

Oxhill Nursery School



Assessment Policy

“Anna Freud, who advised educators to go with the child says that if the child goes somewhere without you, and is lost, you need to be able to find them. That is what assessment is for – to enable educators to gain a thorough understanding of what children know, feel and can do. Observation can provide a means of getting to know children well, in a way that influences our teaching and our developing relationship with them, giving us insight into their interests, abilities, strengths, knowledge and skills so that we are then more able to support, extend and embed their learning”

(Dr Stella Louis article for Early Education Journal no.94)

Assessment forms part of the cycle of observing, planning and assessing in the Early Years. At Oxhill Nursery School assessment is not our focus. The child is our focus. Assessment supports the development of our child led curriculum and ensures equality for all children in our school. We recognise children first and foremost need to feel safe and secure in our care, to be confident to play in our environment. When children have high levels of wellbeing and involvement, we will be able to truly observe their current level of development and plan how to further this. We use the Leuven wellbeing and involvement scales (appendix 1) .

Most of our assessment is formative and allows practitioners to continuously adapt practice and offer children opportunities. We also need to have an overview of children’s progress to allow us to take further action where needed to ensure all children thrive.

Assessment goals at Oxhill Nursery School:

- Focusing upon each child across each term, to see how they learn.
- Developing partnerships with parents and carers to support the sharing of learning from nursery and home.
- Checking that individual children and groups of children are making progress and where necessary, taking prompt action.
- Early identification of children who may require additional support for a special educational need or disability.
- Developing relationships with local schools and settings to share information and provide children with seamless transitions.

We will not spend unnecessary time writing observations or gathering evidence for all children. Instead, will want to be with the children scaffolding and extending learning opportunities in the moment. Professional dialogue with colleagues in school supports first-hand sharing of observations.

Our week is structured to allow practitioners to meet regularly and discuss each child. To support a consistent approach to understanding age related expectations we use the Birth to Five Matters guidance (created for the sector by the sector), to make judgements, informed by our observations. (Appendix 2) Children are not tested in our school, they are respected for who they are.

We recognise the key role of early communication. The centre for inclusive education evidence that... approaches to early education which support developing children's communication, not only help them with their communication (and then early literacy), they are one of the most successful ways to improve children's emotional wellbeing. **Children that can talk about how they are feeling, children who can solve conflicts through discussion rather than getting really angry or becoming really withdrawn, children who can say what they want and need and make choices; are happier children with better emotional wellbeing.**

To be able to support and develop early communication skills Oxhill Nursery School has received Elklan training. Our everyday practice is steeped in strategies which support and promote early language development. Our nursery practitioners use ECaT assessment tools to help monitor Speech Language and Communication needs. (Appendix 3)

To develop consistent approaches to assessment we work together as a team discussing the ranges within Birth to five matters for the Prime areas of the EYFS. We make judgements, informed by our observations, to agree if children have "met" or "not met" developmental milestones. (Appendix 4) Children are not tested; they are respected for who they are.

"Guidance emphasises that our viewpoint should not only be fixed upon typical development, but we should also observe, question and consider why a child may be developing differently". "This knowledge of the child should support and extend their learning rather than purely judging whether they present with SEND."

(Kerry Payne article for Early Education Journal no.94)

We respect our children and strive for all children to reach their full potential. We are an inclusive school. Sally Neaum (Child Development for Early Years Students and Practitioners) defines inclusion as,

"putting into practice the moral and political choices that have been made to create a society which values every child and offers every child the opportunity to flourish". "Inclusive practice can build communities where all people are accepted, where difference is an everyday part of life, and where provision is organised and constructed to enable all children and their families to participate".

We work within the SEN Code of Practice (2015) and write Early Years support plans based upon individual children's starting points. Outcomes from plans are monitored and reviewed with families and professionals over time. Our assessments of children are shared (in an anonymised form) with our school governing body who ensure our processes are robust and aligned with our curriculum and school vision.