

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)

Planning and assessment

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.

In the first term, the majority of our planning is focused on the three prime areas. These are communication, self-confidence and awareness and physical health. Key people spend quality time getting to know their key children and their families. This trusting relationship helps children to settle into nursery and grow in confidence in their new environment. Our assessment starts with an **‘All About Me’** form that we ask parents to complete when children start. This gives us parent’s views on what their child can do and what they may need help with, as well as information about their likes and interests. This helps practitioners have a better understanding of the children’s needs to enable them to settle the children effectively into nursery during the transition period.

Assessment and tracking overview

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. However, we also need to have an overview of children’s progress, so that we can take further actions where needed to ensure all children thrive. Our aim is for the system to be proportionate, and to ensure it is not overly burdensome.

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 are **“growing”** towards or **“showing”** us they have met their developmental milestones. (Appendix 1) Children are not tested; they are respected for who they are.

Assessment information is collated by team and data is input on a an **Excel spreadsheet** by the room leads. Senior leaders work with room leads to analyse the information in order to take action for individual children, or groups of children, as needed. It allows practitioners to continuously adapt practice and offer children opportunities.

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.
- Reporting to parents and to the receiving reception teacher in the summer so that children can continue their learning journey through the EYFS as seamlessly as possible.

We will not spend unnecessary time writing observations or gathering evidence for all children. Instead, we 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).

Assessment of Early Communication Skills

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 who 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](#))

"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)

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We respect our children and strive for all children to reach their full potential. We are an inclusive school. For children with SEND, precise assessment needs to focus on what the child can do, and what the barriers to their learning are. If a child has specific difficulties with their communication, for example, they may need to have aids like a communication board so that they can make choices and share their ideas. Individual progress is tracked using the '**Early Years Development Journal**'.

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.

Appendix 1 – Example Tracker

Appendix 2 – Typical development by stage from Birth to Five Matters

Appendix 3 - [Every Child a Talker - Child Monitoring Tool part 1 \(derbyshire.gov.uk\)](http://derbyshire.gov.uk)