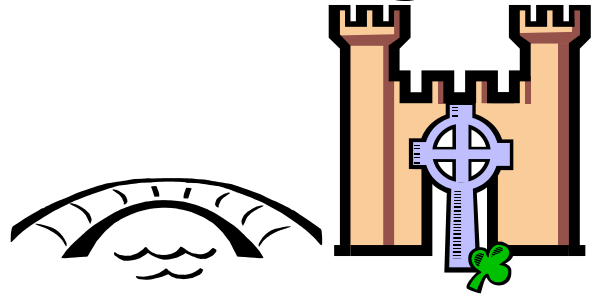
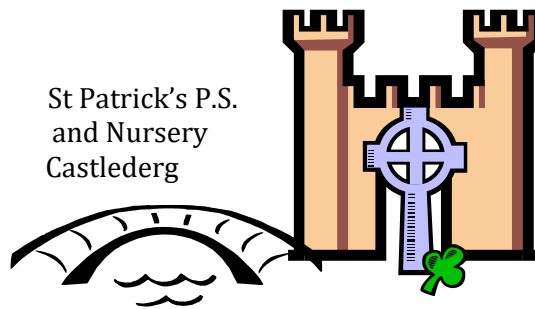


# **St. Patrick's Nursery Unit Castlederg**



## **Nursery School Prospectus 2026-27**

73 Castlefin Rd  
Castlederg  
Co Tyrone BT81 7EE



Tel 028816 71458 Fax 028816 79821 email: [info@stpatricks.castlederg.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stpatricks.castlederg.ni.sch.uk)  
Website [www.stpatrickspscastlederg.co.uk](http://www.stpatrickspscastlederg.co.uk)  
Faith Life Learning

**January 2026,**

Dear Parent/s

Many thanks for the interest you have shown in applying for a Nursery place for your child at our school.

Please find enclosed a Nursery School Prospectus and an application form for nursery.

Admission Arrangements – A Guide for Parents Booklet can be downloaded from [www.eani.org.uk](http://www.eani.org.uk). If your child is due to start Nursery in September i.e. born on or between 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2022 and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024 please complete the online enrolment form carefully at <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/pupil-applications-and-grants/admissions>

Please note that proof of address and a birth certificate may be required. If this is requested by the school the letterhead from this information will be copied and returned to you. One of the following can be included -

- A bank or building society statement
- A utilities bill i.e. electric, telephone, TV licence etc.
- Documentation regarding child benefit
- A child's medical card

When completing the application form please read the admissions criteria carefully and include any of the following information if this applies to your child –

- Are you in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance?
- Has your child any significant special need?
- Has your child any special home circumstances?
- Has your child any brothers/sister enrolled at the nursery or primary school.
- Are they the first or only child in the family?

If you are in receipt of any benefits, a benefit forms must be stamped at your local social security office. By doing this more funding is provided for the nursery school.

Late applications cannot be considered if the school is over subscribed. Children currently attending St Patrick's Nursery Unit do not need to forward a Birth Certificate. If you need help with your online application please ask Mrs. E Shelley Nursery Teacher or Mr. B Mc Gurk Principal for assistance.

**All forms and documentation must be completed online by 12 noon by 21st January 2026.**

Yours sincerely

Brian McGurk Principal

### Introduction

This Prospectus is intended to give you a brief overall view of the education provided in St Patrick's Nursery Unit Castlederg. The Prospectus outlines the general structure and organisation of our school. The nursery school is linked to our primary school and shares much of its policy and practice.

### Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors is responsible for the management of the school and meets at regularly throughout the year. Governors are elected or appointed to represent different interests in the school. A new Board of Governors is being reconstituted for the period 2024 – 2027.

Chairperson:	Dr. O. Ramsey EA
Vice – Chairperson	Mrs. P Mc Anea
Secretary/Principal	Mr. B. McGurk

Trustees:	Fr. P Fraser PP
	Mrs. Eithne Gallagher

Parent Representative: Mr. Tim Harney

Teacher Representative: Mrs. E.Shelley

### **Nursery School Aims and Mission Statement**

St Patrick's PS Nursery Unit is a school which seeks to provide a safe and caring environment for the whole school community.

We seek to provide to educate all our pupils to be caring, tolerant and responsible members of their local community by establishing close links with the home, the parish and the wider community.

We believe in the importance of respect and positive discipline centred on Christian values.

All pupils in our care are entitled to be taught using a variety of teaching styles a broad and balanced curriculum, in a variety of environments which develops their academic, intellectual, creative, social, emotional and physical abilities.

The school always strives for self-improvement and seeks to be a progressive, supportive and educative community.

### School Profile

The Nursery Unit admitted its first pupils in September 1998. The Nursery School building was built in 1998. Creatively designed - circular in shape, it is situated on the school grounds but has separate playgrounds and access it through intercom at nursery or school front entrance. There was a new playground installed in the nursery in 2022 and a newly installed playhouse and digging areas part funded by a generous donation by our parents and parent support group.

The Nursery Unit caters for 52 children in the age range 2-4. Currently there is 1 senior teacher at the school assisted by 2 classroom assistants. The School offers 2 Part time classes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Our professional teaching staff strongly believes in the importance of early years education to the foundation of future learning. In the Nursery Unit we aim to foster the development of skills, attitudes and concepts in a

stimulating environment, which, hopefully, will enable your child to become an increasingly caring, responsible, independent and thinking member of our society. To this end we strive, with your help, to ensure that your child receives a loving, secure and enjoyable first experience of education, in which an atmosphere of joy, wonder and excitement is cultivated.

Finally, the nursery has a cross community ethos and we invite applications from all, regardless of culture or religious belief.

### Importance of parents

We firmly believe that Nursery Education is a valuable and advantageous learning experience for a young child. It should be seen as an extension of the home where the boy/girl will further experience the attention and care of the family.

Close links between you, the parents, and the staff will benefit the child. It is important that parents support the work of the nursery and keep staff informed of any changes in the child's needs. We operate an "open door" policy, are aware of the parental role in the formation of the child, and intend to build upon that.

We aim to provide a well-planned curriculum and pleasant environment, which will help all children in our care to realise their potential. By providing a secure environment which is welcoming, pleasing and supportive we would hope to witness the children become increasingly self-confident, developing a strong sense of self-worth and becoming happy and confident young people.

### Enrolment

The Nursery school caters for 52 part time places. Currently there are 32 children enrolled in the Nursery School.

### Staffing Complement

Principal: Mr B. Mc Gurk

Vice Principal: Mr. A Doherty

Teacher in charge of Nursery Education: Mrs. Elizabeth Shelley

Classroom Assistants: Miss. M Mackey (Nursery Assistant)  
Mrs. M McDermott

Clerical Administration Officer: Mrs. S Molloy

Caretaker: Mrs V Harvey

Cleaning Staff: Mrs B Mc Garvey

### ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Parents considering sending their children to St Patrick's Nursery unit are invited to contact the school at any time during the school day, and talk to the Principal or Nursery Teacher. An appointment can be made by contacting the school office at 02881671458 or by email at [info@stpatricks.castlederg.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stpatricks.castlederg.ni.sch.uk)

The admissions arrangements as set out on the Education Authority EA website and on Pre-School Application online form will be applied. The online admissions portal is available at <https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/pupil-applications-and-grants/ea-connect>

The Principal or Mrs. Elizabeth Shelley Nursery Teacher will assist any parent in any aspect of the admission process or the completion of forms.

### Numbers of Applicants/ Admissions to St Patrick's Nursery Unit

	2023	2024	2025
Number of Applicants	60	34	32
Number of Admissions	52	34	32

### Parent Teacher Meetings

Parents of children starting Nursery are invited to meet the Nursery Teacher individually prior to commencing their education at induction in June, to discuss settling in, look at the pre-school curriculum and to think about ways to help their child to learn at nursery.

Parents meet with the Nursery teacher in the first term to discuss settling in and identify any additional needs. At the end of the year parents again meet with the Nursery Teacher to discuss their child's progress during the school year, to complete the transition form and to provide feedback to staff on their child's experience at nursery. A formal report is issued at the end of June. Teachers are free to discuss any aspects of their child's education with the nursery teacher where possible before or after nursery class or if a longer time is needed by appointment. There is an open door policy at nursery.

### CURRICULUM CONTENT AND ORGANISATION

The staff aim to provide experiences that stimulate, challenge and support learning appropriate to the abilities and needs of your child, whilst also providing opportunities for social and personal development.

We build upon the learning experiences that have already been provided in the home by you as a parent or any previous child care centre experience. Subsequently, the teaching staff plan, organise and structure the curriculum that is based upon the practical activities and interests of your child. This nursery curriculum is essential in laying a strong foundation for the work your child will meet at the foundation stage in primary education.

The school delivers a broad and balanced curriculum. This curriculum is based on the current N.I Pre-School curriculum. Parents can access information on the nursery/foundation stage curriculum on <https://ceea.org.uk/pre-school/curricular-guidance-pre-school-education>

There is a link from our school website. We believe that all children have an entitlement to all areas of the curriculum where possible.

### NEEDS OF THE PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

Young children require:

- a safe and stimulating supervised environment where they can feel happy and secure;
- opportunities to investigate, satisfy their curiosity, explore the environment inside and outside the playroom, extend their sense of wonder, experience success and develop a positive attitude towards learning;
- appropriate periods of time for learning through sustained involvement in play;
- interaction with sensitive and understanding adults who promote their sense of well-being and extend their learning and development; and
- adults who will treat them as individuals, support them and sensitively participate in their play.

Given these needs, it follows that young children require a curriculum that:

- provides equality of opportunity; promotes their physical, social, emotional, creative and intellectual development; and ensures that they feel included, secure and valued;
- is planned, purposeful, flexible and allows them to follow their own interests and develop at their own pace;
- is enjoyable and motivates, challenges and stimulates them by building on their natural curiosity and desire to experiment;
- promotes active learning and helps them begin to develop the skills and dispositions that they will need to be life-long learners;
- is broad and balanced, building on their previous learning and allowing them to make choices and decisions; and
- provides them with opportunities, through play and other experiences, to develop the learning associated with:

In the nursery children learn through play. Children are allowed to choose freely from a variety of activities, but are encouraged by staff to experience the full range of play materials over time. This will enable them to grow and develop in the six areas of our curriculum as listed below –

- **The Arts**
- **Language Development**
- **Early Mathematical Experiences**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Physical Development and Movement**
- **The World Around Us**

We believe that the children should learn by experience and should be taught a range of skills to improve their ability to problem solve.

The staff work as a team in planning and delivering the curriculum. All teachers have received key training in the core elements of the curriculum and child protection.

### Learning By Experience

Within the Nursery Unit we will provide a wide range of equipment and apparatus, both indoor and outdoor. Learning will be activity based and in groups so that the development of social/interactive skills will take place alongside basic learning.

As the year progresses we will organise visits to local places of interest - local library, Sure-Start, the primary school, leisure centre, other schools, etc. All these visits will be properly organised and supervised.

Children will be given the opportunity to meet people who help them, people they will meet/see on a regular basis.

Good Hygiene habits will be developed through practice or personal cleanliness - washing hands after toilet, outdoor play, before meals, etc. Changing footwear for outdoor play is necessary. Healthy eating habits will be encouraged through a variety of wholesome snacks - yoghurt, fruit, milk and biscuits, tea and toast etc. (Weekly cost £5.00 approx. which also includes all trips and any other costs.)

**NB:** It is important that you inform us of any allergies your child may have - dairy products, peanut allergies, etc. It is essential we be informed of any medical/physical problems.

### Making a Complaint

Parents may request a copy of school policy on any curriculum area or aspect area. The school will supply such a policy within five working days and in the event of any complaint the Principal will guide them through the appropriate complaints procedure. The complaints policy is published on our school website

[www.stpatrickspscastlederg.co.uk](http://www.stpatrickspscastlederg.co.uk)

### School Uniform

Children are encouraged to wear school uniform at all times during school. These items can be bought locally –

St Patrick's Nursery Uniform consists of -  
Red St Patrick's Nursery sweatshirt  
Navy polo shirt  
Navy elasticated tracksuit bottoms  
Trainers/shoes, preferably with Velcro fastenings

We encourage children to become independent especially with toilet routine; therefore belt, buttons, buckles, braces and dungarees can be difficult for children of this age to manage.  
Please mark all the children's clothing carefully.

In the interests of health and safety children are not encouraged to wear large amounts of jewellery. Girls and boys may wear stud earrings only.

### Pastoral Care and Child Protection

The school has devised policies in accordance with DENI circular 1999/10 and 2003/13. Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection. The most relevant guidance to which organisations must have regard is contained with Circular 1999/10 (Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection)

Circular 2012/19 (Disclosure and Barring Arrangements)

Circular 2006/06 (Child protection – Recruitment of People to Work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings)

Circular 2017/04 – Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools.

The designated teacher for child protection is Mrs E Shelley Nursery Teacher and the deputy-designated teacher for child protection for the nursery is Mr. Adrian Doherty Vice-Principal. Any concerns regarding any pupil can be made to the Nursery teacher, the Designated or Deputy Designated Teacher at any time. Once reported, the school must follow the guidelines outlined in DENI Circular Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools 2017/04.

Members of staff are regularly briefed on Child Protection, Safety and Discipline issues.

### The School Day

School begins at 9.00am.

Morning Group - 9.00am – 11.30am

Afternoon Group - 12.30pm – 3.00pm

### Special Educational Needs - SEN

The School has a number of children who have a particular special educational need. The SEN policy is kept under constant review. The nursery has access to a number of skilled teachers, a school SENCO, and also receives Peripatetic Support from a number of key health care professionals.

The school seeks to

- Develop all children to their full potential
- To identify children with a SEN at an early stage and to provide suitable support where necessary
- To allow all children have full access to the NI Pre-School Curriculum
- To maintain and update a SEN Register in accordance with the NI Code of Practice for SEN
- To liaise with parents, teachers and the appropriate agencies
- To provide adequate Education Plans to meet the child's Individual Needs

### School Discipline

The school prides itself on the professionalism of its teachers and the high standards of behaviour of the children. The positive ethos of the discipline policy highlights the children's successes and requires the support of parents to achieve these high standards.

The ethos of the school creates an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. The staff strive at all times to raise the self-esteem of the pupils through its Pastoral care policy and Discipline Policy.

### Charities/Fundraising

The school continues to participate in a number of fund raising activities including for the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul, Trocaire and School Funds.

## THE SCHOOL'S CHARGING AND REMISSION POLICY

### Charging Policy

It is the policy of the School to charge for: -

- a) Daily Snacks
- b) Voluntary Contributions

The Board of Governors reserves the right to seek voluntary contributions from parents or others in support of any school activity or for the benefit of the school. Pupils whose parents are either unwilling or unable to make such contributions will not be treated differently. However, the school reserves the right to cancel planned activities if the voluntary contributions are insufficient to meet the costs of the planned activity.



St Patrick's Primary School Nursery Unit  
73 Castlefin Road  
Castleberg  
BT81 7EE

Voluntary Maintained Nursery Unit  
Admissions No: 52 (Part-time)  
Nursery Opening Times – Morning Session: 9:00am – 11:30am  
Afternoon Session: 12:30pm – 3:00pm

Principal: Mr B McGurk  
Chair of Board of Governors: Dr O Ramsey

Telephone: 028 8167 1458  
Fax: 028 8167 9821  
E-mail: [info@stpatricks.castleberg.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stpatricks.castleberg.ni.sch.uk)

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### Respective Functions of the Board of Governors and the Principal in relation to admissions.

The Board of Governors has delegated to an admissions Sub-Committee the task of selecting pupils for admission to the Nursery Unit. The selection so made will have no effect until approved by the Board of Governors. The Sub-Committee will consist of three voting members of the Board of Governors and the Principal.

Children who are not normally resident in Northern Ireland will not be considered for places until all children who live in Northern Ireland have been considered. The Board of Governors have determined that, in the event of there being more applicants than places available the following criteria will be applied, in the order set down, to select children for the available places:

### Admissions Criteria

A timetable of pre-school admissions procedures setting out the dates by which an application is to be submitted is available at [www.eani.org.uk/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/admissions) under 'Pre-School Admissions'. During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered.

The application procedure opens on 07 January 2026 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 21 January 2026 at 12noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 21 January 2026 will be treated as a late application.

As the pre-school admissions procedure is in two stages the timetable also specifies the relevant dates at Stage 2 which will determine if an application is to be considered as punctual or late.

### Statutory Criteria

- 1 Children from socially disadvantaged circumstances in their final pre-school year who were born:
  - on or between 2 July 2022 and 1 July 2023 (inclusive) and whose parents have not exercised their right to defer their child's entry to primary school; or,
  - on or between 1 April 2022 and 1 July 2023 (inclusive) or were due to be born on or between those dates but were born earlier; and,
    - have not attended or are not currently attending a funded pre-school setting under the Pre-School Education Programme as a target aged child; and,
    - that child's parent has completed a request to defer their child starting P1 until September 2027.

**Note: Children from 'socially disadvantaged circumstances' means a child whose parent has an entitlement to (i) Income Support, or (ii) Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or (iii) Income related Employment and Support Allowance, or (iv) Universal Credit. When parents apply for places for their child on this basis they must provide Benefit Verification to confirm that they have an entitlement. The application procedure for Pre-School will outline how Benefit Verification can be submitted.**

2. Children not from socially disadvantaged circumstances (as defined above) who are in their final pre-school year (as defined by Criterion 1).

### Sub Criteria.

In the event of oversubscription on the application of the above criteria the following sub-criteria will be applied in the order set down:

- a) Children currently on the "at risk" register maintained by the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
- b) Children who in the opinion of the Board of Governors have special home circumstances, considered in the following order:
  - a child who has one or both parents deceased;
  - a child whose parent has a serious long-term illness – medical evidence required;
  - children who are twins (or other multiple birth);
  - a child from a family of three or more pre-school age children.
- c) Children who have a child of the family currently enrolled in St Patrick's Primary School/ St Patrick's Nursery Unit Castleberg.

- d) Children who are first members of a family.
- e) Other children.

### **Tie-Breaker**

In the event of more applicants for places available, the final selection will be taken on the basis of the closest distance from their own home address to the entrance gates of the school, by recognised public routeway.

### **Non-statutory criteria**

**Note: Applications falling under Criterion 3 are processed only during Stage 2 of the admissions process, after final pre-school year (Statutory 1 and 2) applications.**

- 3. Children who were born:
  - on or between 1 April 2022 - 1 July 2023 (inclusive), or were due to be born on or between those dates but were born earlier; and have attended or are currently attending a funded pre-school setting under the Pre-School Education Programme as a target aged (not penultimate aged) child; and that child's parent has completed a request to defer their child starting P1, or
  - on or between 2 July 2023 and 1 July 2024 (inclusive); or,
  - on or between 1 April 2023 and 1 July 2023 (inclusive) or were due to be born on or between those dates but were born earlier; and that child's parent has completed a request to defer their child starting P1 until September 2028.

### **Tie Breaker – Non Statutory Criterion 3**

Children within Criterion 3 will be selected in Chronological Order of Age – eldest child first. In the event of two or more children having the same date of birth the final selection will be taken on the basis of the closest distance from their own home address to the entrance gates of the school, by recognised public routeway.

It is important that parent(s)/guardian(s) when submitting the application form give all the relevant supporting information and written evidence that may be needed.

### **Documentation Required**

- 1 Child's Birth Certificate.
- 2 Benefit Verification if Applicable.

All criteria will apply as at the closing date on the application form. If parents have any difficulty in completing the form then they should consult the Principal.

### **Duty to Verify**

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any applicant's Application Form.

If the requested evidence is not provided to the Board of Governors by the deadline given, this will result in the withdrawal of an offer of a place. Similarly, if information is supplied which appears to be false or misleading in any material way, the offer of a place will be withdrawn.

### **Waiting List Policy**

Should a vacancy arise after Tuesday 19 May 2026 all applications for admission that were initially refused, new applications, late applications and applications where new information has been provided will be treated equally and the published criteria applied. This waiting list will be in place until the end of the academic year.

### **Late Applications**

All applications received after the closing date will be processed using the same criteria as above.

### **Admission after 1 September 2026**

The same criteria will be used for applications after 1 September 2026.

Parents/Guardians should also note that if their child is seeking nursery provision for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year they MUST reapply.