

Beech Lodge

ASSESSMENT POLICY



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ASSESSMENT POLICY

This policy lays out the assessment, recording and reporting practices, approaches and systems of Beech Lodge School.

After reading this policy:

1. All staff should understand the expectations of them and what they can expect from each other in relation to this area of school practice.
2. Advisors should be able to understand where children are going in their learning and what they achieve or where they develop to.
3. Parents/carers should be able to understand exactly where their children are in terms of their development and their achievement.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The purpose of this document is to show how pupil progression is planned, assessed, responded to and reported at all levels.

Planning, assessment, record keeping and reporting are inter-related. They are all integral parts of the teaching process. Record keeping is concrete evidence of some form of assessment of a pupils learning and effectiveness of teaching. More will be assessed than recorded and more recorded than reported.

The Purpose of Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. It serves several purposes:

- 'formative' (Assessment for Learning) provides information for the teachers to plan the next steps in pupils learning. Assessment is not an end in itself; its main purpose is to support teaching and learning by identifying what pupils already know and can do and what their next step should be. Assessment for Learning is an integral part of teaching and learning, which is evident in every lesson.
- 'diagnostic' and 'functional' assessment provides more detailed information about pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Summative and observational assessment provides a means for the recording of overall achievement of a pupil in a systematic way usually at the end of a term, year or key-stage.

Aims of Assessment

- To establish as accurately and honestly as possible the pupil's level of function in all areas of the curriculum;
- To provide a starting point/baseline for future decisions regarding the pupil's individual curriculum needs and learning programmes in order to set achievable goals;
- To relate back to the pupil's statement or EHCP where relevant
- To monitor progress and acknowledge achievements;
- To demonstrate continuity, progression and development for individual pupils;
- To report achievements to parents/carers and to provide a basis for discussion with parents/carers and other professionals regarding the pupils progress and future needs;
- To monitor the appropriateness of the individual teaching programmes devised;
- To inform future planning;
- To offer teachers the means to evaluate their teaching methods.

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Assessment at Beech Lodge School – expected practice

Effective teachers hold a great deal of information in their heads and it is not possible to commit all of this to paper. However, we believe that when teachers identify in advance what they intend to assess and then record the outcomes of this assessment in a systematic way, it is more likely that the information will contribute to a developing picture of each pupil's attainments and learning needs and influence teachers' future plans.

A good teacher will:

- identify each pupil's strengths and the priority areas for their future learning
- establish where the pupils are in their learning
- identify an appropriate curriculum for each pupil
- identify "next steps" for each pupil and carefully plan a route to their learning destination expressed as a clear learning objective
- make regular checks on progress over time by identifying progress within individual lessons or a series of lessons
- make adjustments to the "next steps" as pupil progress dictates
- evaluate and improve the teaching strategies for each pupil
- support pupils, where appropriate, to monitor their own learning
- identify, celebrate and share achievement using evidence to adapt what happens in the classroom to meet the learner's needs

Assessment framework in relation to access to learning for pupils with ADHD, ASD, SEMH, SpLD anxiety or additional issues

Pupils with significant additional needs, including those with challenging behaviour make particular demands on the assessment process. e.g.:

- it is very difficult to assess a pupil when they are dysregulated or highly anxious
- it is difficult to assess/access learning before a pupil is able to manage their own behaviour sufficiently to focus and show consistent responses. At Beech Lodge School these factors are taken into account and assessment therefore takes place at times and in such a manner to ensure that the truest and most accurate picture of what a child can achieve is built up.

Our pupils' progress is not always linear and skills are rarely generalised spontaneously. Teachers need to use their professional judgement in analysing the outcomes of any assessment, particularly one that depends on a published tool or on an observation made on only one occasion.

- we need to be alert in our observations of pupils' responses, some of which may be fleeting
- we need to be observing lessons and pupils' responses consistently and using consistent language to do so
- parents/carers are crucial in gaining both formally and informally an understanding of the significance of what we see in order to determine the quality of learning
- judging the quality of pupils' responses in class and around the school-are they different in different circumstances?

Responses and Incidental observations

Responses involve sharing what we know about our pupils and the quality of their responses as we see them from day to day. As class staff, we know each individual pupil very well, which helps us interpret the meaning, significance and quality of their responses. The nature of the pupils' responses is an indication of their attainment and how well they are learning.

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We need to be:

- consistent in recognising and recording observed responses
- aware of the developmental sequence in that progress can be lateral as well as linear. Pupils can deepen their understanding and have a widening of experiences without being necessarily ready to move to the next level. Pupils may have 'spikey profiles' meaning that they excel and progress quickly in one area of the curriculum but make slower progress in others. This is accounted for in the planning and assessment process.
- continually talking to other adults about pupils' responses.

Incidental observations

Alongside planned assessment we also seek to identify key achievements outside the formal assessment process.

Assessment of pupils is going on all the time in class and around school. This usually involves unplanned observations of pupils in the many different contexts that occur in school life. Such observations often provide useful clues to individual needs and are part of the planning and assessment process.

A pupil may demonstrate in one lesson a skill which has been worked on in another curriculum area or show a response related to the focus area but not the same as the learning objective.

We also seek to be alert to the 'wow moments', where a pupil engages in a task for the first time or unexpectedly displays a skill or an attitude which has not previously been observed (for example, initiating a conversation for the first time or accepting close proximity with another pupil). These significant steps need to be noticed, shared and recorded e.g. it could be written down on a values card or house point card for an individual pupil or written up on a specific class observation sheet. These incidental observations need to be used to plan next steps and used as records.

Fagus targets are shared amongst staff so that they are aware of the potential significance of a conversation, action, gesture etc.

Self-Assessment - involving pupils

Whenever possible, pupils should be involved in their own assessment by reflecting on their experiences and setting their own targets. We involve pupils in recognising and assessing their progress in ways that reflect their level of understanding. We want our pupils to recognise their success and feel pleased with their achievements; this should increase their self-awareness and improve their self-esteem. We realise that for many of our pupils, especially those with low self-esteem, this will be difficult but some ways of encouraging pupil involvement could be:

- Personal evaluation and reflection within the class group at the end of a lesson/day or week, celebrating what each pupil has done and reviewing in relation to learning objectives.
- Pupils are also encouraged to look back through their Books, School Magazines and photo collections and their work samples including videos, photos and pieces of work and self-assess in a way that is appropriate to them e.g. giving comments about pieces of work, choosing what they liked doing best, selecting a piece to be displayed.

Some pupils are able to understand their goals and targets and the objectives set for each lesson. Classroom staff will help them to understand the progress they are making and what they need to do next to continue learning 'next steps'.

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Some pupils are able to recognise and accept when they have done well during a lesson, either from the outcome or because they know that staff are pleased with them. Some are able to respond to a structured system of rewards that in time will enable them to understand the desired outcome. Pupils should be given specific, honest feedback (e.g. 'you have focussed for 10 minutes' rather than 'Brilliant concentration').

Although teachers are responsible for ensuring that assessment is planned for and takes place, all members of the classroom team are involved in assessment during lessons and in sharing the information with teachers. This means that they need to be aware of the goals and targets within and of the learning objectives for each lesson. Other professionals (e.g. occupational therapists and speech and language therapists) make separate assessments of pupils' progress in their specialist areas as well as observing progress during the lessons in which they support pupils. This information is shared with teachers, so that they can use it to inform future lessons and to set future targets. Therapists provide functional assessments, support and advice for teachers when writing schemes of work in relation to access to all areas of the curriculum.

Links with the curriculum - Schemes of Work

Each class teacher is expected to produce schemes of work for their class.

Each scheme of work that a teacher writes identifies Learning Objectives i.e. what we want the pupils to learn over the term in relation to skills, knowledge and understanding together with the assessment criteria/focus. Activities i.e. a range of activities differentiated for each pupil dependent on their individual objectives and outcomes are added when the scheme is being taught.

Teachers write schemes of work in a way that suits them and their pupils. The scheme of work includes medium term plans that show week to week activities and incorporate objectives/outcomes, identifying required areas of over-learning. Yearly overviews ensure a broad and balanced curriculum and opportunities for over-learning where required. The pupils at Beech Lodge School are at very different stages of development and therefore we do not take a 'one size fits all approach to planning'.

A folder containing the Schemes of Work can be found in the Teaching and Learning folder on the staff drive of the school network.

Initial Assessments

Before admission to the school:

- A meeting with the class teacher from the current setting or school takes place before the pupil starts. If there is a Team Around the Child (TAC), a transfer meeting takes place and information handed over to the school through the key stage leader and/or teacher. Current progress levels are taken and work books are examined to build up an overall picture of how the child is performing.

Upon admission to the school:

- Wherever possible, baseline assessments in reading, spelling and numeracy will be carried out; however, this will not always be possible.
- Reading, spelling and numeracy assessments are carried out in the Autumn and Summer terms each academic year.
- Where relevant, assessments will be conducted by relevant specialists, including but not limited to the Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and/or Educational Psychologist.

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Tracking

Subject specific progress tracking is carried out in the form of Learning Journals. Teachers complete Learning Journals throughout the year to reflect a pupil's understanding of the taught content.

Parents are updated each term at Parent Consultations and in the end of year written school report.

Recording

In judging the effectiveness of our provision we ask, 'Are all our pupils doing as well as they can?' For pupils with multiple difficulties judgements of achievement need to be underpinned by a range of evidence.

Records are an important piece of the 'jigsaw of evidence'. The quality and reliability of records are vital to present a convincing picture of progress and thereby contribute to judgements about achievement. They give evidence of changes in pupils' attainment, behaviour and personal development over time.

Measuring social and emotional development

Beech Lodge School uses an in-house initiative, Fagus, to support and measure social and emotional development.

Fagus

Fagus provides a developmentally sequenced framework of typical behaviour which clarifies the understanding of a child's strengths and difficulties across social and emotional functioning and supports goal setting toward a better future. It allows teaching staff to monitor social and emotional progress in a similar way as academic progress.

Beech Lodge School uses the Fagus resource to establish a child's approximate level of emotional and social functioning. For relevant students, developmental checklists are completed to create a developmental profile for each child, summarising their development across 12 emotional and social domains. This is used to identify key areas of need and direct teachers towards the appropriate developmental booklet(s). The information within the booklets is used to set developmentally appropriate goals to help the child progress. An appropriate plan is devised and put in place by teaching staff. Pupils tend to have 2-3 emotional/social goals at any one time.

Reporting

Annual Reviews

We involve parents in the Annual Review process by seeking their views on their children's progress and priorities for the following year and sending them draft copies in advance of the review meeting. Teachers write a full report of the activities in which each pupil has taken part and the progress they have made at the end of each year and this document includes details of standardised assessments. Pupils are invited to attend part of their Annual Review.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are seen as partners in the education of their child. They are invited to the statutory Annual Review of the pupils Statement of Special Educational Needs/Education, Health and Care Plan during which any changes to the statement/plan are put forward, progress discussed and targets for the pupil set. There are also parents consultation evenings to review progress and termly targets.

Teachers have regular contact with parents by phone, face to face or email.

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Monitoring and Support

The School Leadership Team aims to:

- Ensure that all teachers know what is expected of them with regards to assessing pupils.
- Help teachers make well-founded judgements about pupils' attainments and progress
- Track the attainments and progress of individual pupils and pupil groups over time and compare the progress made by different groups of pupils to ensure that no group is disadvantaged.
- Provide parents with accurate information about their child's attainments and progress.
- Monitor practice in assessment and the use made of assessment information
- Use assessment information when planning training and the deployment of resources.

Phase leaders induct new members of staff, giving information to teaching staff regarding assessment procedures to be undertaken at agreed times, supporting individual staff in the process of assessment and to co-ordinate and lead INSET relating to assessment. As part of the ongoing monitoring process the Headteacher will work with the Proprietor and external consultants to carry out learning walks to ensure that standards are consistent throughout the school.

The SLT will work alongside the teachers to lead the moderation process which involves consideration of work samples from across the school.

The SLT (and curriculum subject leaders) will monitor the schemes of work and support teachers in developing their curriculum areas.

All teachers have a responsibility for the assessment of the children they teach. Where necessary, training will be arranged to support all teachers in this role. It will be provided as part of an induction programme for teachers new to the school and as part of an ongoing CPD programme.