

Policy:	OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT POLICY
Reviewed:	January 2017
Next Review:	3 years or as legislation may require
Responsibility:	Head of Education and Care
Category:	Curriculum

At Walton Lane Nursery School and Rocking Horse Club we plan to meet the diverse needs of children and to support their development and learning.

This policy outlines the principles upon which we base our observations and assessment of children, and the procedures used to put these principles into practice.

■ Aims of the Policy

- ⇒ To know each child's level of development to ensure that planning meets the diverse needs of all the children
- ⇒ To fully support learning and development
- ⇒ To celebrate progress in learning and development
- ⇒ To value the contributions of and work in partnership with parents.

■ Principles

The principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance emphasise the importance of observation and assessment:

'In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

■ Objectives

- ⇒ To develop good relationships between a child's parents/carers and their Key Person in the setting in order to ensure that information about the child is shared effectively.
- ⇒ To ensure that learning is a shared process - children learn most effectively when, with the support of a knowledgeable and trusted adult, they are actively involved and interested.
- ⇒ To ensure that schedules and routines flow with the child's needs.
- ⇒ To ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- ⇒ To make sure that we build on what children already know and can do.
- ⇒ To develop the expertise of practitioners so that they know how to respond effectively to the observations they make.

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PROCEDURES

Children aged 0-5 years

1. Parental Liaison

Information is gathered from parents before their child starts at the Centre and throughout a child's time in the Centre. Observations made by practitioners are shared with the parents in both formal and informal ways.

The mechanisms used to facilitate this two-way sharing of information are listed below:

- ⇒ Membership form - this collects information regarding the child's health, family circumstances, cultural background, linguistic heritage and additional needs.
- ⇒ Initial parental liaison - information is gathered regarding the child's interests, likes and dislikes. This supports Practitioners in ensuring a smooth transition into the Centre and helps the child to feel that s/he is known to those caring for her/him. Please refer to the Transition Policy for further details.
- ⇒ Home visits – Link Workers and/or the Team Leader or Key Person will visit any child at home with their family on request. This supports the development of clear lines of communication and facilitates the ongoing, two-way sharing of information between Centre and home.
- ⇒ Termly one to one meetings – parents will be invited into the Centre to talk with their child's teacher or Key Person about the progress made by their child and to celebrate their achievements. At this meeting the parents will be invited to look at the child's learning journey, discuss their progress, and make comments to add to the records.
- ⇒ Curriculum days – parents will have opportunities throughout the year to come into the Centre and share learning experiences with their children.
- ⇒ Home link activities/Newsletters – whenever activities are sent home parents will be invited to comment on how their child enjoyed the activity and how they feel that their learning is developing.
- ⇒ Early Years Orbit – parents are able to see observations of their child on a daily basis and are able to send 'postcards' of their experiences at home.

2. Ongoing Observations

This will be the most productive form of information gathering. All practitioners are responsible for recording, in an ongoing way, the significant steps forward taken by children in their learning and development.

These observations will be recorded as soon after they are made as possible and, where appropriate, linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that they can be

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used effectively to inform planning. The child's Key Person will be responsible for maintaining records of the observations on Early Years Orbit.

3. Planned Observations

Key Persons will be allocated time to carry out planned observations of individual children at least once a term. This will give an opportunity for them to focus in on what that child already knows and can do and plan the next steps in their learning.

These next steps will be built into the planning for the environment; planning for the key group of children; and/or specific planning for the child's individual needs.

4. Learning Journeys

Each child within the Centre has a Learning Journey. This is their own personal celebration of the developments that they have made and the experiences that they have enjoyed.

It is contributed to by their Key Person, other practitioners, parents and the children themselves. Similarly it is regularly shared and enjoyed with the children and their parents.

5. Assessment

Each term, assessments are entered into a spreadsheet which enables us to track the progress of individuals and groups of children.

The system also facilitates the evaluation of provision for each gender, ethnic or age group, by comparing the range of learning noted.

The system looks at each area of learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that progress can be identified in any one area or areas can be compared.

Data is fed into the system on an ongoing basis from observations; feedback from parents; and the Key Persons' knowledge of their key children's progress and achievements.

6. Children Aged 6 -11 Years

Many children of this age group attend the Centre for out of school care. For these children, we are providing play experiences and are not required to monitor their progress or development. We do however, place great emphasis on the value of the social experiences gained at the Centre. Informal, ongoing observations are used to evaluate experiences and activities and inform future planning.

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Planned observation would not normally take place in out of school provision unless there was a concern about a particular child. We value partnership with parents for these children as much as for any other age group and take every opportunity to share information with them.

7. Meeting Diverse Needs

Children with additional needs or English as an additional language are supported within our observation and assessment system. Where necessary additional observations are carried out and more finely differentiated scales of monitoring are used.

These observations and assessments are then used to provide appropriately differentiated learning experiences or used in formal assessment of SEN to provide extra support for individual children, if necessary.

8. Links to Planning

All learning experiences provided for children are based on what we know about them and the way in which they learn.

Our comprehensive procedures described above demonstrate the commitment of staff within the Centre to ensuring that children's needs are met and that at every level experiences are as developmentally appropriate and challenging as possible for our children. Please refer to the Planning Policy for further information on how we use our observations and assessments to inform planning.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Teachers will:

- ⇒ Monitor the range and quality of observations made.
- ⇒ Evaluate the effectiveness of planning in light of observations made.
- ⇒ Support the practitioners in the implementation of this policy through regular training and staff development meetings.
- ⇒ Prioritise time for observations of children in order to monitor, support and assess their learning.
- ⇒ Inform the Head Teacher of progress / challenges/ resource requirements.

Team Leaders will:

- ⇒ Ensure that all practitioners within their team are familiar with this policy and the procedures outlined in it.
- ⇒ Support practitioners in making ongoing and planned observations.
- ⇒ Take account of the needs, interests and knowledge of all children when planning.

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- ⇒ Ensure that parents/carers have opportunities to be actively involved in the observation and assessment process.
- ⇒ Ensure adequate time/opportunity is allowed within planning for observation and assessment.

■ **Dissemination**

This policy is available for all parents, governors, staff and prospective parents.

■ **Review Procedure**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Teachers, the Head Teacher and the Governors.