

Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School

"Exploring, Learning and Celebrating Together"

Prospectus 2026

Welcome to Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School



A warm welcome awaits you and your child here at Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School and we thank you for your interest in our school. Our nurturing, experienced and committed team, champion and celebrate integration and the power of the child in the learning process and have served our community for over 50 years.

Our Ethos

Children are at the heart of our vision of 'Exploring, Learning and Celebrating Together'. Starting nursery school is an exciting step and in partnership with you, we aim to provide high quality teaching and learning in a nurturing and enabling environment. As we strive to embed our vision we recognise, value and celebrate the diversity of our community of learners. Through the medium of 'playful learning' across the pre-school curriculum, we hope that each child will grow in confidence and self-worth showing care for others and our world, whilst developing a love of exploration and learning. Children from all backgrounds, cultures and faiths, and of all abilities will be educated together in a warm and nurturing environment, where the NICIE 'Statement of Principles' are lived out daily.

Our Pedagogy

We believe that children are strong, competent learners, who bring their own interests, ideas and experiences to their exploration and learning. Attuned and responsive adults interact skilfully and intentionally to ensure that each child makes progress on his / her learning journey. Springboards, provocations and digital technology are interwoven into the learning experiences to ensure that our children develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a holistic way. We embrace outdoor learning and are committed to supporting children with additional and special educational needs. We are committed to progressing DE 'SEND Reform and the 'TransformED Framework', and will avail of the professional learning and capacity building afforded by these initiatives.

Our Classes

We offer 130 places with one full time class, two part time morning classes and two part time afternoon classes. With 26 places, each class is taught by a qualified and experienced Early Years Teacher. The nursery assistants have a wealth of experience in supporting young children's learning and the support staff are an intrinsic part of our school.

Our Setting offers:

- · A stimulating and challenging outdoor learning environment
- · Three modern and well-resourced playrooms
- · Resources that are reflective of diversity and difference
- · A cloak room space dedicated to each child
- · Three Cosy Rooms for small group work and 'Together Time'
- · Campfire and storytelling area
- · Woods and Willow Tunnel
- · Large mud station, water station and small world station
- The Nook and The Hive (nurture and emotional regulation spaces)
- · The Big Hall

<u>Click the link to our website</u> to learn more about the life and work of our nursery school including our Curriculum Enrichment Programme and our links with Tiny Life, Autism NI and My Earth.

Browse through our prospectus and talk to families in the locality, to give you a flavour of the 'fabric and ethos' of our school. You are also most welcome to call in to talk to the principal, or to make an appointment via the office.

Lesley Whiteside

L. Whiteside



School Information

Address:	32A Castledawson Road, Magherafelt, BT45 6PA
Telephone:	028 79632981
Email:	info@magherafeltins.magherafelt.ni.sch.uk
Website:	www.magherafeltintegratednurseryschool.com
Facebook:	search 'Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School' and 'like' to receive updates
School Classification:	Controlled Integrated Nursery School Education Authority – Locality South West
Age Range of Pupils:	2 – 4 years
Admissions Number:	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

Morning Club

We offer a Morning Club to allow parents going to work to leave children into school from 8.30 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 Integrated 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 an admissions number of 130 children.

On 1st September 2025 we transformed to 'controlled integrated status' and opened the 25-26 school year as 'Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School'.

Starting nursery school is an exciting step and we aim to make it a homely and enriching 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 Integrated Nursery School in the area, our collective aim is to serve our children and families in our local and wider community so that all children have the opportunity to avail of high quality and holistic integrated preschool education.

A School Connected to the Local Community

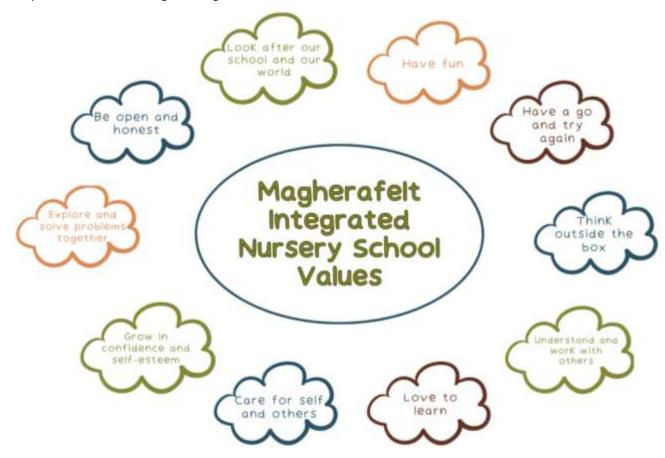
We seek to ensure that every child has access to equitable educational opportunities that are inclusive and adapted to respective cultures, backgrounds and abilities. We encourage children to be caring towards and understanding of each other. We enjoy good relationships with our local schools and day care centres. We are a feeder school for up to 25 local primary schools across all sectors and have a well-established transition programme in place for when our children move on to compulsory education.

We work closely with parents and multiagency professionals to support the learning of our children. We enjoy getting out and about in our local community and are part of a range of learning communities across nursery and integrated education fields.

Each year, we choose a local charity linked to the needs of our children, and our parents and children engage fully in our charity programme.

Vision, Values and Ethos

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



The Nursery School Team



Mrs L Whiteside Principal and Teacher



Mrs L McGill Teacher



Mrs C Quinn Teacher



Mrs D Campbell Teacher



Mrs G McCullagh Nursery Assistant



Mrs A McLernon Nursery Assistant



Mrs L Gilmour Nursery Assistant



Mrs K McCreesh Nursery Assistant



Mrs J Walker Senior Clerical Officer



Mr M Whiteside Building Supervisor



Mrs F Young Cleaner / Morning Club General Assistant

The nursery school has a highly qualified and experienced team of teachers and nursery assistants and support staff, 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
- Making learning irresistible and meaningful
- 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
- Supporting children to interact with and to understand each other

'Looking After Our World' Programme - My Earth

Our Eco programme is championed by Mrs McGill and the children's Eco committees. Working together, they explore 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.

We care deeply about our learning community and our environment, and seek to share these values with our children as they explore, learn and celebrate together. Mrs McGill recently completed her Level 3 'Outdoors Thinking' Award and this drives our outdoor provision and learning.













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 voluntary 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. Wee Critters, Mr Hullabaloo, Fit Minds (with Coach Ronán and Fitzy Bear), Jo Jingles and more.

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 our children. The themes and resources are thoughtfully selected, and our provision is challenging and designed to make learning irresistible and fun for our learners. Our children inspire the play and the educators scaffold the learning and add the language enrichment. Visitors are also invited into school to enrich and extend the learning experiences of our children.







Settling-In

We have a well-established and child-centred settling-in period. This progresses smoothly with most children settled within the first two weeks. One or two children sometimes need a little extra support and the teacher will help to develop a plan for this. 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 our school offering a stimulating and challenging learning landscape for our 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. 'Loose parts' and 'provision' add value to the challenging outdoor learning experiences. Learning in the 'Great Outdoors' is an integral part of the educational programme and our 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, explore, and get messy! It is our view that there is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing!











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 digital skills, the following areas are progressed:



The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has launched its 'Empowering Improvement – Framework for Inspection', and the team is working to explore and embed this framework in Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School. (Click here).

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 our children are key and staff will use these to engage them 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 have opportunities to meet with the class teacher to discuss their child's progress and will receive a transition report before the child starts primary school. Parents / carers are welcome to be fully involved in the life and work of our school, through volunteering, and supporting the curriculum enrichment programme.













Learning Experiences

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. Our 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, you 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 our children the opportunity to engage in exuberant play and to develop a healthy lifestyle and positive attitude to exercise.













Getting Ready to Learn and 3+ Health Review

Our 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 Stay and Play Sessions, our Big Bedtime Read Event in Term 1 and our Family Picnic in Term 3.

Magherafelt Integrated 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, and then both parent and child will meet with our named School Health Visitor in the pre-school setting to discuss the questionnaire and their child's development.

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 our children
- Talking to our 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

Excellent provision for all children's care and needs.

The outdoor play area is superb and my child loves to be outdoors as much as possible which is very refreshing to see a school with such a ethos for this

The opportunities that the kids receive are brilliant and such a solid start for their education

A happy, nurturing environment Staff are fantastic and go above and beyond to ensure the safety and well being of the children, their care and attention is exception from drop off to pick upl

Sharing Information Between Home and School

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

- Our website <u>www.magherafeltintegratednurseryschool.com</u> is packed with key information about Magherafelt Integrated 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 receive regular posts of what your child is learning in school as well as links to curriculum enriching experiences.
- We add monthly videos and community information to our Facebook page.
- 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.

Information we gather about your child is carefully 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. We will support your child with their skills and independence in this area.

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 Integrated Nursery School will work towards creating an ethos that contributes to the care, safety and well-being of our 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 and carers feel welcome and comfortable to approach staff; and in return, you 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 and is available on our <u>website</u>. 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 our setting.

We aim to provide a high adult-child ratio and to maintain close supervision of indoor and outdoor play zones. We encourage our 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, our 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. Our children's wellbeing and health and safety are carefully nurtured throughout our school. The child is 'paramount' in our pastoral care and safeguarding policies and procedures.



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 play and work in community with each other. To this end, we ensure that:

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



Children are encouraged to be respectful of each other, to be responsible for their actions, and to agree 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 and regulation programme. Using the 'Calm Plan' toolkit, the staff are more in tune with their own emotional regulation and that of our children. The school also

has a bank of resources to help children with their emotional regulation. 'Feel Fit Fridays' encourage both staff and children to have fun, try new things and connect with others. Mr Hullabaloo, and Ronan and Fitzy Bear (from Fit Minds Coaching), are key parts of this programme. We are also part of the Education Authority's 'Being Well, Doing Well programme and create an action plan for our learners and leaders each term.



Children with Additional Physical / Medical / Learning Needs



Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School recognises that the integration of children with additional and special needs (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, and that some children need a more specialised setting to meet their learning potential. Children should be educated in the right place with the right team and the right provision to enable them to reach their full potential. We are working towards our Autism NI Impact Award. We have 1 member of staff certified BSL Level 1, and 1 working towards this qualification.

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 maymake 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 willfollow the stages of the Special Needs Code of Practice and will us the Graduated Response Framework and School Provision Map to make provision for each child. 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 is supported by a Local Impact Team and has a named Educational Psychologist from the EA Children and Young People Services who provides generic and specific advice. 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, who support children at Stages 2 and 3 of the SEND Code of Practice.

Magherafelt Integrated 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 ensureeffective 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 strategic direction and ethos of the school, 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 timely, 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 will entrust your child's early education to the team in Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School. You will find further information on our school website, or ask about our school in the local community. 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.

Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School

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Key Dates for Admissions in September 2026

10th December 2025	Admissions criteria for Pre-schools published on the EA website, click here.		
3rd January 2026	Magherafelt Nursery School Open Morning, click here to register.		
7th January - 21st January 2026 (by midday)	Stage 1: EA Connect opens via the EANI website for online applications and submitting verification/supporting documents. There is no immediate rush to get on the syster - the Portal is open from midday 7th to midday 21st January 2026. There is NO first-come, first-served during this time - all applications received by midday 21st January are considered punctual. Target age AND Underage applications are welcome at this time.		
The application	Register with EA Connect, then start a new application. When you add your school preferences, please note Magherafelt Integrated Nursery School is listed as TWO providers - FT (full time places) and PT (part time places) - you need to apply for BOTH as separate providers if you want to be considered for both. When you get a confirmation email from the EA after submitting the form, please check this carefully to ensure it is exactly what you have applied for. If you don't get this email or you made a mistake, contact the Helpdesk. If you have selected PT as any of your preferences, we will send you a google form after the application closing date, to complete with your preference of AM/PM. We will do our best to accommodate this but there is no guarantee. This will go by email to the address stated on your application - please use an email address you check regularly and keep an eye on your junk email folder.		
Submitting evidence	During the application you will have been asked to upload your child's birth certificate and any other documents e.g. Benefit Verification if you have ticked 'Social Disadvantage' during the application on the Portal. You can do this from a phone/laptop/tablet/PC and upload a photo/scan/PDF of the documentation. This evidence must be uploaded by 4pm on 26th January.		
23rd March 2026	Notification of (Stage 1) outcome for Target Age application via email where one is held or by letter. This is the end of Stage 1.		
23rd March - 1st April 2026 by 4pm	Stage 2: Additional preferences for child(ren) not selected in Stage 1; New 1st time Target age application or pre-school application related to a Late P1 Deferral New 1st time Underage application (Treated as late) Additional preference from an applicant who declined a Stage 1 offer (treated as late).		
19th May 2026	Notification of (Stage 2) outcome (includes Underage application) via email where one is held or by letter.		

June 2026 - Meet and Greet Afternoon in MINS Last week in August 2026 – Stay and Play Dates for New Starts

EANI Admissions Helpdesk: Tel 028 9047 0177 or email preschooladmissions@eani.org.uk