

ASSESSMENT POLICY

This Policy was updated in June 2017.

The Policy will be reviewed and updated bi-annually.

Trustee with Responsibility: Lesley Carrington, Teaching and Learning Team

Regular review of this policy will enable staff to evaluate its impact and effectiveness.

The Treehouse School

The Treehouse School

Nature, nurture and nourishment

Rationale

Learning is a subtle and complex process. We recognise that whilst most children encounter common milestones, they do so in different areas, at different rates. Assessment is an integral part of this process; it involves identifying progress, celebrating achievement, and identifying areas for development. The adult's role is to build up a picture of each child as learner so that s/he can provide the appropriate level of challenge, support or change in approach, to enable every child to move forward successfully and reach their full potential.

Principles

We aim to:

- monitor and assess all areas of a child's learning and development;
- encourage learning that is appropriate to each child's stage of development rather than chronological or year group expectations.
- use a range of strategies to gather information about every child as a learner;
- recognise, acknowledge and build on what a child can do;
- identify areas for development, in partnership with the child and their parent whenever appropriate;
- use assessments of individuals and groups to inform and guide planning;
- establish a continuous dialogue with the child and their parents about progress made;
- provide useful information to all parties when children move to a new setting.

Types of Assessment

Establishing a baseline:

We recognise that children arrive at The Treehouse with varying skills. What a child learns in the course of the day depends on a complex matrix of past experiences and current concerns. As a starting point for planning it is crucial to establish what the children's previous learning experiences have been. Before they join the school, parents will be asked to provide information about their child's interests and progress in the core areas of development. Information gathered will form the basis of initial provision.

Formative Assessment:

The emphasis at The Treehouse School is on formative assessment. On-going teacher assessment is key to ensuring all children's needs are met. This is achieved through careful observations and interactions with the children. Records of these findings will be maintained in a variety of forms that will include individual learning logs, videos, photographs and teacher's notes.

Using a combination of the teacher's observations (see appendix 1) and the child's self-assessment, significant achievements made by individuals will be recorded and celebrated. The teacher will monitor the child's progress in all areas of their development, recording observations in their learning log and significant milestones in their Golden folder.

The goal is for every child to be able to talk in an informed way about their own progress identifying their strengths and weaknesses; therefore feedback, whether verbal or written will only be given by adults when the child is alongside. Adults and children will have regular discussions about learning. Initially the adult will lead discussions, modelling reflection and evaluation. This will involve regular opportunities to discuss the areas of learning that a child is developing and recording significant progress in a learning log which will illustrate their learning journey. Over time and with practice the child will be encouraged to complete these steps more independently.

Summative Assessment:

During the course of the academic year summative assessment activities will be used to assess pupil's progress in all areas either individually or as a group, this will include twice yearly NARA reading assessments.

The Treehouse School

Nature, nurture and nourishment

Diagnostic:

Diagnostic tools may be used by teachers when children do not meet developmental milestones within acceptable timeframes, to establish how best to meet that child's needs.

Tracking Children's Progress

Children will keep a log of their learning journey using photographs, annotations, sketches etc. to record the milestones they have achieved and their next steps. This process of reflection and evaluation will involve teachers, parents and children and will enable all parties to be aware of agreed areas for development.

Teachers will track individual children's Smart progress on a continuum to provide an on-going record of their achievement. This information will enable teachers to ensure that children are making progress and will contribute to discussions with both the parents and child.

Partnership with Parents

Building close working relationships with each child's family, and viewing parents as partners in their child's education is an essential element of the school's work. An open door policy will mean that parents are welcome to come in and become involved in their child's work at any time. Staff and children will also invite parents in when there is cause for celebration. Parents or teachers can initiate a more in depth discussion when either party feels it appropriate. A summary of progress will be shared formally with parents twice a year.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Assessment, recording and reporting procedures will be monitored annually in order that they remain meaningful and manageable.

Appendix 1

Observation of Children Learning

Using Observation to assess children's learning

Observation will be the main strategy used to help teachers tune into what an individual child is trying to achieve; what they are interested in; who they like to be with; the roles they take on; whether they are struggling or being challenged. The information gathered will be used to build up a picture of the child and their particular strengths and needs.

Building a Rounded Profile

In order to build up a rounded view of each individual child as a learner:

- The children will be observed at different times of the day;
- The children will be observed during different kinds of session – is the child a different learner when an adult is there as opposed to when they are learning with their peers or alone?
- Observations of children will be made by more than one adult;

The Treehouse School

Nature, nurture and nourishment

- Parents' and carers views will be included to give an insight into a child's learning, their interests, their anxieties and their achievements;
- The child's voice will be included – what does the child believe to be their strengths? What do they enjoy learning about and how do they think they learn best?

Different kinds of observation for different occasions

Investing time in observation will save planning experiences or activities that are either beyond a child's ability or understanding, do not stretch or challenge them, or simply do not interest them.

Observations during adult-focused activities

During adult-focused sessions i.e. where the teacher has a particular objective in mind for an individual or group of children, teachers will note significant steps made by an individual. Whenever appropriate, these will be shared with the child, noted, dated and added to child's learning profile.

Sometimes teachers may choose to stand back and observe an individual child or group learning independently either because there are some concerns about that child/ren or because there are some gaps in their learning profile. For longer observations, a more detailed prompt sheet will be used (see appendix 2).

Observations during adult-initiated activities

During adult-initiated activities, i.e. when the adult has set up an activity and left the children to work with an individual or group, they will be able to find out:

- Whether children have understood the challenge that was posed (was it an effective adult-initiated activity? Was it sufficiently open-ended? Did the children think the problem was worth-solving?)
- Whether children have moved on from the original problem and followed their own interests in a different learning direction (if so, what are their interest? What was the thinking behind the change of interest?)
- What the group – or individual children – is/are trying to achieve, what they are exploring and thinking (so that the teacher's first question tunes straight into their thinking and doesn't just seek to establish 'what are you doing?')

These observations may just stay in the teacher's head or if significant, will be jotted down and added to the child's learning profile or the teacher's planning book at a later stage.

Observations during child-initiated activity

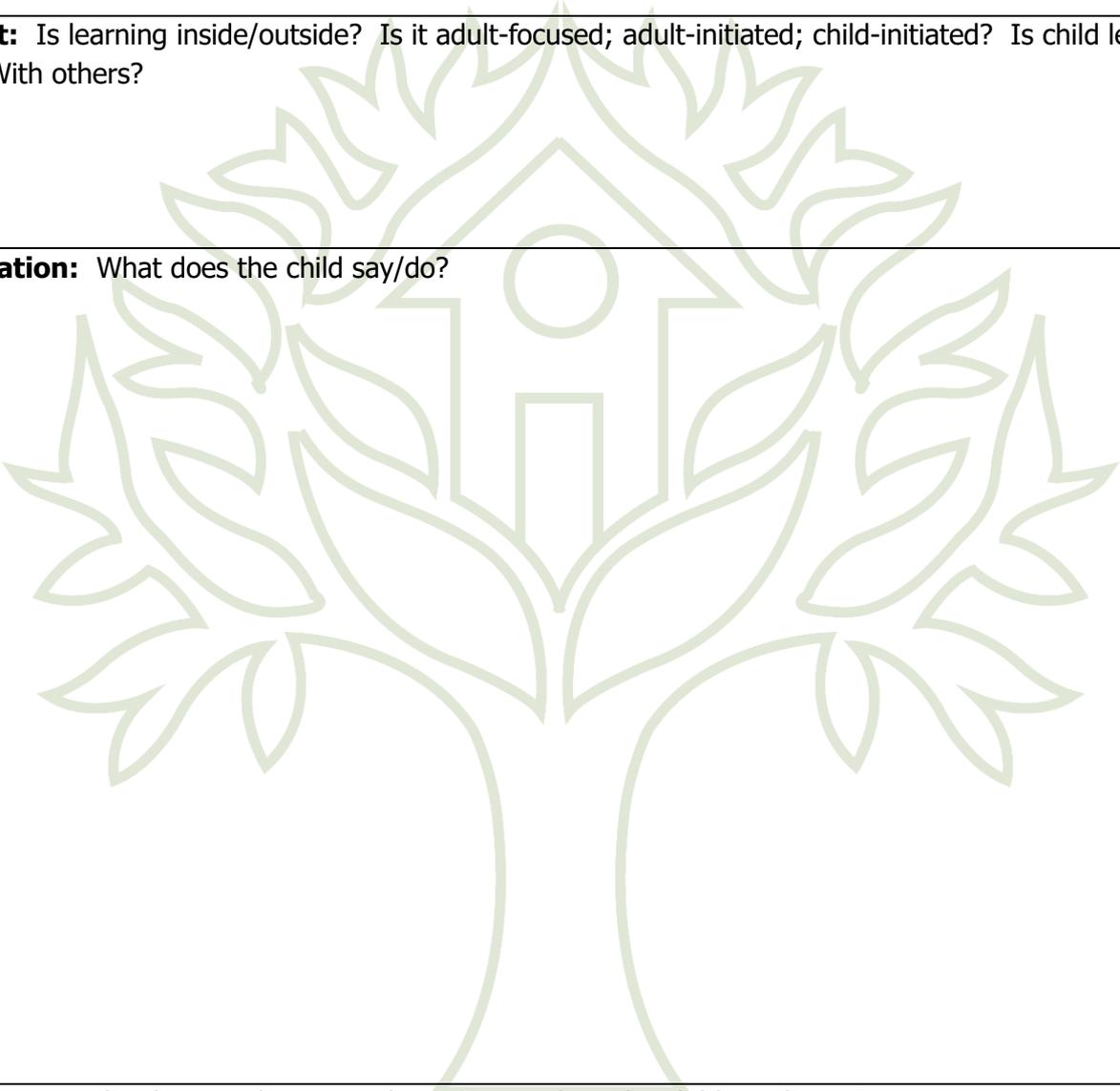
Children are often more free to think, try out and test out what they want to investigate, or to put forward an opinion or idea when an adult is not directing the learning. It is therefore essential to observe children when they are learning independently of an adult. Child initiated learning is unpredictable. Observation needs time and every ounce of the teacher's curriculum and child development knowledge to move from the observation from:

- What are they doing? To
- What are they learning? or
- What are they showing me they know?

The Treehouse School
Nature, nurture and nourishment

Appendix 2

Observation Sheet	
Child:	Date:
Length of observation:	
Context: Is learning inside/outside? Is it adult-focused; adult-initiated; child-initiated? Is child learning alone? With others?	
Observation: What does the child say/do?	
Next Steps: What learning/resources/experiences does the child need next?	



The Treehouse School