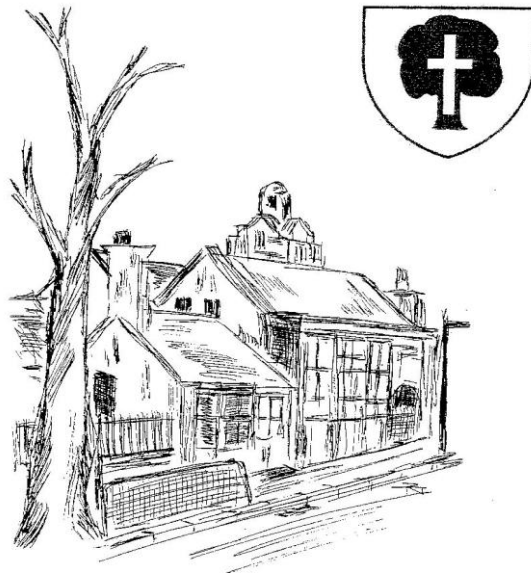


Didsbury C of E Primary School



Handbook

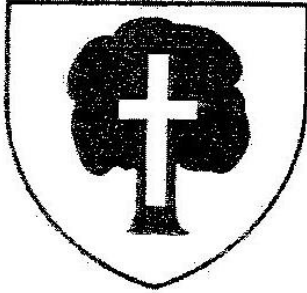
MISSION STATEMENT

Our Christian school exists to provide a welcoming environment in which everyone is cherished and challenged to fulfil their potential.

Executive Headteacher: Mr. Matt Whitehead

Head of School: Mr Simon Ball

Chair of Governors: Mr Paul Good



Didsbury C of E Primary School

Elm Grove

Didsbury

Manchester

M20 6RL

Tel: 0161 445 7144

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope that you will find our School Handbook both interesting and informative.

At Didsbury Church of England Primary School our aim is to create a happy, caring, stimulating environment where children can participate fully and make learning a positive and enjoyable experience.

We have very high standards and expect our children to be polite, work hard and take pride in themselves and the school. We hope that home and school will work closely together in order to achieve this. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with this handbook to help us in this.

Yours sincerely

Matt Whitehead

Headteacher

About Didsbury Church of England Primary School

Didsbury Church of England Primary School is a faith foundation academy primary school with one class of 30 places in each year from Reception to Year 6 and a 26 place Nursery class. Therefore it has support from both Manchester Diocese and Manchester Education Authority. The school has very close links with St James and Emmanuel Church, Didsbury, and encourages applications from families who wish their children to have an excellent primary education underpinned by Christian values. The ethos statement of the school, as recorded in our Instrument of Government by the City Solicitor, is as follows:

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character, in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church, at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality, within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers its pupils.

The original school dates back to 1728 and possibly earlier (see Didsbury Church Of England Primary School 1612 -2012 by Sue Good and Diana Leitch available from the school office price £4). In 1880 the school moved onto its present site where it has remained ever since. Originally there were separate schools for boys and girls. In 1990 the school was remodelled and opened by the Venerable David Hallatt, Archdeacon of Halifax.

We take pride in our school environment and seek to make it a place where children are stimulated to learn. We encourage them to take pride in their work and surroundings and share achievements of all kinds with others.

STAFFING 2017-18

Executive Headteacher - Mr M Whitehead

Head of School - Mr Simon Ball

Nursery : Mrs Noller - Class Teacher / Mrs Fenton - Teaching Assistant
/Mrs Butt - Teaching Assistant

Reception: Miss Evans - Class Teacher/ Mrs Phoenix - Teaching Assistant

Year 1: Mrs Thompson - Class Teacher / Ms Clarke -Teaching Assistant

Year 2: Mrs Gandee - Class Teacher / Mrs Collis and Mrs Fenton

Year 3: Miss McNamara - Class Teacher / Mrs MacKenzie - Teaching Assistant

Year 4: Mrs Royden - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Class Teacher
Mr Briggs - Wednesday Thursday, Friday Class Teacher
Mrs MacKenzie - Teaching Assistant

Year 5 : Mrs Taylor - Class Teacher: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday
Mrs Whittaker - Class Teacher: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
Mrs Miller - Teaching Assistant

Year 6 : Miss Lomas - Class Teacher
Miss Pitts - Teaching Assistant

SENCo - Miss Smith (5 days)

School Business Manager - Mrs J Robinson

Admin Officer - Mrs J Halliwell

Admin Assistant - Ms J Sproson

Librarian - Mrs R Waterton

Site Manager - Mr David Robinson

Cleaners - Mr F Spinello, Mrs Joanne Evans and Mrs Margaret Peace
Mrs Francesco Blanco

Senior lunchtime organiser - Mrs J Embury

Lunchtime organisers - Mrs G. Clavin	Miss S. Collins	Miss J. Collins
Mrs P. Roache	Ms L Phoenix	Mrs R. Gray
Mrs J. Bradbury	Mrs M. Maswa	Miss J. Green

GENERAL AIMS

At Didsbury C of E we aim to:

- Promote Christian values.
- Teach a broad and balanced curriculum so that the children learn a wide range of skills, concepts and knowledge.
- Emphasise the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills so that children have the 'tools' to become independent learners.
- Encourage the children to seek and recognise pattern and inter-connection across the curriculum so that they may apply the skills and concepts they have acquired in a variety of situations.
- Help children develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves to tasks and skills.
- Encourage the children to achieve the highest academic standards.
- Provide equal opportunity for all, to develop whatever talents they possess without discrimination of sex, religion, ethnic origin or disability.
- Teach tolerance and respect for others both in school and the wider community.
- Teach the social skills that prepare children to play their part in the wider community.
- Encourage the children to develop a positive attitude to learning.
- Foster a community where consideration for others is combined with personal fulfilment.
- Encourage an enthusiasm for learning in an atmosphere which is both exciting and stimulating.
- Develop children's pride in their own achievement and progress by fostering self discipline and high self esteem.
- Help children appreciate human achievements, aspirations and differences.

STARTING SCHOOL

When your child starts school for the first time it is a very important step. We want your child to settle into school and to feel happy and secure within the school environment.

Admission to our Nursery is preceded by home visits to children and their parents by the Nursery teacher, and visits to Nursery for children and their parents. Such visits take place in the term before the child is admitted, and are of about 30 minutes duration. PLEASE NOTE A NURSERY PLACE IS NO GUARANTEE OF A RECEPTION PLACE.

When your child is admitted to Nursery at the beginning of the Autumn term, you will be given a start date related to your child's date of birth and there will be a gradual introduction to Nursery education. We consider it essential that the child's introduction to school should be happy, relaxed and secure.

Parents of all 4+ children who are to be admitted to the Reception class, are invited to school for an introductory talk given by the Reception class teacher, when they will have the opportunity to ask questions and clarify the starting school procedure. Children will be given the opportunity to spend a session in our Reception class during July prior to starting in September.

Where possible, we advise that children entering the school after the start of Reception should come and meet their new class teacher before starting.

Nursery

Nursery times are as follows:

Morning session 8.45am - 11.45am

Lunch break 11.45am - 1.15pm

Afternoon session 1.15pm - 3.10pm (There is a charge to some parents, as it is over the basic 15 hour entitlement and will only be free to those children who meet the criteria for 30 hour care and provision)

Both morning and afternoon sessions involve a great deal of structured play which is linked to a theme or topic. We encourage all the children to participate in a variety of activities so that they have experience of a wide range of apparatus and materials. By participating in these carefully planned and interrelated activities, children are developing skills and the ways of thinking necessary for when they begin the National Curriculum programme of study in Year 1. We also hope that they will be stimulated by these activities and enjoy what they are doing!

We believe that the social development of children is very important and aim to foster good social skills within the nursery. From the beginning, we encourage children to be independent and accept responsibility for decisions and actions, so that they may learn to understand the consequences of what they are doing. Through the varied play experiences we hope to encourage children to share, take turns and show concern for others.

ADMISSION TO OUR RECEPTION CLASS

Our Admissions Policy is updated annually and available on the school website at www.didsburycofe.co.uk For admission into Reception all parents will be sent a 'Coordinated Admissions Pack' from the Local Authority during the Autumn term prior to your child starting a Reception class the following September. This should be filled in and returned to the Local Authority. We would recommend that all our prospective parents also fill in the Didsbury CE admission forms and return them to Mrs Robinson in the school office.

The thirty places in our Reception class will be determined by the Admissions Committee of our Governing Body based on the criteria explained in our Admissions Policy.

PLEASE NOTE THAT A PLACE IN OUR NURSERY IS NO GUARANTEE OF A PLACE IN OUR RECEPTION CLASS.

GETTING TO KNOW THE SCHOOL

We often refer to the different sections of the school according to the curriculum stage that they are in. These are as follows:

Nursery	<i>Foundation Stage</i>
Reception	
Year 1	<i>Key Stage 1</i>
Year 2	
Year 3	<i>Key Stage 2</i>
Year 4	
Year 5	
Year 6	

This is because the school must do standard assessments of the children's progress at the end of Year 2, and these assessments, known as SAT's (standard assessment tests) mark the end of work at Key Stage 1. Similarly the school must do standard assessments of the children's progress at the end of Year 6, and this marks the end of work at Key Stage 2.

The primary school curriculum entitles every child to a programme of teaching which is balanced and broadly based. Our teaching promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of each child and prepares them for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life.

Our teaching content is defined by the National Curriculum. This requires us to teach:

Core subjects English, Mathematics, Science, ICT (Information and Communications Technology).

Foundation subjects Technology, History, Geography, Music, Art, Physical Education.

Religious Education is a core subject.

For more information on the curriculum subjects please see the appendix at the back of this booklet.

The teaching of all curriculum areas is based upon a detailed teaching and learning policy. Each subject of the curriculum has its own scheme of work to ensure continuity and progression. Policies and schemes of work are available on request.

The curriculum which we provide for our Nursery and Reception children is based upon the desirable learning goals for Early Years Foundation Stage.

These consist of structured targets in the following areas:

personal, social and emotional development

communication, language and literacy

mathematical development

knowledge and understanding of the World

physical development

creative development

Key Stage 1 and 2 school assemblies (collective acts of worship) are held daily. On Wednesdays and Fridays the Foundation Stage join the rest of the school for assembly. On Wednesdays assemblies are taken by members of the local clergy, and on Fridays we have class assemblies, to which parents are invited. Please see the weekly newsletter for the dates for each class.

How do we organise the children within each class?

Children are grouped, usually according to ability, for mathematics and English. Children are taught using a variety of teaching methods as appropriate to the particular task. During the school day whole class teaching, group teaching and individual work will be in evidence. Each class is allocated one full-time teacher often supported by a teaching assistant.

We have a high level of classroom assistance at Didsbury C of E. All classes receive classroom support. This is quite unusual and enables the teachers to deliver and maintain high standards in all curriculum areas.

Extra Curricular Activities

The school offers a wide range of extra curricular activities. These are organised by staff in their own time or by external providers. They include football, netball, art, chess, recorder, book club, choir, Passport to Sport, French.

School Times

Nursery

Nursery times are as follows:

Morning session 8.50am - 11.45am

Afternoon session 1.05pm -- 3.10pm

Timing of the school day

KEY STAGE 1

8.50 Registration
8.55 Collective Worship
9.10 Teaching Time
10.30 Break
10.45 Teaching time
12.10 Lunchtime
1.15 Registration
1.20 Teaching time
2.15 Afternoon break
2.30 Teaching time
3.10 End of school day

KEY STAGE 2

8.50 Registration
8.55 Collective Worship
9.10 Teaching time
11.10 Break
11.25 Teaching time
12.25 Lunchtime
1.15 Registration
1.20 Teaching time
3.10 End of school day

Total teaching hours per week:

For Key Stage 1 (Infants) - 22 hours

For Key Stage 2 (Juniors) - 24 hours

Supervision

Your child's safety and security whilst in school is of paramount importance to us. It is a responsibility which we take very seriously. Security arrangements are regularly reviewed. All main entrances are fitted with special security locks. During the school day visitors can only enter the school via the main front entrance. This entrance is fitted with a camera and intercom system. These measures have been taken by the school to ensure your child's safety.

Your child is supervised at all times during the school day. This supervision commences at 8.45am and lasts until the end of the school day at 3.10pm. If your child is brought to school very early each day they remain your responsibility until the 8.45am bell. However, if in the morning it is raining heavily children can be brought into the entrance hall from 8.40am to avoid waiting in the playground.

Whilst in the classroom your child is supervised by their class teacher. During morning and afternoon breaks they are supervised in the playground by an adult. If playtime is wet, and the children cannot go out, a member of staff remains in each area to supervise the children.

At lunchtime your child is supervised by midday assistants. We currently employ ten midday assistants. These assistants supervise in the hall, where lunches are served, and in the playground.

Welfare

Your child's welfare is of crucial importance to us. The school has a strong Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) policy which links closely with our whole school ethos. We treat each child as an individual and do our utmost to ensure that each child develops in confidence and self esteem.

The school follows the DfE's procedures in respect of all child protection matters and our policies for keeping children safe in education are on our website.

School Council

We have a School Council which is made up of two council members from each class. The children themselves elect the children to represent their class. The School Council meets regularly with a teacher to discuss ways that we can make our school a better place. They help to create the agenda and they keep their class informed of progress and action.

We have a School Council because we believe it is important for our children to learn how to be responsible. We also want our children to learn that they can make an effective contribution to our school community.

Discipline

We expect high standards of behaviour from all our children. We teach the children to have respect for others. It is our belief that good discipline is essential to achieve high standards of learning.

Before and after school care

Before and after school care facilities are available at Didsbury C of E. The Elm Grove Kids Club is managed and organised by Lisa and her staff are all qualified in child care and police checked. The club offers care during the following times:

7.30am - 8.55am - every day

3.10pm - 6.15pm - Monday to Friday

The club is very popular because the staff offer quality care in a happy and secure environment. Places are limited - so early booking is advisable. Further details can be obtained from Lisa on 07778 160959/07503387857

WORK IN PROGRESS

We will keep you up-to-date with school activities by sending you regular newsletters. These are sent out every Wednesday by email. These are very important for keeping you up to date with school activities and news. Please make sure you get your letter and keep the relevant information. Newsletters can also be accessed via our website.

How do we inform you about your child?

You are always welcome to make an appointment so that you may discuss a particular aspect of your child's education with their teacher. Individual parent interviews are held in October to discuss your child's progress and targets for the year ahead. A second interview is organised at the end of the Spring term when the teachers will give you an update and review your child's progress.

Each year we will send you a curriculum booklet which lists every topic a class will be covering during the academic year and gives other important information for the year. This gives you an overview of the topics planned and suggests ways in which you can help and support your child to get the most out of the term ahead.

You will also receive a full written report concerning your child's achievements and progress each July. This will be followed by an informal open evening when you will be able to look at your child's work and speak informally with the class teacher. This evening also gives you the opportunity to meet the teacher who will be teaching your child in the next academic year.

Year 2 and Year 6 children will take SATs in May. SATs are Standard Assessment Tests and are used in Year 2 and Year 6 to measure the progress your child is making through the National Curriculum in English, Mathematics and Science. Years 3,4 and 5 will take Optional Assessment Tests (OAT's) in May. These tests help to track the progress your child is making as they move through our school. Further information for parents regarding the National Curriculum and school curriculum policies are available from the Headteacher.

We seek to give parents a very full 'picture' of the work that their child covers during the year and the progress which they make. We want to involve you in the education of your child. It is this partnership which enables your child to achieve the highest standards possible.

Special Needs

We believe all children are unique and will have individual needs. We welcome children who have particular identified special educational needs. We seek to integrate such children into their classes, and to work in collaboration with families and outside agencies to support their learning and enable them to have equal access to the curriculum.

If it becomes apparent as your child progresses through the school that they are experiencing difficulties with a specific area of the curriculum, we will inform you and discuss with you the best course of action. We do organise our own support programmes which target children in Key Stage 1 and 2 classes who are struggling with literacy and numeracy skills. Such programmes provide intensive teaching in smaller groups. Individual Support Plans may be drawn up for these children to help them to access the curriculum. Several of our children receive extra help in working towards the targets on their Individual Support Plans.

If your child should struggle with any area of the curriculum we would always ensure that you are kept fully informed of our concerns and plans for the future. Equally, you are always welcome to discuss your concerns with us. Together we can often plan a programme which will help and support your child to overcome their difficulties.

Some children's difficulties may be such that the school needs to involve outside agencies in order to get better support and understanding of a child's needs. The school may need to begin the process of getting an Education Health and Care Plan in order to guarantee adequate specialist support for a child.

The school has a special needs policy which is available on the website.

Homework

Children will regularly be given reading homework from Reception to Year 6. We also expect children to learn and practise both tables and spellings.

Children may be given homework tasks to complete which are relevant to current topic work. Such tasks are given, usually within Key Stage 2, to stimulate interest and involvement. These tasks are given at the discretion of the individual teacher.

If a child is experiencing difficulties with a certain area of the curriculum specific homework tasks will be given to help overcome these problems. As parents, you would be fully informed of this situation.

Our children are given regular homework tasks. Parents are asked to support and supervise these activities and check that homework is completed on time. Parents have an important part to play with any homework task which is given. Your support in ensuring that your child completes any given task is much appreciated.

Home-School Agreements

At Didsbury C of E we believe wholeheartedly in the strength of our home-school partnership. Parents are encouraged to get involved in the education of their child. We need your support to maintain and develop our high standards.

When children start school we distribute home-school agreements for parents to sign. Once signed, these are kept at school as a record of joint responsibility for the education of your child. All new parents are asked to sign our Home-School Agreement. This formalises our commitment to you and your child and it also commits you, the parent, to supporting our efforts.

Complaint Procedure

We make every effort to communicate with and inform parents of policies and initiatives. We are always ready to listen to concerns which parents may have. If you wish to make a complaint, contact your child's class teacher in the first instance to discuss the matter. If you need to take your complaint further the Headteacher is available and the school complaints procedure, which follows the LA model, is available, either on the school website or in the school office, for your guidance.

Come and talk to us. We want to help.

WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM YOU?

Attendance

Please ensure that your child arrives promptly for school each day as we feel that it is important to develop good habits of punctuality. If your child is late they should report to the office on arrival. Should your child be unable to attend school for any reason it is important that we are informed, if possible in advance. If your child is ill, and therefore unable to attend school, we would appreciate it if you would inform us by telephone or email, on the first day of absence by 9.30am and then in writing on return to school. This is necessary so that your child is not assumed to be an 'unauthorised absence'.

A child should not be absent from school for the purposes of a holiday. Absence during term time is not a right, and approval for any planned term time absence is required from the headteacher and would need to be for exceptional circumstances, at least 2 weeks in advance and request forms are available from the office or can be downloaded from the website. Prolonged term time absence does disrupt school life and we are anxious to avoid this if at all possible. Absences during April and May, for children in Year 2 and Year 6, will not be authorised because of the national testing procedures.

If your child needs to leave school during the school day (for example, to attend a medical appointment) please inform the class teacher in writing. Your child should be collected for such an appointment, as no child will be permitted to leave the premises unaccompanied.

Uniform

We are a 'Uniform' school. We believe that a uniform looks smart, wears well and contributes to a feeling of belonging to the school. This policy is supported by all our parents. The basic colours are navy blue, grey and white.

Our uniform consists of

White or blue shirt/blouse/polo shirt

Navy jumper, cardigan or navy blue sweatshirt bearing the school logo

Navy skirt or pinafore

Grey/Navy trousers

Blue checked summer dress

Navy blue fleece (optional - bearing the school logo)

T-shirts in house colours for PE

All items are available from a wide range of clothes shops. Prices will vary according to your choice of store or supplier. We recommend our own PTA or MCS stores for all our uniform requirements.

All children take part in Physical Education and require a pump bag containing a pair of pumps, a t-shirt and a pair of plain black/navy shorts. Trainers may only be worn for outdoor PE lessons. If, for religious or cultural reasons, you would prefer your child to dress in a different way for PE, please talk to the class teacher. On entry into school your child will be placed in a house. Our houses are named after famous people from Didsbury and are used to encourage considerate behaviour and group the children for events such as Sports Day. It is possible to purchase a t-shirt, bearing the school badge, in your child's house colour from MCS stores. PE kit should consist of either a white t-shirt or one of the coloured t-shirts.

We ask that all items of clothing and personal belongings are marked with your child's name. This can save so much time and upset when things get lost!

Parents are also asked to purchase one of our navy book bags. This is used to protect reading books as they travel from home to school!

Toys

We would prefer your child not to bring toys from home into school. In our experience this practice usually leads to argument and upset.

Jewellery

Children are not allowed to wear jewellery in school. Watches are allowed, providing the child understands that they are their own responsibility.

Some parents insist that their child should be allowed to wear earrings if their ears have been pierced. We would prefer children not to wear earrings. If earrings have to be worn then only the small studs are allowed. To meet health and safety regulations all earrings must be removed for all PE lessons. Teachers are not able to remove or replace earrings - this must be the child's responsibility.

Refreshments

Children may bring a snack to school for their morning break. This has to be a piece of fruit as part of our Healthy Schools Policy.

At lunchtime your child may have a school lunch or bring a packed lunch from home. School meals are cooked on the premises; menus are available on request and special requirements such as vegetarian meals are available. Each Monday children taking school meals should bring the exact money in an envelope with their name, class and amount of money enclosed written on it. If your child wishes to change from school dinners onto packed lunches, or vice versa, this can only be done half termly with two weeks written notice required.

Some children may be eligible for free school meals. Children from families in receipt of Income support/Income based jobseekers' allowance are eligible for free school meals. For further details contact the Manchester Housing and Council Benefits team on 0161 234 5003. Application forms are available from the school office.

There are drinking water fountains in both playgrounds, and water is available in the dinner hall. Children are welcome to bring a clear bottle of drinking water (not juice) to school to drink from in the classroom, so long as it has a sports cap and is named. Such bottles should be taken home at the end of the school day.

Money

If you send money into school to pay for trips, photos, lunches etc. please ensure that it is always in a sealed envelope with the child's name on it.

Medicine

For the safety of all our children please do not allow your child to bring any medicines or tablets into school.

Please try to arrange times of doses so they are outside of school hours. If this is not possible (ie. 4 doses a day needed) all prescribed medicines must be taken to the office by an adult and a form must be signed before medicines can be given in school.

If your child is ill the best place for them is at home with their parent/carer.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be contacted to make arrangements for them to be picked up from school.

Charging policy for school visits and activities

School visits and trips do much to enhance the quality of educational provision. We currently take our Year 6 children on a residential trip where they take part in an outdoor pursuits week.

All classes regularly visit local places of interest as part of their topic work. We visit such places as Lyme Park, Manchester Cathedral, Stockley Farm and Manchester Museum to name but a few. However, without the support of voluntary parental contributions such activities would have to cease.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

Voluntary help in school

Some parents are able to give a bit of time in the week. Sometimes this can be to listen to children reading, to help with a craft activity, or simply to help a teacher put up a display of the children's work. This help is very welcome. Please speak to your child's class teacher if you would like to do this at some stage.

Help is also very welcome on class trips. Please speak to the class teacher if you are able to accompany your child's class on a visit.

School Association (Parent Teacher Association)

We have an active parents association who organise many social and fund-raising events throughout the year. It is a great way to get to know other people in the school community. All parents are welcome to participate.

Please help us with our fund-raising efforts. The money raised pays for all those extra things which we would otherwise be unable to afford.

Governing Body

Governors make decisions about how the school is run. They meet at least once a term at school. Governors are appointed to help decide what is taught, interview and select staff, set standards of behaviour and decide how the school budget is spent.

School Governors have legal duties, powers and responsibilities. They can only act together; they cannot act individually. School Governors are parents, teachers at school, local council representatives, or community representatives.

Parent Governors have a child in school, are elected by the parents, and serve, as do other Governors, for four years. Parent governors bring the views of parents to the Governing Body, but they speak and act as individuals. They should not be thought of as delegates or 'mouthpieces' for the parents; they do not vote for all parents in general. They have equal status in the work of the Governing Body and have voting rights.

Teachers and Heads in most schools will already be making efforts to encourage parental involvement and Parent Governors can be an important element in developing the partnership of parents with the school. If you would like to become a Governor, ask the Headteacher for details.

The minutes of the Governors' meetings are in the school office for anyone to read. There are seven Foundation Governors on our Governing Body, chosen by the Church PCC along with one LEA Governor, one teaching staff Governor, one non-teaching staff Governor and the Headteacher. We also have one Parent Governor who is elected for a period of four years. Currently our Governing Body has seven parents in these positions.

APPENDIX - MORE ABOUT THE CURRICULUM

English

The development of literacy skills has always been a priority at Didsbury C of E. We place great emphasis upon the early acquisition of reading skills. We have a wealth of reading resources to teach reading skills. (These include Rigby Star, Oxford Reading Tree, Ginn 360, Oxford Literacy Web, Storychest etc. etc.). The resources are carefully structured so that each individual child can be challenged and stimulated to develop new skills, whilst continually reinforcing what has already been learned.

Literacy

Several years ago the government introduced a national literacy strategy into primary schools. At Didsbury C of E we have individualised the strategy to suit the needs of our children. High standards in reading and writing are expected. In Early Years we place a big emphasis upon the acquisition of phonic skills. This is developed throughout Key Stage 1 to support both reading and writing. Whilst we have guided reading sessions within school, we have continued with our individualised reading as we believe that this is in the best interests of the children. However this creates additional work for our teachers so we expect parents to support the individualised reading approach by hearing children read at home. Children are expected to learn spellings and formal handwriting is taught. As a result many of our children are able to read fluently and can produce high quality writing from an early age.

When at school, your child is developing reading skills all the time. We do not simply teach reading through reading scheme material. As parents you have an important part to play in helping your child to learn to read. A reading record will be sent home and this will help us to monitor your child's reading development.

Mathematics

The acquisition of mathematical concepts and skills is of the utmost importance. We strive to obtain high standards of numeracy. Basic number skills are taught systematically and thoroughly using a variety of resources. All our numeracy teaching is cross referenced to the Numeracy Strategy thus ensuring progression from year to year. This is supplemented by many mathematical activities and investigations which are designed to encourage the child to use and apply their skills in everyday situations.

All classes have daily mental arithmetic lessons in addition to their general maths teaching. Great emphasis is placed upon the acquisition and development of mental strategies. Instant recall of number bonds and multiplication tables is developed and practised during these sessions.

Science

The introduction of science as a core subject has clearly established its importance within the primary curriculum. Most of our science work is incorporated into our thematic approach. Environmental science has always played a key role in the life of the school.

Religious Education

Religious Education conforms to the Manchester Agreed Syllabus and is part of the school curriculum for all children. The Christian faith is studied in Years 3 and 5. Different faiths are studied along with Christianity in Years 4 and 6. Exemption from RE is permitted should parents so desire.

Collective Worship

There is a daily collective act of worship for all pupils. We join together as a whole school twice a week. These assemblies promote the ethos of our school and the act of worship develops Christian values. We also celebrate the success and achievements of our children in order to encourage high standards and develop self esteem. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective acts of worship.

ICT (Information & Communications Technology)

Didsbury C of E is fortunate to have its own ICT suite. The ICT suite is equipped with thirty PC's all of which are connected to the Internet. We are very proud of this magnificent resource. These hi-tech facilities are enabling us to teach every aspect of research to equip our children for the 21st century. All classrooms have computers which are used to deliver different strands of the ICT curriculum. The entire school is networked to the main server and every child saves their work to their own individual area on the server.

We have installed Interactive Whiteboards in all Key Stage 1 and 2 classes along with the board in our suite and another in our SEN learning area. The teachers use this powerful technology to enhance teaching and learning. The interactive whiteboards are hugely motivating and really focus children's attention.

Foundation Subjects - History, Geography, Technology, Art, PE, Music.

The foundation subjects plus science are taught via a cross-curricular approach. This is most commonly referred to as a topic or thematic approach. The topic provides a focus which allows us to teach different subjects in a meaningful way to children.

Subject focused topics are planned by the teaching staff a year in advance. This ensures that all subjects are adequately covered and that there is a balance between each subject within the topic. Topics are most commonly changed each half term but may occasionally last a whole term. We have written schemes of work for each subject so each teacher knows exactly what needs to be taught to their particular year group.

The use of a topic approach enables us to teach the requirements of the National Curriculum in a way which is meaningful and relevant to young children.

In the early years, the topic helps to develop literacy skills. Within Key Stage 2 both language and research skills become increasingly complex. The subject content also becomes more diverse and demanding.

Music

Although one of the foundation subjects, music is one of the two subjects which are usually taught separately.

All classes have regular music lessons. These may link with the current topic if relevant but may also be 'separately taught'.

We currently have peripatetic music tuition available for our Key Stage 2 children in guitar, brass, woodwind, piano and strings. Parents can opt for such tuition for their child. A charge, dependant upon numbers, is made for such tuition.

Sex Education

Sex education is taught as part of a planned programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) development for the children of the appropriate age and maturity. Parents are welcome to discuss this policy with the headteacher. Year 6 children are taught specifically about physical changes. Parents will be notified in advance when these lessons will take place and have the right to withdraw their child from the lesson.

Drugs Education

Drugs education is incorporated into our teaching in both key stages. This begins with our youngest children as part of their science work. Drug awareness is developed throughout Key Stage 2 as part of our teaching on healthy living.

Dinner Money

This should be paid weekly on a Monday morning or can be paid half termly in advance. Please contact the school office if you wish to pay this way. We now have a facility to pay on line and you will be given a registration number and instruction on how you can do this. Dinner money must be kept in credit at all times.

Thank you for taking the time to familiarise yourself with our Handbook. We hope you have found it useful.

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In addition, please remember . . .

- You are always welcome in school to discuss your child's progress.
- We would be delighted if you would help in school, either in the classrooms or in our practical area.
- Our School Association (PTA) work tirelessly to raise funds for our school and would be delighted to have your help and support.
- Please contact the Chair of Governors if you are interested in joining the Governing Body.
- You can contact Didsbury CE School in various ways:
 - 1) Telephone 445 7144
 - 2) Email: office@didsbury-pri.manchester.sch.uk

Please note that the phone does have an answer phone facility for messages out of school hours.