

Magherafelt Nursery School

'Exploring, Learning and Growing Together'



Prospectus 2024

Welcome to Magherafelt Nursery School

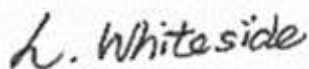
A warm welcome is extended to you and your child as you embark on your educational journey together. Starting nursery school is an exciting step for your child and working in partnership with you, the parent, we aim to provide high quality teaching and learning in a nurturing and enabling learning environment. By choosing Magherafelt Nursery School you will provide your child with an excellent learning foundation.

As you browse through our prospectus, we aim to give you a flavour of the 'fabric and ethos' of our school. Keeping the children at the heart of our provision, they will be valued, encouraged and supported on their individual learning journey.

As a cross-community school, mainly for children in their pre-school year, we welcome children from all backgrounds, communities, faiths and cultures. We are an open and inclusive school with a warm and nurturing ethos, and we look forward to "Exploring, Learning and Growing Together" as we build reciprocal relationships of trust, creativity and discovery. With the support of our Board of Governors and parents, Magherafelt Nursery School hopes to transform to have fully Integrated status in the near future.

Through the medium of 'playful learning,' our team of experienced and enthusiastic staff will nurture and encourage your child to develop in a holistic way across the six areas of the pre-school curriculum and to the best of his/her learning potential. We hope that each child will grow in confidence and self-worth, showing care for each other and developing a long-lasting love of learning.

You and your child will be made most welcome at Magherafelt Nursery School and we will be happy to provide you with any further information that you may require.



Lesley Whiteside
Principal



Sarah-Jane Knox
Chair of the Board of Governors



School Information

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Address: | 32A Castledawson Road, Magherafelt, BT45 6PA |
| Telephone: | 028 79632981 |
| Email: | info@magherafeltns.magherafelt.ni.sch.uk |
| Website: | www.magherafeltnurseryschool.com |
| Twitter: | @MagherafeltNS |
| Facebook: | search 'Magherafelt Nursery School' and 'like' to receive updates |
| School Classification: | Controlled Nursery School Education Authority – Locality South West |
| Age Range of Pupils: | 2 – 4 years |
| Number on Nursery Roll: | (1 st September 2023) 130 children |
| Full Time Places: | 26 |
| Part Time Places: | 104 |



School Times

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|---|---------|
| Full-time | 9.00am | - | 1.30pm |
| Morning | 9.00am | - | 11.30am |
| Afternoon | 12.30pm | - | 3.00pm |

Before School Club

We offer a Before School Club to allow parents going to work to leave children into school from 8.40 am. This service costs £5 per week. Places are limited and will only start when children are well settled into nursery school.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is a statutory body which meets at least once each term. A list of the Board of Governors will be provided as part of the Induction Pack. Governor Roles:

- Setting the culture, ethos and values of the school
- Promoting positive behaviour and healthy lifestyles
- Maintenance of school buildings and grounds
- Production of annual Action Plan / Reviews on the progress of the school throughout the academic year.
- Special Educational Needs
- Pupil admissions
- Child Protection
- Pastoral Care
- Recruitment
- Financial matters

Nursery Education at Magherafelt Nursery School

Magherafelt Nursery School opened in 1975 with an enrolment of seventy-five children. The sustainability of the school is reflected in the Education Authority's provision of a state-of-the-art, purpose-built nursery building that opened in November 2012 with capacity for 130 nursery aged children.

Starting nursery school is an exciting step and we aim to make it an enriching and homely experience for you and your child. Each child is special and valued and the team will support your child in his / her learning journey with sensitivity and enthusiasm.

As the only cross community Nursery School in the area, our collective aim is to serve the children and families in our local and wider community so that all children have the opportunity to avail of high quality pre-school education.

The Nursery School Team



Mrs L Whiteside
Principal / Teacher



Mrs L McGill
Teacher



Mrs C Quinn
Teacher



Mrs D Campbell
Teacher



Mrs K McCreech
Nursery Assistant



Mrs L Gilmour
Nursery Assistant



Mrs A McLernon
Nursery Assistant



Mrs G McCullagh
Nursery Assistant



Mrs J Walker
Senior Clerical Officer



Mr M Whiteside
Building Supervisor



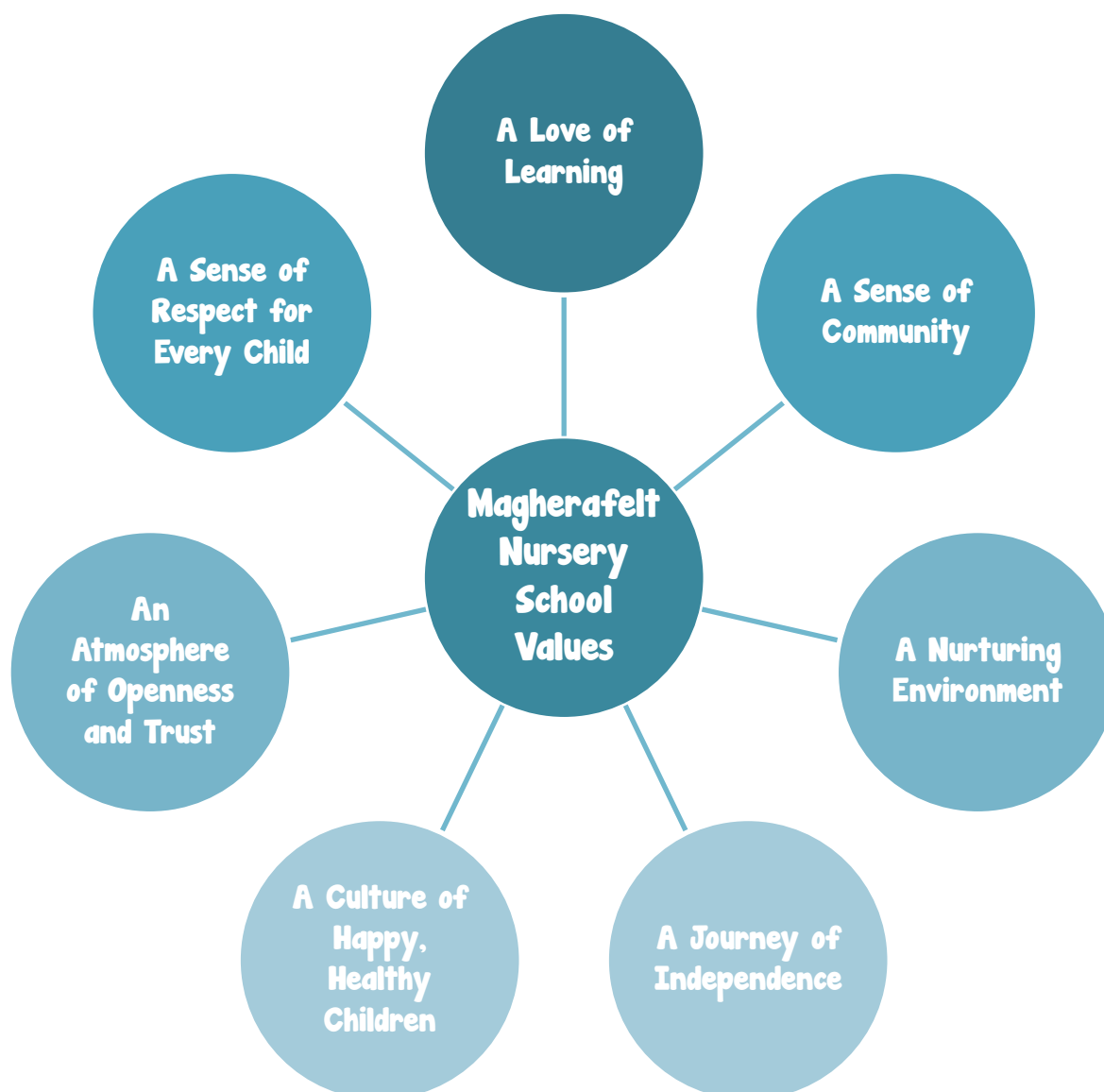
Mrs F Young
Cleaner / Before Schools Club
General Assistant

The nursery school has a highly qualified and experienced team of teachers and nursery assistants and supportstaff, who work together to ensure that your child has a high-quality learning experience. Together, we plan, organise and progress children's learning by:

- Developing warm and nurturing relationships with children
- Teaching using adult-led and child-led learning experiences
- Using natural, stimulating and progressive play materials
- Encouraging children to take on new challenges
- Evaluating the teaching and learning on a regular basis
- Using open-ended questions to promote creative and critical thinking and imaginative skills
- Modelling conflict resolution strategies and social and emotional regulation
- Listening to, observing and documenting the learning journey

Learning Ethos and Culture

A nurturing ethos is cultivated throughout the school and the health and wellbeing of the learning community are highly valued. A rich and varied play programme which extends and enhances the experiences of the children is provided. Children of all abilities and learning styles will be encouraged to progress along their journey of independence and life-long learning. We hold to a number of core values:



A School Connected to the Local Community

We believe that every child should have equal access to educational opportunities valuing their culture, ethnic origin, gender or special needs. We support and uphold this policy and encourage children to be caring, tolerant and interested in each other and other cultures. We enjoy good relationships with our local schools across all sectors and with our local day-care facilities.

Reflecting the diversity of the children and the ethos within the school, the Board of Governors and staff of Magherafelt Nursery School are seeking to transform the school into a fully Integrated School. This will enable the school to further celebrate the uniqueness of every child and to provide children with playful learning, enriched with a diverse range of resources and experiences - children of all cultures, backgrounds, faiths and abilities working together in a shared learning space. The support and commitment of parents is key to the life and work of an integrated school. A Development Proposal and supporting 'Case for Change' have been submitted to the Department of Education, and the Consultation Process is now complete. If successful, Magherafelt Nursery School would be the third nursery school in NI to be granted 'Integrated Status' by the Department of Education.

Shared Education – 'Steps into Sharing' is the latest initiative to move our children towards a shared society. The Shared Education programme is being progressed by Mrs McGill and Mrs Whiteside. As a school, we work closely with education partners in the locality and beyond. A Shared Education cluster of preschool settings is currently being set up as the Education Authority moves towards the 'mainstreaming' of Shared Education for all children. This latest initiative is subject to funding begin secured by the Education Authority.

Eco-Schools Award

The Eco programme is championed by Mrs Quinn together with the children's Eco committee. They come up with new initiatives to encourage us all to care for the school, our local environment, and our wider world. An Action Plan is created each year and the Green Flag Award is applied for biennially.



School Fund

As we are funded by the Department of Education, there is no daily charge to parents for the Nursery Education their child receives. However, we ask for a contribution (£30 each term) towards items such as a daily snack, gardening activities, cookery ingredients, extra equipment, parties, entertainment, puppet shows and musicians. Our school relies heavily on this additional funding to provide these curriculum-enriching experiences e.g. weekly sessions with Fit Minds (Coach Ronan and Fitzy).

Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Enriching Experiences

Learning involves all the planned and spontaneous experiences that the child is engaged in and it is important to harness the interests of the children. The themes and resources are thoughtfully selected to provide challenge and to generate excitement in the nursery-aged child. The children inspire the play and the educator scaffolds the learning and adds the language enrichment. Visitors are also invited into school to enrich and extend the learning experiences of the children.



Settling-In

Here at Magherafelt Nursery School the settling-in period progresses smoothly with most children enrolled within the first two weeks. Your child's time at school will build up gradually and is determined by the teacher as your child adjusts to the new environment and routines.

The Learning Environment

Our learning environment is well-resourced with quality resources and open-ended play materials that lend themselves to playful exploration and creative thinking. The outdoor environment is an outstanding feature of the school offering a stimulating and challenging learning landscape for children to explore. A covered sand house and sand wall, a roofed mud station, a roofed small world area, and a mound and tunnel feature, enhance our garden play space.

Learning in the 'Great Outdoors' is an integral part of the educational programme and the children will be able to explore using real and natural resources to aid their discoveries and to deepen their understanding. Children will need to wear clothing that will allow them to move around and shoes that are waterproof and suitable for climbing in. No laces please!



The Nursery Day

Morning Class

- Greeting Time
- Indoor Play & Exploration
- Snacktime
- Tidy Time
- Outdoor Play & Exploration
- Together Time including Story Time and Music
- Home Time

Afternoon Class

- Greeting Time
- Indoor Play & Exploration
- Snacktime
- Tidy Time
- Outdoor Play & Exploration
- Together Time including Story Time and Music
- Home Time

Full Time Class

- Greeting Time
- Indoor Play & Exploration
- Snack
- Tidy Time
- Outdoor play & Exploration
- Together Time including Story Time and Music
- Lunch Time
- Outdoor Play & Exploration
- Music & Movement / Small Group Time
- Home Time

The Curriculum



“Most young children come to school as active, experienced and enthusiastic learners. To build upon the learning that has taken place in the home and its immediate environment, pre-school staff should provide children with a rich variety of challenging play activities and other experiences in a stimulating environment.”

CCEA, 2018

The refreshed ‘Curricular Guidance for Pre-school Education 2018’ is used as a framework to guide and support our planning framework. Using a range of teaching methodologies and incorporating ICT, the following areas are progressed:



Detailed planning notes are used to guide teaching and learning in each classroom. The learning journey and progress made by each child is recorded using a combination of written, electronic and photographic evidence. The interests of the children are key and staff will use these to engage the children in purposeful learning activities. Parents are encouraged to get involved in their child’s learning through a ‘Meet and Greet’ session and ‘Stay and Play’ sessions. Parents will also be invited to meet with the class teacher to discuss their child’s progress and will receive a transition report before the child starts primary school.



Activities to Experience

Painting, drawing, cutting out, model making, cooking, imaginative play, building, collage making, investigating sand and water, printing, talking, listening, writing, reading, mathematical games, music, drama, sorting, counting, scientific exploration, iPads and interactive technology.



Milk, water and a healthy snack are available during all the sessions. The children have the opportunity to choose the activities that they wish to play with and the team is on hand to encourage lengthening periods of play and enriching language experiences. If your child has a food allergy, parents will be asked to provide details of this so that provision can be made.



Learning in the 'Great Outdoors' is an integral part of the educational programme and children will use the space to investigate and explore natural and authentic materials. Challenging physical play experiences give the children the opportunity to engage in 'huff and puff' play and to develop a healthy lifestyle and positive attitude to exercise.



Getting Ready to Learn and 3+ Health Review

The school receives funding from the Department of Education's Getting Ready to Learn Programme. This initiative is co-ordinated by Mrs Quinn, and seeks to engage and empower parents in children's early learning through a number of themes:

- Happy, Healthy Kids
- Big Bedtime Read
- Ages and Stages of Development
- Education Works in Pre-school.

The programme is delivered through a blend of home lending resources, interactive workshops, webinars, and the Learning Together section of the school website. Highlights of our School Calendar are our Big Bedtime Read Event in Term 1 and our Family Picnic in Term 3.

Magherafelt Nursery School participates in the joint Health-Education initiative '3+ Review'. This provides parents and practitioners with valuable information that can be used to support the child's development, enabling early identification of needs, and where necessary, making appropriate referral to support services. Parents will have the opportunity to complete a questionnaire from our named Health Visitor, and then both parent and child will attend a meeting with the named Health Visitor in the pre-school setting to discuss the child's development, including the information provided in the completed questionnaire.

Parental / Carer Involvement

It is our intention that our school will have a special place in your family life for many years to come. You, the parent/carer, are your child's first and ongoing educator and you will be made most welcome in school. All the information you share with us is key in enabling your child to settle in. We will encourage you to take an active interest in the life of the school in the following ways:

- 'Meet and Greet' Day and 'Stay and Play' sessions
- Big Bedtime Read Lending Library
- Parent volunteers for outings and for gardening jobs
- Coming in to share a hobby or read a story to the children
- Talking to the children about your job/interest
- A newly developed and regularly updated website
- An online 'Learning Together' Programme to enjoy with your child
- A monthly news sheet to keep you informed
- Parent teacher meetings and an end of year transition report for your child
- Play resource lending packs linked to the curriculum
- Shared links to useful parent information sites
- Parent feedback is always welcome

The nursery school really is amazing, the facilities, staff and methods of teaching used in the school is outstanding and we feel that it provided our child with the opportunity to develop those initial building blocks to learning/ life in such a safe and supportive environment.

This is now the third year in a row my kids have attended the nursery ... it's been a pleasure to have them go to the school. Watch them learn and grow and develop friendships. Would highly recommend the nursery to any parent

My child has had the best two years in nursery. I know she will never forget her time in the school. I can't thank the staff enough for making my child feel so safe, happy and help her grow.

This is such a fantastic nursery and gives the children the best start to their education. The staff are fantastic and my children have enjoyed their experiences at the nursery immensely. Thank you for your energy and effort to everyone at the school.

I couldn't have imagined a better nursery experience for my son. He has thrived at your nursery and has went in every single day smiling which means more than anything. Your nursery is truly amazing ... everything centres round the children which is evident for all to see.

Sharing Information Between Home and School

We use a number of methods to share information between school and home:

- Our website www.magherafeltnurseryschool.com is packed with key information about Magherafelt Nursery School, news and events.
- We use an app called 'Schools NI' to send out regular notifications e.g. school newsletter, reminders, requests for information. At the start of the school year you'll receive a message to add this to your smartphone and turn on notifications.
- Seesaw is used by the teachers to log your child's learning journal - At the start of the school year you'll receive a message to sign up for this app; you'll then see regular photos of what your child is doing in class as well as direct updates from the teachers.
- We add monthly videos and community information to our Facebook page (Magherafelt Nursery School) as well as our X (Twitter) account '@MagherafeltNS'.
- Google Forms are used to gather large quantities of information from parents, particularly during the admissions / settling in process, but also during the year for survey responses.
- Parent-Teacher Meetings take place twice a year (once in person, once by phone).
- If you need to speak with your child's teacher, you are welcome to do this after class, or call the school and request a call-back or appointment time.

All information we gather about your child is strictly controlled and processed within the General Data Protection Regulations.

Intimate Care

Staff will act 'in loco parentis' whilst your child is at school. On occasion, it may be necessary to clean or change your child and we will seek your permission for this before your child starts school with us. All children should be encouraged to use the toilet and be as independent as possible in the bathroom.

Medical Needs

Every effort will be made to ensure that children with medical needs receive appropriate care and support at school. Any child with a medical need will require a Care Plan to be completed and this will be held in the School Medical Register and by the class teacher. Where prescribed medication is to be administered during the school day, this is usually of a life-preserving nature (e.g. asthma, severe allergy, diabetes, epilepsy). The parent is responsible for providing the school with comprehensive information regarding the child's condition and medication.

Pastoral Care and Safeguarding



Mrs L Whiteside
Head of Safeguarding



Mrs D Campbell
Designated Teacher



Mrs C Quinn
Deputy Designated Teacher



Mrs L McGill
Deputy Designated Teacher

Magherafelt Nursery School will work towards creating an ethos that contributes to the care, safety and well-being of the children and will aim to do whatever is reasonable in the circumstances to safeguard and promote each child's safety and wellbeing. All children attending have the right to be protected from harm, and can only learn effectively when they feel safe and secure. Every effort is also made to ensure that parents feel welcome and comfortable to approach staff; and in return, parents are asked to respect the position and role of each member of staff. A summary of the main school policies is issued to parents at the start of each academic year. To fulfil our responsibilities in relation to pastoral care and safeguarding we seek to:

- Work as a team to ensure the safety of staff, children and families.
- Provide a safe environment for children and their parents/carers.
- Respect the rights of each child.
- Listen to children's concerns.
- Actively teach children how to keep safe.
- Ensure each young child's right to privacy and physical integrity is protected.
- Ensure the welfare of the child is paramount in decisions likely to affect him/her.
- Work in partnership with all those using the nursery and external statutory agencies to ensure effective & efficient child protection.
- Provide effective procedures and guidance to advise staff how to fulfil child protection responsibilities.
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Team receives up-to-date training.
- Work closely with our Health Visitor and Social Care Services.



Concerns of a safeguarding or child protection nature should be discussed with a member of the Safeguarding Team. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share information with other professionals e.g. Health Visitor, Education Authority Safeguarding Team or Social Services. Further information will be made available at the time of induction to the setting.

We aim to provide a high adult-child ratio and to maintain close supervision of indoor and outdoor play zones. We encourage the children to think about safety and to take well-thought-out risks in play experiences. We use a combination of Risk Assessments and Risk Benefits Assessments to maximise child and staff safety.

Through circle time activities, stories, puppets and play experiences, the children are taught to listen to, and to care for, each other. They are also taught how to say 'No' or 'I don't like that' and to seek help if needed. We have introduced the Jenny Mosley Golden Rules and are actively teaching these as part of our Personal, Social and Emotional Curriculum.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour and Purposeful Play

Our aim is to nurture well-rounded children who have respect for each other, have a love of learning and who work in community with each other. To this end, we ensure that:

- Children are challenged and active.
- Golden Rules are shared with the children.
- Behavioural instructions are positively framed.
- Children are encouraged to develop their conflict resolution skills with adult help.
- Children are encouraged to apply their knowledge of the Golden Rules when playing with others.
- Children will be redirected from less purposeful play.



The team believes that children should be encouraged to feel responsible for their actions and to develop peaceful ways to solve problems as they arise.



Wellbeing

We have recently completed training on promoting children's wellbeing. We have been integrating 'calming' experiences and play materials into their emotional learning programme.

Using the 'Calm Plan' toolkit, the staff are more in tune with their own emotional regulation and that of the children. The school also has a bank of resources to help children with their emotional regulation. We have introduced 'Feel Fit Fridays' to encourage both staff and children to have fun, try new things and connect with others. Ronan and Fitz Bear (from Fit Minds Coaching) are a key part of this Friday programme.

Children with Additional Physical / Medical / Learning Needs



Magherafelt Nursery School recognises that the integration of children with additional needs alongside others (where possible), is beneficial to all. It also acknowledges the right for all children to have the maximum possible access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

In the context of our school, a 'learning difficulty' means that the child has significantly greater difficulty in accessing the curriculum or learning than the majority of children of his/her age, or has a disability which may make it difficult for that child to make full use of the nursery environment without additional resources.

It is recognised that addressing additional needs effectively may require additional adult time and expertise. When observations and assessments show that the child is having significant difficulty, the Nursery Team will follow the stages of the Special Needs Code of Practice and will begin the process of setting individual targets and an appropriate learning programme. Advice may be sought from other professional services (with Parental Consent) and parents will be kept informed at all times. At times, children may need to work 1:1 or to play in a quieter area to restore wellbeing and purposeful play.

The school has a named Educational Psychologist and generic and specific advice is available. The Educational Psychologist consults with the Principal / Learning Support Coordinator. In some instances a Statement of Special Educational Need may need to be issued by the Education Authority. We will support you through this gradual and lengthy three stage process. A new SEND Act is gradually being implemented by the Education Authority.

Magherafelt Nursery School strives to:

- Provide a broad, balanced and differentiated education as well as encouraging the child to participate in all the activities available to them in the nursery classroom.
- Identify children who may have additional needs at an early stage and, in consultation with appropriate personnel, ensure that they are referred for statutory assessment when appropriate.
- Encourage parental involvement and co-operation between various professionals/agencies in the diagnosis, treatment and support of children with special educational needs.
- Plan and provide experiences and opportunities which allow pupils to progress in understanding and skills.
- Enhance the range of additional resources available for children with additional needs.
- Liaise with Health professionals such as Paediatrics, Speech & Language Therapy, Health Visitor, Social Workers etc.
- Develop an effective system for recording and continual assessment so that each pupil's progress can be monitored.
- Encourage the use of teaching styles which are responsive to different learning styles and which ensure effective learning.
- Develop and utilise all available resources in support of children with additional needs and their families.
- Encourage children to learn the skills needed to live in community with each other.
- Share strategies and methods with families.

School Complaints Procedures

The Board of Governors, together with the Principal, sets the direction and tone of the school in all that they do, and are committed to working with parents in the best interests of their child's education. If for any reason, parents have a complaint against the school or any member of staff or governance, every effort will be made to resolve the issue informally and make a plan of action. A Complaints Procedure is in place to address more serious concerns in a swift, full and fair manner. A copy of this procedure is posted on the parents' notice board at the entrance to the school.

Closing Comments

We hope that you found this prospectus informative and that you will entrust your child's early education to the team in Magherafelt Nursery School. You will find further information on our school website. We look forward to a great year together with you and your child.



The information contained within is correct
at the time of going to print.

Minor changes may be made during the academic year

What to do now ...

Applying for a place at Magherafelt Nursery School

The Pre-School Enrolment Process happens in 2 stages. The key dates are summarised below. Further information will be available on the Education Authority website www.eani.org.uk/admissions.

Our School Admissions Criteria is published on the EA website on Tuesday 12th December 2023.

Target Age – born on or between 2nd July 2020 and 1st July 2021

Underage – born on or between 2nd July 2021 and 1st July 2022

Target Age children will be considered before Underage children and punctual applications will be considered before late. If you are considering applying for a place for an underage child, we would encourage you to do so by the Stage 1 closing date (Friday 26th January at midday) for the best chance of a place.

When completing the application at the Parent Portal, please note that Magherafelt Nursery School is listed as TWO providers – FT (for Full Time places) and PT (for Part Time places).

If you are interested in both part-time and full-time places in our school, you will need to list the school as 2 separate choices on your preferred provider list.

Once you have submitted the application to the Education Authority, you will receive a confirmation email. Please check that this confirms your actual preferences.

Timetable for Enrolment in Magherafelt Nursery School:

| STAGE 1 | |
|---|--|
| Tuesday 12 th December 2023 | Education Authority publishes admissions procedure and admissions criteria on its website. |
| Saturday 6 th January 2024 | MNS Open Morning |
| Tuesday 9 th January 2024 | Midday – Parent Portal opens for registration and preschool online applications (www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions). |
| Friday 26 th January 2024 | Midday – Parent Portal closes for applications. Applications received after this are considered ‘late’ and only processed after ‘punctual’ applications. |
| Wednesday 31 st January 2024 | By 4pm – parents to upload additional documentation (Long Birth Certificate, Benefit Verification Form if relevant). Closing of system for Stage 1 ‘late’ applications and additional information / changes of preferences in exceptional circumstances. |
| Thursday 25 th April 2024 | Parents find the outcome of their applications by email (only target age and punctual applications). This is the end of ‘Stage 1’. |
| STAGE 2 | |
| Friday 3 rd May 2024 | By 4pm – closing of system for Stage 2 applications and additional information, further preferences for unplaced children. |
| Tuesday 11 th June 2024 | Parents find the outcome of their applications online at the Portal (previously unplaced target age, late target age and all underage applications). This is the end of ‘Stage 2’. |
| STARTING AT MAGHERAFELT NURSERY SCHOOL | |
| June 2024 | Prior to admission, parents of new nursery children will be invited to a Meet and Greet session to experience the Nursery Programme. Alternatively, a Virtual Tour of the school is available on the website. |
| August 2024 | Children will have an induction ‘Stay and Play’ session in late August. |