Assessment

Why we assess

Children’s progress is closely monitored so that we can provide the best possible opportunities and highest levels of support for all children. All assessment activities aim to ensure that the children are able to make excellent progress in their learning whilst taking into account the needs of individual children.

The aims and objectives of assessment in our school are:

- to enable our children to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in their work;
- to allow teachers and teaching assistants to plan work that accurately reflects the needs of each child;
- to help our children understand what they need to do next to improve their work;
- to provide regular information for parents that enables them to support their children’s learning;
- to contribute towards accountability data.

Assessment without levels

In September 2014 schools were given the freedom to move away from assessing using National Curriculum levels and could design assessment systems that more accurately described the children they were teaching; enabled children to understand their next steps and was more useful to parents who wanted to understand their child’s attainment and help them to improve.

Assessment at The Woodland Federation

The most fundamental and important assessment we do is our observation of children in the classroom. We do not believe in over-using formal methods of assessment as the teacher’s daily observations of the children and their progress is the most valuable tool the teacher has to make judgements. These judgements that we make are based on our questioning, analysis and interaction with children and help us to plan activities that will support and develop their next steps for learning. Assessment in this context happens every day to all children. Detailed pupil progress discussions occur termly with the headteacher and the SENCo, which allows us to focus on individuals and to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and any programmes or interventions that might benefit them.

We also assess children by looking carefully at the work they complete within their lessons. Our marking is designed to help children see what they are doing well and what they need to do to make their work even better. For further information, see our marking policy.
We also encourage children to assess their own work and occasionally that of their peers. This is particularly useful for helping children to engage with the success criteria and to know what good looks like.

Other types of assessment happen at regular intervals and include:

- phonic progress checks;
- reading conferences;
- reading age tests;
- independent writing assessments;
- spelling age tests;
- grammar unit assessments;
- maths unit assessments;
- individual questioning, tasks and activities to assess mathematical understanding;

Assessment of the National Curriculum objectives

It’s important that we keep track of whether children are moving through the National Curriculum at the right pace so that we can track under-achievement and intervene early to diminish the difference and to set targets to maximise achievement for all. Data is collected termly using external assessments and teacher judgement. We do this by tracking children’s progress year on year and in-year using our assessment and tracking system developed in school. This carefully tracks children against the national curriculum objectives so that we can see how much progress they are making. If a child is working below their expected year group, then they are tracked in the appropriate year to their ability. We have a clear annual assessment calendar which all staff follow to ensure consistency and continuity.

Age related expectations
Some assessments we do are age standardised and give us a clear picture of a pupil’s ability against that of other children of a similar age. This helps us to maintain objectivity and externality, vital to any meaningful assessment system.

Moderation
End-of-year statutory assessments of EYFS, Y1 Phonics, KS1 and KS2 are moderated periodically by the local authority. Staff also regularly attend moderation meetings with colleagues from other schools to ensure our assessments are fair, reliable, valid and moderated.

**Reporting assessment findings**

Children’s assessments are formally reported once a year on the annual school report. Ongoing assessments are also reported to parents at our parent consultation evenings. We are always very happy to provide parents with the current picture of their child’s attainment and achievement at any point throughout the year and welcome their involvement.

Data is regularly shared with governors and used by the LA School Improvement Advisor to ratify the school’s judgements about its performance when completing the annual School Improvement Record (SIRR) It is also used to inform the School Development Plan, performance management, our CPD programme and our Self-Evaluation Summary.