



Assessment Policy and Procedure August 2024

Reviewed by: Tina Hobday

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Related documents: Curriculum Policy; Solving the Riddle of the Child; The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum; Early Years Foundation Stage policy; Non-examinations assessment policy; Examination contingency plan

Endorsement

Full endorsement is given to this policy by:

Name: Joel Chalfen

Position: Chair of Teaching and Learning committee

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide clear guidelines on our approach to assessment
- Establish a consistent and coherent approach to recording summative assessment outcomes and reporting to parents/carers
- Clearly set out how and when assessment practice will be monitored and evaluated

Roles and responsibilities

Trustees are responsible for:

- Being familiar with statutory assessment systems, as well as how the school's own system of non-statutory assessment captures the attainment and progress of all pupils
- Holding school leaders to account for improving pupil and staff performance by rigorously analysing assessment data
- Monitoring that school staff are receiving the appropriate support and training on pupil assessment, to ensure consistent application and good practice across the school

The Teaching and Learning Lead and Early Years Manager are responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is adhered to
- Monitoring standards in core and foundation subjects
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific groups
- Prioritising key actions to address underachievement
- Reporting to trustees on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years
- Making sure arrangements are in place so teachers can conduct assessment, marking and feedback competently and confidently, including training and moderation opportunities

Teachers are responsible for:

- Following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy, including for effective marking and feedback
- Creating and sharing clear mark schemes for the purposes of moderation
- Being familiar with the standards for the subjects they teach
- Keeping up to date with developments in assessment practice

General Principles and Definitions

In keeping with the ethos of the school, all teachers should strive to recognise the unique individuality of each pupil; learning to appreciate the strengths and weaknesses, approaches to learning, attitudes and behaviour of each child, and in so doing, ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.

We recognise that good assessment is an essential part of quality education. Its value is in giving the teachers feedback on the pupils' learning so that this can inform their teaching. It also gives the pupils information on how they are doing and what they might do better. It enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught.

Not all assessment will be shared with the children. When it is shared it will be shared in a developmentally appropriate way.

“Good practice occurs when the self-reflective teacher assesses his or her own teaching and its outcome with individual children and shares this with colleagues on a regular basis. This insight should feed directly back into the classroom. The Steiner Waldorf approach sees assessment as a means of gaining knowledge of, insight into and understanding for the child. The more accurate and comprehensive the observations, the richer the understanding. Increased understanding can lead to

positive development in the child. In ideal circumstances, the outcome of an assessment of a child is that meaningful help is offered and new developmental opportunities are created. Assessment can lead to transformation in teaching and learning.”

The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum

Teachers will attempt to deepen their understanding of the children by:

- carefully observing the pupils and their responses to what they are taught
- reflecting on their classroom experience
- sharing observations with colleagues
- sharing observations with parents
- undertaking regular study of Steiner Waldorf Pedagogy and Child Development
- engaging with colleagues in a detailed study of a particular child
- engaging with colleagues in a study of a particular class
- seeking the help of outside expertise where necessary

Whole School Assessment Approaches

Quantitative assessment

We believe that an over emphasis on quantitative assessment can be detrimental both to children's education and to their general wellbeing. Studies have shown if a child receives a grade and a comment they ignore the comment and only read the grade. As a lot of self esteem goes into academic achievement, it can also lead to great anxiety and fear of failure. For those who do not get good grades, it can result in a sense of failure and a loss of confidence. The crucial element of giving the pupil constructive feedback to facilitate their learning is lost via the grade/rank.

Assessment for Learning/formative assessment

Assessment for learning forms a key part of our approach. It is process orientated. It includes the monitoring of the ongoing learning of pupils and is used to make adjustments to the learning process and to offer reflections to students.

Teachers regularly review the child's work with them; discuss what has been done well and what might be improved. Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to set their own targets to work towards.

Child observations and formative assessments are made continually by the teachers and noted in their daily planning.

Effective in-school formative assessment enables:

- Teachers to identify how pupils are performing on a continuing basis and to use this information to provide appropriate support or extension, evaluate teaching and plan future lessons
- Pupils to measure their knowledge and understanding against learning objectives, and identify areas in which they need to improve
- Parents/carers to gain a broad picture of where their child's strengths and weaknesses lie, and what they need to do to improve

Summative assessment

Summative assessment enables teachers to assess understanding following a main lesson block or period of time. It is especially useful for monitoring pupil cohorts and assessing need for further support or intervention.

Standardised assessments are used to assess pupils against National standards, (the schedule of these assessments can be found in Appendix 1. These help the school target interventions, make sure pupils make good progress and attainment, and enable teachers and parents to understand how pupils compare with pupils nationally.

Effective in-school summative assessment enables:

- School leaders to monitor the performance of pupil cohorts, identify where interventions may be required, and work with teachers to ensure pupils are supported to achieve sufficient progress and attainment
- Teachers to evaluate learning at the end of a unit or period, and the impact of their own teaching
- Pupils to understand how well they have learned and understood a topic or course of work taught over a period of time. It should be used to provide feedback on how they can improve
- Parents/carers to stay informed about the achievement, progress and wider outcomes of their child across a period

Marking and Feedback

Marking is a review of a child's work, which includes feedback to the child. It is essential that there is regular acknowledgement and recognition of the children's work. Whilst teachers will take note of the level that the child has reached, feedback to the pupil will be of a qualitative nature where possible and not include a grade.

Marking pupils' work is also an opportunity to evaluate teaching and should inform the preparation of lessons taking account of the need for different approaches and/or extra support.

Marking can give quantifiable information and helps to monitor some aspects of pupils' development. It should be a regular experience for pupils to be present when their work is marked. At such times, the teacher can discuss the work, commenting on presentation, accuracy and time taken etc. The teacher should be positive, encouraging, challenging and supportive. Thoughtful feedback can help children towards productive criticism and evaluation in an age/stage appropriate way.

Generally marking should:

- be meaningful to the child and useful to the teacher
- be relevant to the aims and objectives of the task
- change according to age and ability – individuals in a class may be marked differently on a similar piece of work using different criteria (qualitative, child specific)
- help pupils to see how to improve their work.
- require activity on the part of the pupil where possible

Child Observation/Study

A more detailed study may be undertaken for an individual child, where more insight into the child's development may need to happen. All teaching staff contribute to this in-depth study through either their knowledge of working with the child or as a practitioner who has expertise in certain areas of learning and development. Parents are informed when this is taking place.

The Waldorf publications website defines it as:

'A child study is a technique unique to Waldorf schools that has the child become the focus of observation on the part of the whole faculty. A faculty meeting then devotes itself to lining up observations about the child's physical organization and appearance, the child's behavior in class, and with other children, and as a learner, and also how the child is in his or her own world – likes and dislikes, social ease, imaginative abilities, willingness to learn and to work. Then the faculty lives with the questions that the child prompts out of these observations. If it is possible, some ideas of what can be done to help and harmonize the child's experience in school and in the world come forward as a plan on the child's behalf.'

Whole School Record Keeping

Recording lesson plans, the work done and progress of pupils enables teachers to:

- inform future planning
- produce accurate end of year reports and updates to parents through the year during parent consultations
- give information to a teacher taking over a class or lesson.

Pupil records will be kept securely in the School Office /SEND room. They will contain:

- any records from previous school
- profiles from kindergarten
- copies of annual reports
- copies of assessments from outside agencies

Whole School Reporting to Parents

We recognise that an important element in the education of children is their experience of the cooperation between parents and teachers.

During the course of the year the Class Teacher or Guardian will organise at least two meetings with the parents of each child in the class. This meeting will provide an opportunity to:

- discuss their child's progress
- share observations about the child's development
- discuss if there is the need for any extra support
- discuss any issues which the parents or teachers think are relevant to further mutual understanding of the child and to help meet his/her needs. Such meetings may be requested by the teacher or by the parents.

If a child is experiencing difficulty in some aspect of life (academic, social or health) it may be helpful for parents and teachers to have a number of shorter meetings to ensure that a supportive dialogue is established.

A written progress report for each child will be sent to parents annually and will be completed before the end of the summer term.

Reports will include:

- A detailed and clear assessment of the performance of their child, in relation to the school's aims
- Comments on their progress and attainment in each main subject area
- Highlight strengths and areas for development
- Comments on general progress
- Pupil attendance data
- Statement or data on how the pupil's achievements against age-related expectations

Whole School Inclusion

The principles of this assessment policy apply to all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Assessment will be used diagnostically to contribute to the early and accurate identification of pupils' special educational needs and any requirements for support and intervention.

We will use meaningful ways of measuring all aspects of progress, including communication, social skills, physical development, resilience and independence. We will have the same high expectations of all pupils. However, this should account for the amount of effort the pupil puts in, as well as the outcomes achieved.

For pupils working below the national expected level of attainment, our assessment arrangements will consider progress relative to pupil starting points, and take this into account alongside the nature of pupils' learning difficulties.

Moderation

Moderation is a key part of assessment as it enables the school to be confident that the expectations and standards between classes are consistent. It also provides training for teachers, enabling them to compare and discuss standards of work and expectations.

Specific pieces of work: Waldorf Cambridge is collaborating with other Waldorf schools and Waldorf UK to work towards a method of national moderation across schools/ a process of benchmarking pupil work.

Book Looks: Department meetings provide a forum for discussions about the expectations placed on pupils and the quality of work being produced.

Half termly 'book looks' – either within department meetings or mentor sessions – contribute towards these discussions and provide a more formal framework for reviewing pupil's work. The focus of the book look will be determined by the School Development Plan focus, or something that has been flagged by staff or leaders as needing discussion.

Although reviewing book work provides significant insight into our child's learning journey, this is just one means by which to assess pupil progress and cannot ever fully represent the full breadth of learning that takes place.

Pupil progress meetings: During a pupil progress meeting, staff will briefly review the impact of the previous meeting. They will then review data and discuss children and how to best support their progress.

Learning Walks (a focused 'walk' through the school, visiting a range of different classes) take place regularly (at least once a half term). Each learning walk has a predetermined focus, which could range from academic to housekeeping, some example questions to consider might include: Is the content of the lesson tailored to children's starting points? Is the level of challenge appropriate for the most able? Is the classroom tidy and inviting? Are children respectful and kind?

Annual Appraisals and Mentoring Sessions/Lesson Observations are completed by the Teaching and Learning lead or Early Years Manager.

Training

Teachers will be kept up to date with developments in assessment practice, and are expected to develop and improve their practice on a regular basis. Time will be provided in meetings for discussion and staff development and well as additional inset training as appropriate. Teachers may have specific targets relating to assessment and feedback as part of their appraisal process.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Teaching and Learning lead.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy.

The Teaching and Learning Lead is responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed.

The link Trustee for assessment will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school.

Early Years

Our assessment and observation for the young child is based on the teacher's knowledge of child development, which is informed by the Waldorf pedagogical view, namely that the child has three distinct and important developmental stages of development the first being from birth to 7 years old and which is linked to this policy. It also aligns with statutory regulation and is oriented on the milestones outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for children from birth to 5. As we have children up until their sixth year in kindergarten, teachers also follow an embedded curriculum that has been designed and created with Waldorf UK with a read over document. We take guidance from Waldorf UK for setting appropriate goals in a Steiner Waldorf setting which includes relevant forms and assessment paperwork that relates to the Early Years Waldorf curriculum.

All staff (teachers, assistants, volunteers, and supply staff) contribute to the observation and assessment of a child. The person who compiles the assessment/reports etc., is known in Waldorf terms as the kindergarten 'teacher' or 'practitioner'. This person is the same as the EYFS practitioner, teacher, or key worker. The kindergarten Teacher holds the overall responsibility for the children in their group. We recognise that to properly meet the individual needs of each child and to sufficiently observe and assess their learning and development, it is important to allocate an individual key worker. The key worker will share information with the teacher on a regular basis. Parents are provided with their child's key worker's name, and whenever possible the teacher and key worker together feed back to the parents in consultations etc.

The regular assessment of each child's healthy and age-appropriate development rests upon the following procedures:

Early Years Starting Points Statement Form:

On entry to the kindergarten the kindergarten teacher meets with the parents to establish background information, including a brief biography forming a picture of the child. This is called the Initial meeting. This is entered on the Starting Point form, which includes questions relating to the EYFS Progress Check (2-3 yrs) if applicable. This form is adjustable and is used for all children who enter Kindergarten and is a first reference point when meeting the child and parents for the first time unless the teacher has received a 'baseline' check from a previous setting. The starting point form is intended to pick up any areas where support might be necessary as early as possible, while also gathering and gaining insight into the individual child. These checks create a starting point against which progress can effectively be measured. The starting point form is shared with the parents, and they are invited to contribute to it via online input or together with the teacher as part of the Initial meeting that happens once the child's application has been accepted. After an initial 6 week settling in period the teacher fills in the Starting Points Assessment part of the document to highlight what they have seen in the child and what they can see now.

Parent Consultations (twice yearly)

In the Autumn and Summer terms, the teacher will invite parents to a 30-minute parent consultation to discuss their child's development and progress in kindergarten. Parents are also invited to write on the parent consultation form to highlight struggles, achievements, developments, and concerns. The written content of the parent consultation form is informed by the shared observation of the child. This in-depth observation is a focus child observation. As part of the weekly planning, several children are highlighted as the focus children, so staff are aware of who to observe, although general observation of children is happening on a constant basis. All members of the kindergarten staff, who are in contact with a child daily, observe the child's development and make notes. These

observations are on-going together with the use of photographs, the observation of the child's drawing and activities that include elements like movement, group activities and craft projects.

Summative Assessment

The Kindergarten Progress Developmental Descriptors should inform teachers and kindergarten staff in making observations and comments in the Summative Assessment form. These Developmental descriptors are a guide to expected levels of progress for children throughout their time in kindergarten. The Summative Assessment is filled in twice a year and works in conjunction with the observations that are made of the child when there is a focus child week. The summative assessment informs the writing of the end of year Kindergarten reports; a highlighting and bringing together of the child's achievements, strengths, and areas for further development.

End of year Reports

At the end of each Kindergarten year, all children in kindergarten will receive an end of term report highlighting their achievements and developments. The information that is brought in the reports is a culmination of what was reported in the twice-yearly parent consultation.

At the end of a child's years in kindergarten, a summative report is written for the parents and is also passed on to the child's next teacher or school. A special celebration marks the 'journey to school' and parents will be invited to join in and celebrate this special moment of transition. The child celebrates their time in kindergarten with a showcasing of their project work (eg, weaving doll making, skipping rope etc)

When children need extra support:

There may be times where a child needs extra support if there are questions around learning and development, language support or any other area. Parents will be consulted and have input into any plans to support the child's needs and the SENDCo coordinates support with the child's teacher, speech therapist etc. The SENDCo's input comes after the observation of the child in the classroom setting. Plans and support can be put in place to create an IEP with the teacher and parents that can be implemented at school as well as areas defined that can be supported at home, (for more information please refer to our SEND Policy).

Transition to Class 1: movement journey to summative assessment

In the final year of kindergarten, the older children have more 'trips' and 'helpful' jobs throughout the main school to get used to and navigate the wider school setting.

As part of the transition into lower school, the older children of kindergarten have a Screening Movement Journey where outcomes of what is observed is recorded by the SENDCo and EY SENDCo leads. The children's motor coordination, balance, spatial orientation, and lateral dominance are assessed through a guided movement sequence led by the SENDCo teacher. Their fine motor skills, attention and representational skills are assessed through a drawing exercise. All observations are passed on and discussed with the future Class 1 teachers. The future Class 1 teacher visits the kindergartens to observe the children that are transitioning into their group. The teacher may also participate in Sunbeam (name of the older children in kindergarten) session in the summer term. A verbal picture of the child is also shared with the future Class 1 teacher and this together with the end of term report support the future Class 1 teacher in gaining insight to all the children in their class.

Children leaving our school to join another school will be supported in this transition. Prospective teachers may be invited to visit the child in our kindergarten to share information and create a better picture of the child. Their new school will also receive a report from kindergarten that has been especially adapted to highlight areas of learning and development in the national curriculum.

Child Study will also be used (see previous information).

Lower and Middle School

Age Related Learning Opportunities

As part of our curriculum framework, for each year group there is a set of key concepts and skills for the following areas: Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, Number, Shape and Measure. Main Lesson and Subject Lesson 'Schemes of Work' will cross reference the relevant key concepts and skills for each block/term.

The key concepts and skills are largely in line with those presented in '**The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum**' edited by M. Rawson and T. Richter (Steiner Waldorf Education) and have been developed in collaboration with other UK Steiner schools. This framework allows pupils' work to be assessed regularly and thoroughly and for that information to be used to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

Point in Time Assessment

On the half term (November, February and June) the class teachers make a Point in Time Assessment (PITA) and RAG (Red, Amber, Green) assessment for each child with regards to the ARLO's for Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, Number and Space and Measure.

In RAG rating, teachers assess whether a pupil is Red – emerging, Amber – developing or Green – secure against the specific descriptors taught.

In PITA scores, teachers reflect on the question, 'is this child on track to master the key concepts and skills for this area this year?' and make a professional judgement. The assessment uses 'On Track Point Guidance' grade descriptors that help the teacher to accurately assess the progress of each child with reference to the end points outlined in the curriculum framework.

The PITA's and RAG rating feed into Pupil Progress Meetings and are also used by the school to monitor pupil progress, attainment and teaching.

Holistic assessment

Twice yearly (January and July), teachers complete the holistic assessment for each child. This holistic assessment that looks at the child's progress each term in non academic areas. It specifically assesses areas such as problem solving, leadership and metacognition to highlight specific challenges and achievements that are not descriptor or academic subject based. These are long term areas for improvement, and will provide opportunities for recognition for children outside of an academic focus.

Marking

Waldorf Cambridge aims to balance effective marking and feedback with teacher workload. Teachers are part of the review process for this policy annually, and will discuss their workload and feedback during check-ins and appraisal meetings.

The focus for this year is quality over quantity, teachers will give fewer areas of improvement but ensure that they are revisited regularly during main lessons and summative at the end.

Main Lesson books are reviewed regularly, with verbal and/or written (from Class 3 onwards) feedback in pencil on the onion skin. Specific feedback should be given once per week for each child, mostly this will be in main lesson books, but could also take other forms, for example, maths marking, tests or presentation feedback.

Subject teachers will provide feedback half termly for written subjects. For practical subjects, feedback will be more regular but verbal. Pupils should be able to discuss their work and their areas of strength and improvement.

Guided self-assessment can also be undertaken by the children right from Class 1. For example, they can check that all the i's are dotted and t's crossed; that all their pictures are finished to the best of their ability.

Peer assessment may include reading their work back to a partner or swapping work to mark one another's, children 'critiquing' each others' work, or being guided/taught to give constructive feedback.

Teachers may make informal written notes/observations of the above assessments to help inform their planning and monitor pupil progress.

Class teachers will set clear expectations when setting work for pupils. Expectations for pupils will vary depending on individual needs and aptitudes.

All work should be:

- Dated
- Titled
- Clearly show whether it is independent work, dictated or copied from the board
- Avoid full drafts before putting work into main lesson books
- Use brackets to show mistakes, with correction after

From Class 3 upwards, summative feedback will take place at the end of each main lesson block, including two stars and a wish for areas for improvement and strength from both the teacher and the pupil.

From Class 6 upwards, pupils will have the opportunity to meet 1-to-1 with their class teacher to discuss their work and progress.

Upper school

Upper school focuses on progress and attainment against standards and criteria for GCSEs and the Level 2 Diploma in Integrated Education. Both these qualification types have clear outcomes and descriptors for each grade level. Teachers will use these to provide specific feedback for pupils throughout the 2 year course.

Upper school holistic assessment and marking will be as described above in the lower and middle school section.

Assessment points during the 2 year GCSE and Level 2 Diploma course

Here is the overview of Class 9 and 10 assessment points. Along with this is ongoing feedback through marking, meetings/chats/verbal feedback, and other normal school assessment (e.g. presentation feedback, practical write up assessment rubrics).

Assessment point	Type of assessment	Outcomes/feedback
Class 9 January	GCSE subject assessments based on past paper questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current working grades for GCSE subjects based on paper marks▪ Trialled reader and laptop – preferences noted and logistical issues reviewed▪ All pupils and parents meet with Anita to discuss access arrangements
Class 9 February	Level 2 Diploma review of work and feedback Feedback on effort and work completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current working grade for Level 2 Diploma▪ Feedback grades for effort and work completion
Class 9 June	GCSE past papers on modules covered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current working grades for GCSE subjects based on paper marks▪ Target grades for GCSE subjects▪ Exams access arrangements practiced, any amendments discussed with Anita
Class 9 July	Level 2 Diploma review of work and feedback Feedback on effort and work completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current working grade for Level 2 Diploma▪ Feedback grades for effort and work completion
Class 10 November	Level 2 Diploma review of work and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current working grade for Level 2 Diploma
Class 10 December	Feedback on effort and work completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Feedback grades for effort and work completion
Class 10 January	Mock papers on modules covered Feedback on effort and work completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current working grades and target grades revised as appropriate▪ Exams access arrangements practiced
Class 10 March	Level 2 Diploma review of work and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Final submission info
Class 10 April	Full mock papers on all GCSE course content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Current working grades and target grades revised as appropriate▪ Full exams protocol practiced

Current working grades – this is the grade we think the pupil will achieve if they continue their current work and effort level.

Target grades – this is the grade we think the pupil could achieve with full work and effort level.

If predicted grades are required for the next education establishment, we will provide these, taking into consideration all aspects of the pupil's work and potential.

Access arrangements

The SENDCo will complete assessments with all pupils during the Autumn term of Class 9. A specific assessment is required for assessing for extra time, previously other reports and assessments can be used to provide evidence but will not guarantee access arrangements will be agreed without the support of these specific assessments.

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini. Waldorf Cambridge recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also lend itself to cheating and plagiarism.

Pupils may not use AI tools:

- During assessments, including internal and external assessments, and coursework
- To write their homework or class assignments, where AI-generated text is presented as their own work

Pupils may use AI tools:

- As a research tool to help them find out about new topics and ideas
- When specifically studying and discussing AI in schoolwork, for example in IT lessons or art homework about AI-generated images. All AI-generated content must be properly attributed