



Dear Parents & Guardians

I am delighted to introduce you to the life and work of our school. The decision about which school is the right one for you and your child can be a difficult one to make. I hope this prospectus will help you make that choice and give you a valuable insight into the opportunities we provide here.

Harrison Nursery School is a progressive and vibrant school with a reputation for excellence – ‘The quality of education provided by this nursery school is outstanding’ (Education and Training Inspectorate, Jan 2015). It is our prime aim to ensure that all our pupils are happy and learning effectively. We recognise the important role of parents in supporting this learning, particularly with very young children, so we aim to foster open, positive relationships with parents at all times.

Please take some time to visit our school website and I would encourage prospective parents to visit our school. Should you have any further queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to welcoming you and your child in the very near future.

‘Harrison Nursery School ... where learning is fun’.

Yours sincerely

Jill Hunter

Mrs Jill Hunter

Principal



School Ethos

The ethos, or distinctive character and atmosphere of Harrison Nursery School will promote the all round development of the children within a caring environment, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

At Harrison Nursery school all pupils are offered a curriculum which –

- meets their physical, social, emotional and cognitive needs at their particular stage of development.
- motivates, challenges and stimulates them.
- is broad and balanced and helps children prepare for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

We aim to safeguard our children's safety and wellbeing at all times.

Our Vision

We, the staff of Harrison Nursery School, believe in promoting the personal, social and emotional, and academic goals desirable for all our pupils.

We aim to provide a caring, working and happy atmosphere in which every child reaches his or her full potential.

We believe in the dignity and worth of each child and their family in our school.

We wish to promote in all our pupils a caring, responsible attitude towards each other and to the environment. Hopefully these values will be carried on into their adult life.

We aim to promote individual empowerment and values such as self-esteem, openness, honesty, tolerance, respect and caring for self and others.



About Us

Harrison Nursery school offers learning for children between the ages of three and four years. Children come from a wide area in and around Lurgan and from both sides of the community.

The school was officially opened in 1975 and extended in 2005, with the addition of 2 quiet rooms, disabled toilet facilities, utility room and staff room.

The staff consists of two qualified teachers with specialist nursery training and two nursery assistants. Additional classroom assistance may be provided for children with special educational needs. We also have a secretary, cook, kitchen assistant and building supervisor.

The enrolment number is 52. There are two full time classes with 26 children in each. These run daily from 8.40am to 1.10pm.



Starting school for the first time ...

Starting school is a very important time for you, your child and the school. We all need to work together to make the transition smooth and problem free.

Following allocation and acceptance of places you and your child are invited to a play afternoon in school. This will provide you with the opportunity to meet the staff, familiarise yourselves with the environment and to meet other children and their parents. This visit is followed by additional visits to enrol at the end of August and an introductory information evening for parents/carers.

We have a staggered entry system and all children will have started school by the middle of September. Children stay in school until 12 noon during September, 12.30pm during October and 1.10pm from the start of November.

Classroom organisation

The school is organised in one large playroom and we operate an open plan approach to teaching all the children. This means that the 52 children have contact with all members of staff. The children are separated into 2 classes of 26 children and each class group will be with their own teacher for dinner time, story, music sessions and other particular activities which the teacher may wish to organise with her class from time to time. This approach enables us to provide the children with a wide range of activities as well as allowing us to provide a greater degree of continuity and consistency of care and support.



A day in the life of Harrison Nursery School ...

8.40am Children begin arriving for school

8.40 – 11.50am Free play.

During this time the staff are involved in working with the children, supporting and extending their play. Children may choose to play inside or out and may move from one to the other. A snack table is available where children may help themselves to milk or water from jugs and something to eat once during the morning. Staff may be involved in working with a small group of children at a planned task e.g. baking wheaten bread. There may be an outing to the library or other local place, or a visitor may come to school to talk to the children.

11.50am Story/music time.

12.30pm Dinner – during dinner children sit with their own teacher and a nursery assistant. We all eat dinner together.

From 1.00pm Children involved in play outdoors and indoors, followed by helping with tidy up.

We open the door at 1.10pm. Parents/carers are encouraged to come into the classroom or through to the garden to collect their child.



Curriculum

We provide an education appropriate to the needs of three and four year olds. It contributes to the physical growth, the social and emotional experience and to the aesthetic and intellectual development of each child. We do not see nursery education merely as a preparation for more formal schooling. It is an opportunity to provide a stimulating yet secure environment in which children's individual difference and needs can be recognised and met, so that all aspects of their growth and development are promoted.

Each child is given the opportunity to –

- settle smoothly into the nursery environment
- enjoy good relationships with other children and with adults
- develop confidence, independence and self-discipline
- use his/her initiative
- play alone or as part of a group
- respect others and acquire social skills
- experience success and enjoy the consequent satisfaction of achievement
- develop at his/her own rate through challenging progressive play
- express himself/herself and be creative through the exploration of a wide variety of materials and equipment
- experience the pleasure of books, stories, poetry, song, drama, movement and music
- experience the wonder of science and the natural world
- make an informed choice from a range of activities and materials available
- have fun – children who are not happy will not learn effectively



The learning environment provided takes account of the child's needs for-

- active involvement
- sensory exploration
- discovery
- creativity
- interaction with others
- opportunity to learn and practise skills

Learning activities

We have a wide curriculum designed to give each child as broad and as rich an experience as possible. Throughout the year children are given the opportunity to take part in a range of activities, including the following –

- Outdoor and indoor gardening including growing our own vegetables
- Cooking and baking
- Visits to the local libraries, Pantomime, Santa's grotto, Harrison Hollows (our own woodland school onsite), fire station etc.
- Walking to the local shop to purchase groceries
- Visits from our community policy officer, road safety officer, local musicians etc.
- Listening to and taking part in music, song, poetry, stories, movement and drama
- Participating in a concert at Christmas and in the summer term
- Imaginative play in a variety of situations e.g. house, shop, hospital, office, post office, vet etc.
- Physical play with a variety of climbing and balancing equipment, wheeled toys, ball games, large construction blocks etc.
- Working with natural materials such as clay, sand, water and wood.

The activities listed above are only a snapshot of those available.



'The staff have a very good shared understanding of the learning to be promoted through the play and the daily routines and all areas of the pre-school curriculum are very well catered for both indoors and outdoors. The staff are highly skilled in supporting the children to progress in their learning and development; they listen carefully to the children, model language, support appropriate behaviours and use appropriate questioning to extend their thinking. Excellent individual support is provided for children identified with additional learning needs.'

(Education and Training Inspectorate, Jan 2015)



Let's get Physical

Physical activity is important for enhancing the co-ordination and motor skills of young children. We play outside every day unless it is very wet. Even then, we take groups of children out with raincoats and umbrellas so that they can experience the weather at first hand.

In our garden area there are opportunities for ball play, climbing, pedalling, balancing, sand play, running etc. as well as gardening, imaginative play, drawing, construction, woodwork, handling books etc.

We have a large covered area which contains our sandpit and various other play activities. We emphasise the importance of movement and exercise both through play and by taking the children for walks in the grounds of Lurgan Junior High School and to other places of interest e.g. the library, Armagh Planetarium, Oxford Island, Gosford Forest Park etc.



Being creative

We see art for young children as a pleasurable, fun experience which allows them to express themselves freely. Children have the opportunity to experiment with various materials and tools. We use an extensive range of paints, drawing materials, fabric, card, papers, junk etc.

We believe that young children can develop many other essential skills such as language, early maths and technology and the social skills associated with sharing materials, tools, space etc. through their involvement in art related activities.

While we recognise that for young children the process is more important than the product, we also recognise that we can build children's confidence and self-esteem by appreciating their achievements and the beauty of their work.



Healthy Eating

It is our policy to provide healthy, nutritious food in school and to make children aware of the importance of always maintaining a healthy diet. This policy is promoted in the following ways –

- We discuss with the children which foods are healthy and which are not and why it is important to eat healthy foods
- Children are involved in baking and cooking activities which helps them understand the whole process and realise that healthy food can be fun
- We liaise with our cook to ensure that the children are being provided with healthy choices at lunchtime

During the morning a healthy snack is made available to the children. Each child can go to the snack table once during the morning where they have the opportunity to sit with other children and chat while they are eating. They are encouraged to pour their own milk or water and may choose from a selection of healthy snacks e.g. fresh fruit (available daily), crackers, toast, wheaten bread etc.

A meal is served in the middle of the day in a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. The meal is served by the four full-time members of staff who each sit with a group of children and eat with them. Nutritious, balanced meals are prepared by our own cook. Children are encouraged to try whatever is available but may themselves choose what to eat. In keeping with our healthy eating policy we always have fresh fruit as well as a convenience dessert such as shortbread, yoghurt or ice-cream available and children choose what they want to eat.

If your child has particular dietary needs relating to a medical condition e.g. diabetes, coeliac disease, lactose intolerance or specific allergies etc., these can be catered for. The Principal should be informed of any such conditions at the time of admission.



Arrangements for children with Special/Additional Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs are integrated into the school as far as possible. An additional classroom assistant may be employed to help with any statemented children at the discretion of the Education Authority.

Our approach to children with additional needs is essentially the same as to children who have not been identified as such. Every effort is made to establish as clearly as possible the special individual needs of each child and respond to them.

Regardless of the type or severity of the needs, much emphasis is placed on integrating all children as fully as possible into the whole group. Through detailed observation, the staff structure and modify the curriculum so that the experiences offered to the children match their level of development.

At all times the staff will liaise and co-operate with any other professionals who may be involved with the child. It is felt that a multi-disciplinary approach is necessary if special needs are to be addressed effectively. We liaise on a regular basis with the Child Development Clinic and therapists in order to support the children in our care.



Pastoral Care Arrangements

It is our policy to do our best to ensure that the children enrolled in Harrison Nursery School and their families receive the care and consideration to which they are entitled. We aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, in which all our pupils can learn and develop to their full potential. It is our policy to treat all children and their families with respect and consideration at all times.

School Discipline

The policy of the school is to reinforce positive attitudes and encourage self-discipline, self-esteem and respect for other people and for property. If we experience on-going problems with a child's behaviour we consult with parents on how this might best be managed. We have various behaviour management strategies in place and we call on the support of the Education Authority if necessary. Parents whose child's behaviour continues to adversely affect the safety and wellbeing of other children may be asked to remove their child from school.

Charging and Remissions Policy

Nursery education is free to all children. However the school meal available is charged at the current rate and we also ask for a small monthly contribution towards snack food and sundries. Some families may be entitled to free school meals. Application forms for this are available from the Principal or the Education Authority.

Child Protection Policy

We have in place a Child Protection Policy which is circulated to parents at the time of admission. The aim of this policy is to provide procedures and safeguards to ensure that we are providing a safe and secure environment for all children and staff.



School Uniform

We have a uniform which all children are asked to wear. This consists of a red sweatshirt, navy poloshirt and navy jogging bottoms. The sweatshirt and poloshirt are available through the school.

Parents are asked to ensure that all uniform items and clothing including coats, hats, gloves, shoes etc. are labelled with the child's name. For reasons of safety, ease of movement and independence all children are asked to wear lightweight shoes (e.g. trainers) with rough, flexible soles. Laces are not permitted. Children may have to change shoes when dressing up or in order to wear boots in the sandpit or garden and we encourage them to be independent and manage this themselves.

School Hours and Holidays

School hours are as follows –

8.40am – 12 noon during September

8.40am – 12.30 pm during October

8.40am – 1.10 pm from November onwards. We operate a flexible opening and home time in order to ease congestion in the entrance hall and in the car park.

A list of school holidays will be provided at the beginning of each school year.

Mid-Academic Year Changes

If a place becomes available during the year it will be filled in accordance with the admissions criteria.

Visiting our School

In conclusion, we hope you have found the contents of our Prospectus useful and informative. If you would like to call into the school and take a look around, we will be more than pleased to meet you and answer any further questions you may have concerning our school and what we aim to achieve for your child. Please contact the Principal to make an appointment.

