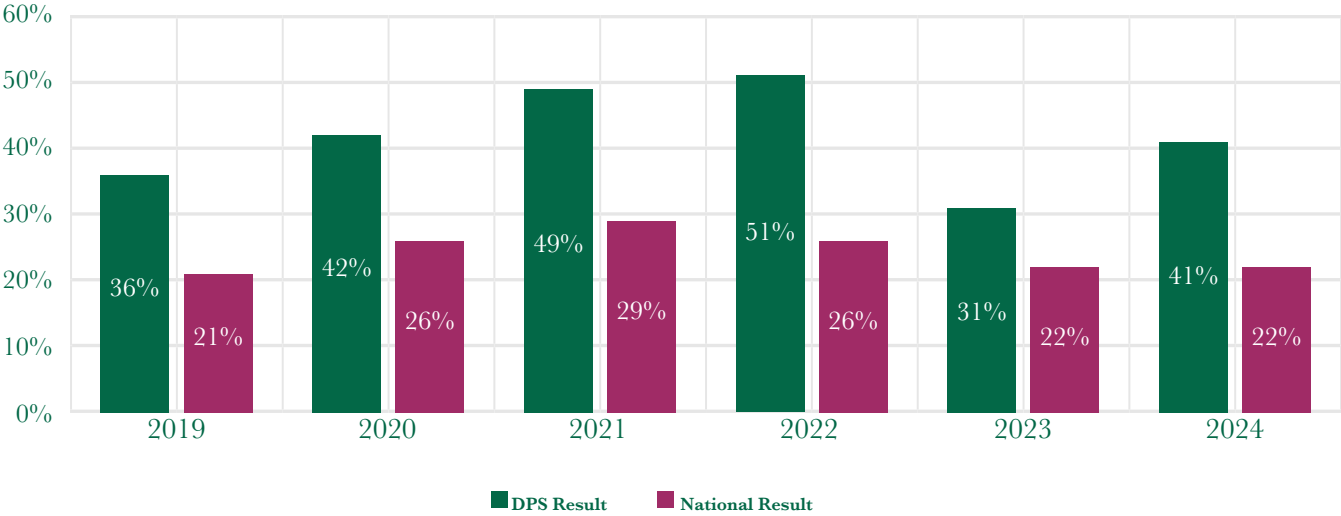
Our three-year GCSE programme is the jewel in our academic crown as we offer 19 different subjects including Computer Science, Sport & PE, Latin, Business Studies, Music, Art and Drama.

Pupils receive individual attention and plenty of encouragement from talented and well-qualified teachers which enable them to make excellent progress academically. Pupils in Nursery and

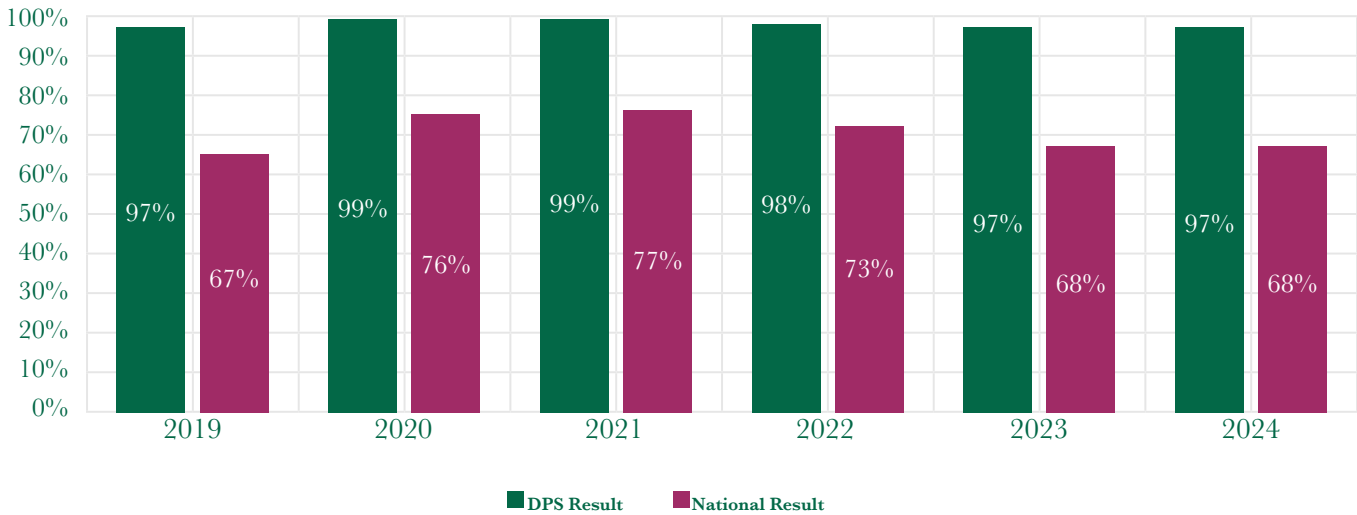
Reception will reach or invariably exceed all their early learning goals. Pupils in Juniors will exceed expected levels of literacy and numeracy for their age and pupils in Seniors gain impressive GCSE results as measured by our valued added or raw score.

We are proud of the academic success our pupils achieve; each year for the last five years at least one Ditcham Park School student has achieved outstanding GCSEs and moved onto a College or Sixth Form where they have obtained outstanding A-levels and a place at Oxford or Cambridge.

Ditcham Park School v National GCSE Results 9-7 (A*/A)



Ditcham Park School v National GCSE Results 9-4 (A*/C)



STEAM – Inspiring the Innovators of Tomorrow

Our innovative STEAM initiative is an exciting experiential style of learning that combines the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics.

Our pupils experiment with the latest technologies and hands-on activities that have authentic real-world applications to build the flexible and creative problem-solving skills that will be most valued by employers in the future.

Junior and Senior curriculum

STEAM lessons are delivered by the teacher and subject specialists with a passion for their topics.

We offer extra-curricular STEAM workshops and the opportunity to take part in national competitions such as the First Lego League and the National Science and Engineering Competition.



Upper Juniors design, build and race an electric car, supported by the Greenpower Education Trust.

Creativity is an essential part of STEAM. Our pupils enjoy a varied and wide-ranging Art, Design and Technology curriculum. Specialist Art teachers allow our pupils to engage with the arts at a high level and create sculptures, batiks, collages, portraits, models, sketches and paper engineered books. Both Juniors and Seniors enter the ISA art competition and win or place highly every year.

Creative and Performing Arts Festival 2024

In July 2024, all pupils from Reception to Year 10 enjoyed three days of immersive and hands-on creative and performing arts masterclasses, culminating in a Festival on day 3 for the whole Ditcham Community to enjoy. Children could opt to take part in sessions such as Rock School, a song writing workshop, big wire sculpture, music workshops by Earth Song, musical theatre workshops, large-scale painting, and film making workshops to name a few. We were delighted to welcome rock legend, Mark Knopfler from Dire Straits, to give our Rock School participants some words of wisdom and advice.

Speaker programme

Our STEAM speaker programme provides an opportunity for our pupils and their parents to meet and listen to inspirational figures. We have welcomed Lord Robert Winston, Helen Sharman OBE, the first Briton in space, Craig Fenton, Director of Operations for Google and past pupil Holly Budge who climbed Everest.

Educational visits

We have a rich programme of curriculum-based and extra-curricular trips and visits for all pupils. From the Winchester Science Centre to the Natural History Museum in London and the Globe Theatre to regular theatre trips to the Festival Theatre, Chichester. Students also have the chance to go abroad in Seniors to the Battlefields of Northern France and Belgium, to witness the spectacular geology of Iceland and to the Alps for the annual ski trip.



Art, Design & Technology, Drama and Music

Our light and spacious Art, Design and Technology studios, dedicated Junior and Senior music rooms and Drama theatre provide the perfect backdrop for our pupils to be inspired and engaged.

Specialist and talented teaching staff and visiting teachers encourage pupils to explore their creative potential.

Art

Our Art Studio and Pottery are vibrant hubs of activity where our pupils can express their creative ideas and develop their imagination, experimenting with all media, taking inspiration from trips to galleries, exhibitions, workshops, museums, and visits from professional artists.

Design & Technology

This highly rewarding subject encourages pupils to develop their creativity, maths and communication skills and knowledge of materials. As well as a wide range of tools and machinery, our fully-equipped workshop provides access to the latest digital design and 3D printing technology; pupils also have opportunities to enter national competitions including the prestigious Arkwright Scholarship.

Drama

Drama lessons take place in our theatre – a space in which pupils can express themselves, build self-confidence, learn backstage skills and shine.

Pupils stage class and whole-school productions, and often link their work creatively with other academic subjects. There is also an opportunity for pupils to enjoy the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) lessons with a specialist teacher.

Music

We have a vibrant and energetic community of musicians, led by specialist and talented teachers who encourage pupils to participate and experiment with new instruments. There is an abundance of opportunities for pupils to perform in school and at local concerts and festivals, highlights in our School calendar for pupils and parents alike.

Pupils can join our choirs and instrumental groups, including concert band, jazz ensemble, brass groups, and string groups, and there are many other opportunities for pupils to form groups and enjoy performing together. One-to-one tuition is available for pupils wishing to progress their skills on a specific instrument and/or their voice and should they wish, take ABRSM, Trinity and Rock school examinations.

Private tuition is available for pupils wishing to progress their skills and take the Associated Board of Music examinations.





Sport

Sport is an intrinsic part of life at Ditcham and made even more memorable thanks to our location.

Our 16-acres of playing fields and impressive multi-purpose sports halls enable pupils to receive specialist coaching in a huge range of team and individual sports. These include badminton, basketball, cricket, cross-country running, cycling, fencing, fitness training, football, golf, hockey, netball, rounders, rugby, table tennis, tennis, trampolining and volleyball.

In April 2023, we set up a Ditcham Park School Tennis Academy which is run by LTA performance coach, James Vaughan. Excellent tennis coaching is now available all year round.

Your child will belong to one of four Houses – Buriton, Chalton, Harting and Nyewood. The House system encourages camaraderie together with a competitive spirit at sporting events throughout the year, which culminates in our annual Sports Days.

For our most talented pupils, our Sports Scholarship & Development Programme provides opportunities to train and be inspired by visits to centres of excellence, and visits from professionals who have competed at the very highest levels in their respective fields.



“ I can honestly say we have the happiest son since moving him to Ditcham Park. ”

Parent of pupil in Juniors



A young girl with brown hair and glasses is riding a red mountain bike. She is wearing a colorful cycling jersey with green, yellow, and red stripes, and a red and blue helmet. The background is a lush green forest.

Beyond the Classroom

We offer all pupils exciting opportunities of creative, musical, sporting and academic extra-curricular clubs and activities to enhance their learning and educational experience.

Many take place during the school day; the programme varies from term to term according to the seasons and pupils' interests.

Diverse and comprehensive, it is designed to encourage pupils to participate in activities they wouldn't otherwise experience and learn new skills. Bushcraft and mountain biking are just two of our most popular clubs which benefit from our woods and trails.

Ditcham Park School Tennis Academy

In April 2023, we launched the Ditcham Park School Tennis Academy and it has grown hugely over the past year.

We are very proud to have our own tennis academy that welcomes both Ditcham families and families from the local community. James Vaughan, a Lawn Tennis Association player and performance coach leads the Academy and we are hugely fortunate to have the benefit of his extensive experience at Ditcham.

The tennis academy offers more than just an after-school club with regular tournaments, holiday camps and accredited competitions for players to take part in.

Our all-weather tennis courts provide the perfect playing surface and in the summer months, grass courts within the school's sheltered Walled Garden are marked up. During the winter, the Academy runs inside the Martin Pryce Sports Hall so children can play all year round.





Here, There and Everywhere

For us, the whole world is a classroom, so educational trips and visits are an important part of the curriculum.

Nursery and Reception pupils visit local attractions such as Birdworld, the Sealife Centre, Staunton Country Park and West Wittering Beach.

Juniors will venture further afield, visiting places like Beaulieu, Gilbert White's House, Winchester Science Centre, Churt Sculpture Park, Portsmouth City Museum and Butser Ancient Farm.

Lower Juniors spend two nights camping in the New Forest, while Middle and Upper Juniors take part in a three-day residential trip – encouraging independence in preparation for Seniors.

Trips and visits are an integral part of the curriculum in Seniors. All year groups benefit from a wide range of co-curricular experiences outside of the classroom. Recent highlights have included residential trips to the World War I Battlefields in Belgium, a ski-trip to Italy and a Geography GCSE trip to visit the volcanoes and glaciers of Iceland.

The Modern Foreign Languages department runs an annual residential to either France or Spain. These immersive experiences offer our pupils invaluable opportunities to develop both their language skills and appreciation of other cultures.

In addition to the residential visits on offer, all subjects provide a wide range of day trips. These include visits to theatres, galleries, museums and other places of cultural, educational and historical interest.



Valuing Every Pupil

Ditcham Park School is an open, inclusive community where every child is known and valued.

We welcome pupils with a wide range of abilities and individual needs: some 15% currently receive regular 1:1 support with literacy, numeracy and other areas of the curriculum from our specialist Learning Support team.

We also offer additional provision for those pupils with exceptional gifts and talents in

particular subjects, skills or wider fields of study. They receive carefully tailored support that balances helping them realise their full potential with their own ambitions, expectations and personality.

Meeting your child's individual needs, whatever they may be, is very much a partnership, based on trust, transparency and mutual support. If your child has particular needs you feel we should know about, please speak to our Admissions team in the first instance.



Wellbeing

Our pupils' happiness and wellbeing is central to the ethos of the school and is upheld by the entire school community.

Our nurturing, caring and inclusive environment fosters kindness, empathy and respect for self and others; leading to greater self-confidence, self-esteem, resilience and courage in all our pupils.

Children also benefit from a compassionate team of pastoral staff, educational specialists and a wellbeing coordinator.

All pupils receive a comprehensive and accredited programme of Personal, Social and Health Education lessons, as well as creative and mindfulness sessions.

There are clear, proven links between children's physical health and their academic and sporting performance, personal development and general wellbeing. So as well as enjoying wholesome, freshly-prepared food, your child will have daily opportunities for exercise and spending time in the open air, including outdoor learning sessions and exploring our beautiful grounds during break times.

“

Everyone from staff to pupils has been so welcoming, and he truly feels settled in just a few days. He talks about school on the way home which is a wonderful, new development.

Parent of pupil in Seniors

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Ditcham Community

As a parent, grandparent or guardian, you become part of our extended family.

You'll have regular, wide-ranging opportunities to get involved in the life of our school, beginning with meeting the Headmaster and his Senior Leadership Team, together with your child's class teacher or Form Tutor, at the start of each academic year.

Thereafter, you're welcome to join us for assemblies, sporting events, musical performances and dramatic productions; we'll also keep in touch through our webinars, Year Group Representatives and weekly emails and newsletter.

Our School Book Club meets in school to discuss books on topics around education and childcare. Plus, we're always delighted to welcome parents to share work or life experiences that could help or inspire our pupils on their own journeys.

We have a very active Friends of Ditcham Park School (FDPS), who support school events and organise fundraising occasions including the Christmas Fayre. The FDPS are always keen to recruit more volunteers so if you are interested in helping, there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved.

It's not only your child who'll make friends for life here – we're confident you will too.



Life Beyond Ditcham

Preparing pupils for the future is at the heart of our mission and philosophy. In Forms 4 and 5 (Years 10 and 11) all students receive advice and guidance through our Careers and Further Education Programme.

This includes psychometric tests, and individual meetings with our independent careers adviser. They'll also hear from people working in a wide range of industries, professions and sectors to help inform their choices post-GCSE.

We have excellent links with local Colleges and Sixth Forms holding our pupils in high regard. Whether they proceed to A-levels and higher education, vocational training, apprenticeships or employment, our pupils remain closely attached to our school and each other.

We have an active alumni network, with former pupils well represented at our annual events and celebrations; these friendships and connections also pay huge long-term dividends in professional life.



Scholarships & Bursaries

Academic scholarships are awarded on the basis of your child's performance through the school and at point of entry. Scholarships are also available for pupils showing exceptional talent, promise and potential in Music, Sports, Art and Drama. For further information please see our website.

We know that choosing to educate your child independently is a significant investment in your child's future. We also understand that your own financial or personal circumstances may change significantly while your child is with us. Where there's a real, clearly identified need, financial support may be considered for current families who experience sudden or temporary financial difficulty. Awards may be made to cover academic tuition fees, and sometimes additional costs such as transport or learning support lessons.

Discounted fees are also available for younger siblings of current pupils. To find out more in the first instance please contact Admissions.



Registration and Admissions Process

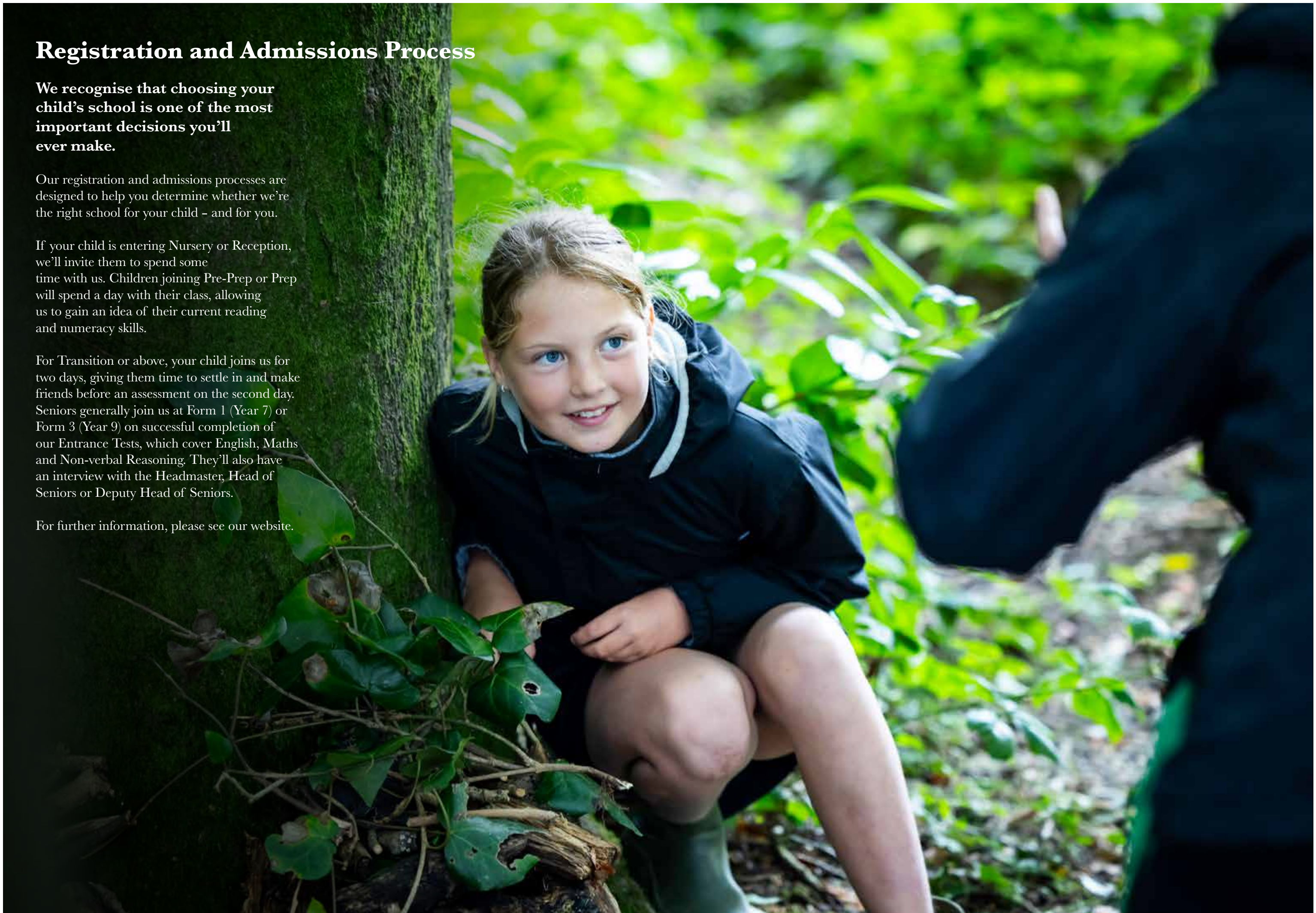
We recognise that choosing your child's school is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make.

Our registration and admissions processes are designed to help you determine whether we're the right school for your child – and for you.

If your child is entering Nursery or Reception, we'll invite them to spend some time with us. Children joining Pre-Prep or Prep will spend a day with their class, allowing us to gain an idea of their current reading and numeracy skills.

For Transition or above, your child joins us for two days, giving them time to settle in and make friends before an assessment on the second day. Seniors generally join us at Form 1 (Year 7) or Form 3 (Year 9) on successful completion of our Entrance Tests, which cover English, Maths and Non-verbal Reasoning. They'll also have an interview with the Headmaster, Head of Seniors or Deputy Head of Seniors.

For further information, please see our website.



A Unique Location

Ditcham Park School is set in the heart of the South Downs National Park, with spectacular views of the rolling Hampshire hills and south across to the Solent to the Isle of Wight.

To ensure your child can benefit from our safe and nurturing countryside location, without you having to commit to the daily school run, we operate a comprehensive private Home-School bus service throughout our catchment area. Details of the latest routes are available on our website.





DITCHAM PARK SCHOOL

Where every child is known and valued

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