

Acorn Integrated Primary School Nursery Unit
110 Victoria Road
Carrickfergus
BT38 7JL

Principal: Mrs J. Fuller
Chair of Board of Governors: Mr P Comins

Grant Maintained Integrated Nursery Unit
Admissions No: 26 (Part-time)
Session Times: 9:00am – 11:30am

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

The Board of Governors will determine the Admissions Criteria. The criteria will be applied by a sub-committee of the Board of Governors.

Acorn is an integrated co-educational nursery which welcomes, respects and cherishes children of all religious and non-religious categories, whilst retaining its own Christian character. It is committed to educating children of differing beliefs together and strives to maintain a balanced enrolment as defined by the Statement of Principles of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) to this end places will be allocated thus; 11 places for Roman Catholic, 11 places for Protestant and 4 places for other children. (Other is defined as neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic).

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 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 9 January 2024 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 26 January 2024 at 12noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 26 January 2024 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.

To fulfil our admissions criteria it is the responsibility of all parents/guardians to provide information regarding their child's perceived community background.

The religious affiliation/community background (Protestant, Catholic or Other/None) of a pupil will be determined by one of the following methods:

- a) For parents/guardians applying for a place via the Education Authority's **online application**, you will be prompted to and must select your child's religious affiliation when completing the online form. You must also complete Acorn Integrated Nursery Information Form. This is available by emailing the school or calling at the school office;
or
- b) For parents/guardians applying using a **paper application** you must also complete our school Acorn Integrated Information Form which can be obtained from our school website or school office. Your Acorn Integrated Information Form must be sent directly to our school on or before 4pm (GMT) on Wednesday 31 January 2024;
or
- c) If the parents/guardian(s) do not supply this required information then the Board of Governors will treat the application as being from those in the community who describe themselves as being from the Other/None category

Documentation (including the child's birth certificate and the Acorn Information form) which is submitted in support of your application should be on or before 4pm (GMT) Wednesday 31 January 2024.

Integrated Education Act

The Board of Governors of Acorn Integrated welcome the introduction of the Integrated Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and look forward to its implementation. We note the definition of an Integrated School as outlined in the Act and believe our criteria will allow us to successfully meet the definition of the same.

The Board of Governors of an integrated school must use its best endeavours, in exercising its functions under the Education Orders, to ensure that the management, control and ethos of the school such as are likely to attract to the school reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils. The collection and processing of information regarding the religious/perceived community background of children set out above is necessary in order for the Board of Governors of an integrated school to carry out its statutory functions and fulfil its public task.

Admissions criteria to be used in the event of the school being oversubscribed. The criteria are listed in order of priority.

The Admissions sub-committee divides the applications into three categories, i.e. Other, Protestant and Roman Catholic. The criteria set out below will be applied separately to each category in the order listed. It is therefore essential that all parents who seek a place for their child complete the Acorn Nursery Information Form to indicate in which category their son/daughter is to be included. Should there be any conflicting information between the online and paper applications in the admissions process, the information provided on the written application form will supersede the online information.

Statutory Criteria

The following statutory criteria will be applied separately to each religious category:

1. Children from socially disadvantaged circumstances in their final pre-school year who were born:
 - on or between 2 July 2020 and 1 July 2021 (inclusive) and whose parents have not exercised their right to defer their child's entry to primary school; or,
 - on or between 1 April 2020 and 1 July 2020 (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 2025.

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).

If applications meeting the statutory criteria exceed the number of funded places available, the applications will be split into three categories, i.e. Other, Protestant and Roman Catholic as stated above.

If any category is oversubscribed at this stage, the Admissions criteria listed below are applied in the given order. In any category which is under-subscribed, all those applicants who fit into this category will be admitted. Should there be any surplus of places which arises from any under-subscribed category, that surplus will be distributed beginning with the category which is most oversubscribed alternating with the other category until the final place is allocated.

Children resident in Northern Ireland at the time of their proposed admission to the school will be selected before any child not so resident.

Sub-criteria

- a. Preference will be given to children who have named Acorn Integrated Nursery as their first preference over those who have named it as second preference; second preference will be admitted before third preference etc.
- b. The child has a brother/sister, or half-brother/half-sister, or foster brother/foster sister who currently attend or has attended Acorn Integrated Primary School (not including Acorn Nursery Unit).
- c. The child is the first child in the immediate family to attend a mainstream Nursery.
- d. The child is currently attending Acorn Playgroup at closing date for applications.
- e. In the event of over-subscription children will be selected for admission on the basis of initial letter of surname (as entered on birth certificate) in the order set out below:

W R X O S V T C N B P L H Z G Y K U I F D J Q E M A

This order was determined by a randomised selection of the letters of the alphabet. In the event of surnames beginning with the same initial letter, the subsequent letters of the surname as entered on the birth certificate will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of two identical surnames, the alphabetical order of the initials of the forenames as entered on the birth certificate will be used. In the event of forenames beginning with the same initial letter the subsequent letters of the forenames as entered on the birth certificate will be used in alphabetical order.

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 2020 - 1 July 2020 (inclusive), or were due to be born on or between those dates but were born earlier; and,
 - 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 2021 and 1 July 2022 (inclusive); or,
- on or between 1 April 2021 and 1 July 2021 (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 2026.

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 DOB the above random selection of letters will be used.

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on or attached to the application form and Acorn Integrated Nursery Information Form. Parents should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on the application form and Acorn Integrated Nursery Information Form or attached to them

In the case of an unsuccessful application, the parent/guardian must indicate on the Acorn Integrated Nursery Information Form whether or not they wish to remain on the Acorn Integrated Nursery waiting list.

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 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

Our waiting list policy is as follows; should a vacancy arise after placement letters have been issued, all applications for admission to Acorn Integrated Nursery 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 30 June 2025. The school will contact you in writing if your child gains a place in the Nursery by this method.