



**Learn
together,
play together,
achieve
together.**

**Closeburn House
School Prospectus 2024**





Nicola McDonald
Head of Education

Welcome

A warm welcome to Closeburn House School, part of Options Autism, from all the staff, children and young people.

This prospectus provides information about our school, the curriculum and additional support services we offer. You will also find our contact details if you wish to explore a place at the school for your child or young person.

www.holisticchildcare.co.uk

What we do

Many of the children and young people at Closeburn House School will have experienced feelings of isolation, exclusion and feeling different from others due to their previous experiences, backgrounds and diagnoses. We understand the psychological effects of this, and our model has been developed with a trauma-informed approach, while keeping nurture and boundaries at the core of our offering.

We see behaviour as a language and respond in an objective and reflective manner. Children and young people benefit from an individualised, inclusive and nurturing setting where they have the opportunity to explore deep-rooted issues and trauma through therapy, play and social modelling.

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Young people at Closeburn House are empowered and encouraged to engage in their care plan and to voice their opinions...young people felt safe and had confidence in the staff teams supporting them. ”

Care Inspectorate



Founded in 1996, Closeburn House School was created to ensure every child is given the opportunity to thrive in their learning, regardless of their trauma or circumstances. We work in partnership with parents, carers, Local Authorities and partner organisations to meet the individual needs of our children and young people.

We support children and young people with a range of additional support needs, including Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Trauma, Social, Emotional and Mental Health diagnosis, ADHD, as well as several other conditions. We support our learners to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

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We believe every child is an individual, and they deserve the opportunity to thrive in an environment that is respectful of their needs and challenges. ”

Vision & Values

Our vision is to create a happy, safe and nurturing environment which supports children to become settled to learn and develop to their full potential.

Our values of honesty, kindness, respect and safety underpin how our community develops and thrives. These are key to growing nurturing and successful relationships.



Curriculum

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Learn together, play together, achieve together. ”

Our curriculum provides pupils with a range of rich experiences that will meet their complex additional support needs and complies fully with the expectations of the Curriculum for Excellence and is aligned with the requirements of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). Wellbeing, literacy and numeracy are at the core of our offering, and pupils are provided with personalised, group and whole class opportunities for new learning, consolidation and challenge.

Good wellbeing is fundamental to all other learning key to achieving good outcomes for our young people. Our ‘Wellbeing Wednesday’s’ provide a dedicated time to focus on a variety of activities designed to promote physical, emotional and social wellbeing, improving resilience and confidence. These activities include mindfulness sessions



led by our Psychotherapist, yoga classes, drama workshops from a visiting drama specialist, and social communication support through games and interactive activities led by our Speech & Language Therapist.

By integrating therapeutic and creative activities within our curriculum, we support the holistic development of our pupils, addressing both mental and emotional health, and ensuring pupils feel secure, balanced and supported in all areas of their lives.



Across both the Broad General Education and Senior Phase, pupils are provided with a range of learning opportunities including project work, active learning, and personalised learning. We can provide a high degree of personalisation within our curriculum, taking into account the needs of each pupil. This ensures pupils receive a learning experience which is relevant, interesting and at a suitable level.

In the senior phase, young people are supported to achieve to their full potential through a personalised pathway which can include voluntary opportunities within the local area. We provide a range of subjects and qualifications up to National 5 Level including: Maths, English, History, Geography, PE, Computing, Science and Art. We also provide further qualifications such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award, Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering, Administration & IT, ensuring each young person can follow their own path and prepare for life beyond school.

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Closeburn House School has successfully raised the attainment and achievement of young people...through encouraging good attendance and offering a wide range of relevant and meaningful national qualifications which are improving young people's life prospects. ”

Electives Programme

Running since 2022, our highly successful electives programme empowers our pupils, boosts academic achievement, and improves self-esteem. Each term, pupils choose from a variety of activities which are tailored to their interests and needs, providing a dynamic and personalised educational experience. This approach enables us to engage pupils with different parts of the curriculum and promote a sense of achievement across multiple areas.

The electives programme supports the seven principles of curriculum design by ensuring challenge and enjoyment, breadth, progression, depth, personalisation and choice, coherence and relevance. The electives programme changes every term, with some popular choices continuing all year round. Activities have arranged from creative arts, sports, technology, outdoor learning and life skills. Our 'Warhammer' elective has been the standout success story, engaging students in building,

painting and playing with miniatures. Our students travelled to Cumbria to participate in an activities and games event, gaining recognition in several Scottish, UK and Worldwide publications.

Independence Development

A key part of the work we undertake with young people at Closeburn House is helping them to prepare for life after they leave school. Our independence development programme is intertwined throughout daily life in the school, and again for those young people who also reside with us. Young people are supported to learn key skills that they will need for life including budgeting, cooking, personal hygiene and household chores such as laundry, and are encouraged to maintain a good standard of cleanliness in their rooms.

These activities are recorded in a person-centred care plan which is developed by the key worker and implemented by a whole team approach.

Trauma-informed Practice

Closeburn House is a Trauma-informed service, and currently holds the Silver accreditation. Trauma-informed Practice (TIP) Accreditation aims to embed trauma-aware approaches in services across three primary areas: Leadership & Development, Nurturing a Trauma-informed Culture and Embedding Connect, Co-regulate and Co-reflect.

We are currently working towards the Gold award, with particular strengths in promoting independence, maintaining nurturing relationships and creating a positive environment. We have implemented several key initiatives to support our young people including:



- Regular reflective practice and debrief sessions
- Positive behaviour management and listening to young peoples' voices through meetings and consultations
- Multi-agency collaboration to support the care and education needs of young people such as referrals to CAMHS and working with our in-house specialist Occupational Therapist and Wellbeing clinicians
- Use of Trauma-informed practices to address behaviour and support the emotional regulation of young people.





Clinical Provision

Our young people are supported by a dedicated and on-site clinical team who work across both of our services in Dumfries & Galloway.

Our clinical team work with our care and education teams to create an environment that enables our young people to explore their issues, develop strategies to maintain positive behaviours and remove barriers to learning.

Comprising of Occupational Therapy, Speech & Language Therapy, Psychotherapy and Educational Psychology, the clinical team undertakes a 12-week observation of all young people who join Closeburn House and, together with information from relevant professionals, key staff, input from family and any other additional assessments, uses this to formulate an initial clinical plan.

Support is delivered through a combination of the following:

Universal: Clinicians support staff to create the right environment for learning and living.

Enhanced: Support strategies are used to provide education and care staff to carry out directly with children and young people, reviewed by the clinical team as and when needed.

Specialist: Specialist assessment to be carried out and/or direct 1:1 input provided regularly by a clinician.

Supporting our Clinical Team is our therapy dog in training, Rosie. Rosie has become an integral part of the school over the past year and together with her owner Danny, provides several key activities aimed at enhancing student wellbeing:



- **Frequent Walks:** Students regularly take Rosie for walks which prompts physical activity and provides a calming, routine-based interaction that fosters a sense of responsibility and companionship.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Rosie serves as an emotional companion, with her presence helping students to manage anxiety and stress.
- **Training & Grooming:** Pupils participate in Rosie's training and grooming which not only teaches them practical skills but also reinforces positive behaviours and empathy towards animals.

The impact of having Rosie within the school environment has led to notable improvements in student wellbeing and emotional regulation. There has been a significant reduction in reported feelings of anxiety and depression among students, and students are more engaged in school activities, showing improved attendance and a reduction in absconding and refusal behaviours. Interaction with Rosie has also helped students to develop better social skills, fostering stronger peer relationships and a more supportive classroom environment.

Our Site

Surrounded by lush, green farmlands and rolling hills, Closeburn House provides excellent recreational facilities for our pupils. Our picturesque setting allows for a diverse range of outdoor learning experiences, in addition to easy access to facilities in and around Dumfries.

Our historic school building has been providing education to children and young people for over 100 years and provides a warm and nurturing learning environment.

We have several subject specific classrooms including IT suite, music room, craft room, breakout/quiet room, home economics room, art studio, sports hall and outdoors area.

Our linked accommodation building provides a modern living environment for our residential students, in keeping with the building's history. We have 8 bedrooms for young people, in addition to a lounge, tv room, dining area and our own pupil-led hair salon.

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Being here has helped me have the space to improve my social skills, coping mechanisms and academic level without the overwhelming factors a large school and instability that home/social life gave me. ”

Autism Accreditation

Ask, Accept, Develop

Closeburn House currently holds to the Bronze accreditation, which is based on three key pillars: Ask, Accept, Develop. These pillars ensure that the voices of young people are heard during the decision-making process, the neurodiversity of our young people is celebrated in a sensory-friendly environment, and their growth and independence is supported.



We have implemented several initiatives to support autistic individuals including communication profiles, consultation and personalised care and education plans. We have a focus on sensory needs and provide a structured environment for our young people, while promoting independence development and integrating their strengths and interests into daily activities.

National Autistic Society Accreditation

We are proud to have a National Autism Accreditation which is an internationally recognised quality standard and demonstrates our commitment to understanding autism and sets the standard for autism practice.

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There is a particular emphasis on developing social skills and supporting pupils to become independent learners. Learning is motivated by individual interests and the day is carefully structured to allow for minimum disruption by transitions, with a supportive timetable which has an emphasis in regular routines. ”

National Autistic Society
Accreditation Report

Parents & Families

We understand that many of our young people have had a difficult time before arriving at Closeburn House, and therefore take a proactive approach with parents, families and/or carers. Each young person's Key Worker will provide regular updates for families and professionals where required and liaise with the team around the young person to ensure key information is available.

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All the teaching and care staff are extremely helpful and understanding. Our son tells us he loves his school... his behaviour and attitude are now the best it's ever been.”

Parent of a young person
at Closeburn House School

Admissions

We're happy to consider admission requests directly from parents, carers, and Local Authorities. We cater for as many circumstances as possible and support children from across Scotland and the rest of the UK.

We offer day, 39-week, and 52-week residential placements, with fees usually paid by Local Authorities.

If you'd like to make a referral, would like to visit the school, or simply want to find out more information about our services, please get in touch.

You can contact the school on **01848 331352** or by emailing **office@closeburnhouse.co.uk**

Alternatively, for more information, you can contact our Admissions Manager by email at:

iain.owens@ofgl.co.uk

**We support
children and young
people to take life's
important steps**



**Holistic Childcare
and Education**
Living and Learning in Harmony

Part of
OptionsAutism

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