

Assessment Policy

Introduction

This policy document reflects the aims, values and philosophy of the Nursery. These are described in detail in our rationale and aims section. The policy sets out the framework within which the whole staff operates and provides information on the strategies for the assessment of children's work, the records which are kept and the ways in which reports on children's performance are made. It applies to all the children and supports the principles described in our Equal Opportunities and Special Needs Policy. In addition this policy should be read in conjunction with all other policy documents and Schemes of Work.

Policy documents are intended to inform all staff, students, nursery nurses and parents. Copies are available from the manager on written request.

Rationale and Aims

At Rising Stars Nursery we believe that assessment, recording and reporting should:

- Identify children's ability on entry to the nursery in order to help them progress and to inform planning.
- Help monitor the children's progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and plan accordingly in order to raise expectations.
- Provide parents with ongoing information about their child to build a two way process of information.
- Celebrate the successes of all the children.
- Provide an accurate record of achievements to inform future settings, external agencies and parents.
- Ensure that all the staff in the nursery are working with clear and shared criteria.

On entry information

Prior to entry at the nursery we collect information about each child using:-

- Visit by parents/carers and child
- “All about Me” booklet
- Information sheet and Parent packs
- Transition Documents
- What to expect when

We aim to gather as much information as we need to make informed decisions when planning for the child’s entry into the nursery.

Planning for assessment strategies

Staff work together to use assessment information to plan for teaching and assessment.

Assessment information is collected through

- Daily evaluations
- Weekly planning sessions
- On-going formative assessment

All nursery staff are involved in the planning cycle and an agreed working rota is displayed. This ensures consistent application of standards and expectations throughout the nursery. In the Foundation Stage we use:-

Long term planning

Assessment is used to monitor and review to ensure a broad and balanced coverage of the Foundation Stage Curriculum through our themes.

Medium term planning

Assessment is used to review progress at the end of planned experiences and activities in order to identify areas for further development as next steps in learning. Termly plans are displayed on the main notice board for the over threes. These focus on the seven areas of learning, focusing on the 3 prime areas. All activities are differentiated, assessed and evaluated to ensure all learning objectives are met. At the end of each term, a summative assessment is made in order to monitor attainment targets.

Short term planning

Assessment is part of the cycle of learning. It should demonstrate what children can understand, know and can do. Staff plan for assessment by using weekly planning sheets and if necessary targeted learning plans. Activities are differentiated according to individual needs. Activities are assessed at the end of each day to inform future planning. Written evaluations are made on the planning sheets. Use of evaluation notes on the planning formats enable staff to keep pertinent, informal records and thereby indicate the next steps forward. The Early Years Professionals, manager and SENCO monitor the plans on a regular basis.

Within the 0 to 3 age range assessment is used to monitor and ensure progression. Assessment is part of the cycle of learning. Staff plan using the 7 areas of learning, focusing on the 3 prime areas – Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development.

A progress check between 24 and 36 months is undertaken by the child's key worker. Staff will share this with parents and request parent comments.

Assessment strategies

Effective assessment arises from the nursery's clear intended learning objectives at the planning stage. This is implemented through the use of formative assessment strategies. We believe that focused and positive feedback given to the children proves to be a motivational tool, which encourages further learning to take place.

The assessment strategies used are:-

- Formal observations e.g. tracking of individuals and groups. Observations based on a particular activity or experience.
- Informal observations e.g. open ended questions and listening to answers.
- Asking thought provoking questions and develop questioning techniques.
- Choosing work for display. Every child has work displayed, which is mounted attractively and labelled.
- Asking children to talk about what they have done e.g. circle time, discussion, snack time.
- Giving children feedback about what they have done and what they are going to do next. This can be achieved through rewards such as WOW stars and certificates.

Children are involved in the assessment process and are encouraged to develop their self-evaluation skills. Strategies to involve children in this process include:

- Talking on a one to one basis.
- Group discussion
- Practical activities
- Celebration of their achievements
- Praise and encouragement.

Record Keeping

A variety of assessment evidence is collected to form the basis of assessment records, which in turn are used for a variety of purposes. Records are kept on an informal basis and are based on the 7 areas of learning, ultimately indicating each child's progress towards the Early Years Foundation Stage.

We aim to utilise record keeping which is useful (i.e. to the staff, parents and outside agencies where appropriate) and manageable.

Informal Recording

Staff keep records, which they annotate on a daily basis to remind them of assessments they have made and help them to plan the next steps. All staff contribute to these informal records. Some of the ways we keep informal records at the nursery include:

- Evaluation notes on short term plans
- Evaluation notes on activity planning sheets
- Regular contact with parents

Formal Recording

The nursery maintains formal curricular records for individual children related to the 7 areas of learning. These records are used to inform reports for parents and are also used to monitor the progress and achievements of each child. Staff use the records to help inform their planning for the next stage of learning. Formal assessments are transferred throughout the nursery recording the children's progression over their time spent at the nursery. Parents have access to their child's assessments on request.

Individual Formal Curricular Records used by Rising Stars include an "All About Me" booklet, assessment sheets, tracking documents and Welcomm screening. Welcomm is a tool used to support children's language and communications skills. Additional input from nursery will be put in place if required.

Learning journeys are kept on each child. These include a number of observation formats and pieces of work, which are dated and annotated. The learning journeys are given to each child at the end of their time at the nursery.

For the under threes, a daily record sheet is used to inform parents/carers of their child's daily activities. The over threes use a communication board to share information with parents as well as having informal discussions with parents.

Reporting

We at Rising Stars Nursery inform parents/carers of their child's progress in the 7 areas of learning by

- Informal discussion with parents/carers. We see these as being extremely important in maintaining an open dialogue between all the important people in the child's life. An open-door policy is operated and the staff greet parents/carers every time their child attends nursery.

Staff are always willing to answer any questions a parent/carer wants to ask and an appointment can be made if a parent wants to discuss a sensitive issue which cannot be dealt with immediately.

- Parents/carers are kept informed about the life of the nursery and our planned activities and experiences. We display our plans on the parent's notice board.
- Annual written reports are given to the parents/carers of children who are entering reception classes in September. These reports are given out in June/July along with the child's transition profile.
- Parent's evening/meetings for the children entering reception classes in September take place in June/July where the reports can be discussed and their children's portfolios can be collected. Alternative arrangements will be made for any parent/carer who cannot attend.

Transfer

Information on each child is passed on to the next key person in the relevant room ensuring that there are developmental assessments of each child. This information comprises SEN information, assessment sheets and any other relevant information. Information from the nursery class will be passed on to parents. This information, with parental consent, will be sent to the school the child will attend.

In addition reports are written in response to requests from other agencies such as Social Services, Educational Psychologists, Child Development Centre or schools.

Reports are also written to support children with Special Educational Needs and those identified as being particularly able or gifted. (See SEN Policy).

Special Educational Needs

The policy of Rising Stars Nursery is that all children are entitled to equality of access to the full range of educational experiences available. (See SEN policy). It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that children are taught and assessed appropriately according to their needs. In addition to the principles and practice described in this policy the nursery undertakes the procedures recommended by the DfEE Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to ensure that parents and children are fully involved in all decision making and support programmes.

Roles and responsibilities

MANAGER: Catherine Teasdale

SENCO: Emily Darwen

SENCO deputy: Catherine Teasdale

All nursery staff to work as a team in order to provide a holistic approach to child centred learning.

Inset Provisions

A member of staff will attend appropriate assessment courses.

Evaluation and Review

It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor their adherence to this policy. The policy is reviewed annually by the Manager and SENCO. The outcomes are evaluated and targets for improvement are included within our planning process.