Lower School Assessment Policy and Procedure
January 2020

Reviewed by: Sarah Fox
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Next review: August 2020
Related documents: Year Plan Template; Main Lesson 'Scheme of Work' Template; Subject Lesson 'Scheme of Work' Template; Termly Holistic Assessment Template; On Track Point Guidance; Pupil Progress Meeting Template; Curriculum Policy; Lower School Core Curriculum Outline; Lower School Subject Lesson Outlines; Solving the Riddle of the Child; The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum; School Readiness Policy.
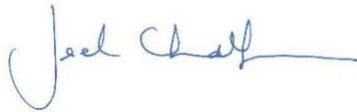
Endorsement
Full endorsement is given to this policy by:

Name: Joel Chalfen
Position: Cambridge Steiner School Trustee

Signed:

Date: January 2020

Lower School Assessment Policy

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.

"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

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

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.

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 not simply a means of assessing the knowledge and skills of the pupils. It 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.

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

Lower School Assessment Procedure

Key Concepts and Skills

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. This will be complete across the full range of subjects by July 2020. Once in place, 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.

Curriculum Coverage

Teachers make a note of the key concepts and skills covered each term in each area. They are highlighted in their planning folder, orange for the autumn term, green for the spring and yellow for the summer.

Point in Time Assessment

On the half term (November, February and June) the class teachers make a Point in Time Assessment (PITA) for each child with regards to Writing, Reading, Speaking and Listening, Number and Space and Measure. On the full term (December and April) PITAs take place as part of the termly review for the subject lessons. These assessments allow pupils' progress to be tracked and analysed by senior leaders. 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.

Termly Summative Observations

This is a qualitative and holistic assessment that looks at the child's progress each term in all areas of the curriculum as well as their social skills. It allows the teacher to comment on the specific challenges and achievements of individual children, and to set individual learning goals. It also highlights areas that need attention or further support. This then informs the subsequent planning of the teachers. A specific set of questions is used to guide the thinking of the teacher when carrying out this assessment. These assessments are completed at the end of each term, in the summer term this takes the form of the child's annual progress report.

Regular Marking

Class Teachers look at the children's bookwork during daily lesson time, giving feedback in situ - mostly not recorded. Main Lesson and practice books are reviewed regularly, with verbal and/or written (from Class 3 onwards) feedback in pencil. 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 set clear expectations when setting work for pupils. Expectations for pupils may vary depending on individual needs and aptitudes. All work should be dated. For the younger classes, the

teacher may write the short date onto the child's work, or the teacher can keep a record sheet of which piece of work was done when.

Class teachers use a simple coding system (appropriate to the age of the class) to identify what type of task the children have been set. Written work generally falls into the following three categories:

Type of Writing	Benefits	Example Code
Dictated	Dictations provide opportunities for ongoing assessment, particularly for phonological knowledge and accurate spelling.	Encircled 'D'
Emergent / independent	This should form the main bulk of pupils' work. Independent work may first be written up in a practice book, to be edited by the pupil and checked for corrections, before writing the work up neatly.	Encircled 'M' (mine); blue dot (independent)/ purple dot (with help)
Copied	Giving children work to copy from the board allows for high expectations of work to be put in place and encourages handwriting and spelling skills. This method of learning is used sparing, with specific purpose in mind e.g. a starting sentence for independent writing; a poem exemplifying structure and form.	Encircled 'C'; red dot

Moderation

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. Each book look takes a different focus (such as marking and feedback, presentation, appropriate challenge, links to key concepts and skills and progress) and a sample of pupil's books (for example high achievers, EAL pupils or pupils on the SEND register). Cambridge Steiner School is also collaborating with other Steiner Waldorf schools in the UK to work towards a method of national moderation across schools/ a process of benchmarking pupil work. 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 the pupil progress meeting, staff will briefly review the impact of the previous meeting. They will then use the 'Pupil Progress Meeting' pro-forma to support discussions of children and how to best support their progress. This meeting takes place on the half term (November, February, June) following the PITAs.

Learning Walks (a focused 'walk' through the school, visiting a range of different classes) take place regularly (at least twice a half term). Learning walks by the Education Manager/Subject Leads allow accurate monitoring of the Quality of Teaching; giving all staff the opportunity to participate allows for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities. Each learning walk should have a pre-determined 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?

Class folders (in line with SWSF purple folder system) contain a checklist to help keep track of completed paperwork and class folders are checked half termly to help monitor assessment and planning.

Annual Appraisals and Mentoring Sessions/Lesson Observations are scheduled by the Education Manager.

Child Observation/Study

An important agenda item in teachers' meetings is the study of the child. In these Child Studies, teachers share observations connected to a specific child, study the general development of that child and look for significant patterns or themes that might help them in their educational approach to that child.

Annual Review

In the summer term each teacher should conduct a review of progress made in relation to the key concepts and skills set for the year for each child, alongside their non-academic progress. The same should be undertaken in the subject lessons. This will feed into the annual progress reports for parents. An honest review will make for effective and efficient planning for the forthcoming year.

Screenings

Five year old, eight year olds and ten year old assessments are undertaken by a SEND trained teacher (usually in the summer term) and are recorded for each child; they are used to support the early identification of needs, aid transitions and inform teacher planning (see also School Readiness Policy).

Wide Range Achievement Tests

As part of our process for monitoring pupil progress the school periodically conducts Wide Range Achievement Tests: a brief achievement test measuring reading recognition, spelling, and arithmetic computation. These take place for all pupils from Class 4 onwards once a year (usually in the spring term).

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.

Reporting to Parents

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

During the course of the year the Class Teacher will organises 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. These reports give parents a detailed and clear qualitative assessment of the performance of their child, in relation to the school's aims, with comments on their progress and attainment in each main subject area.

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

Summary Diagram
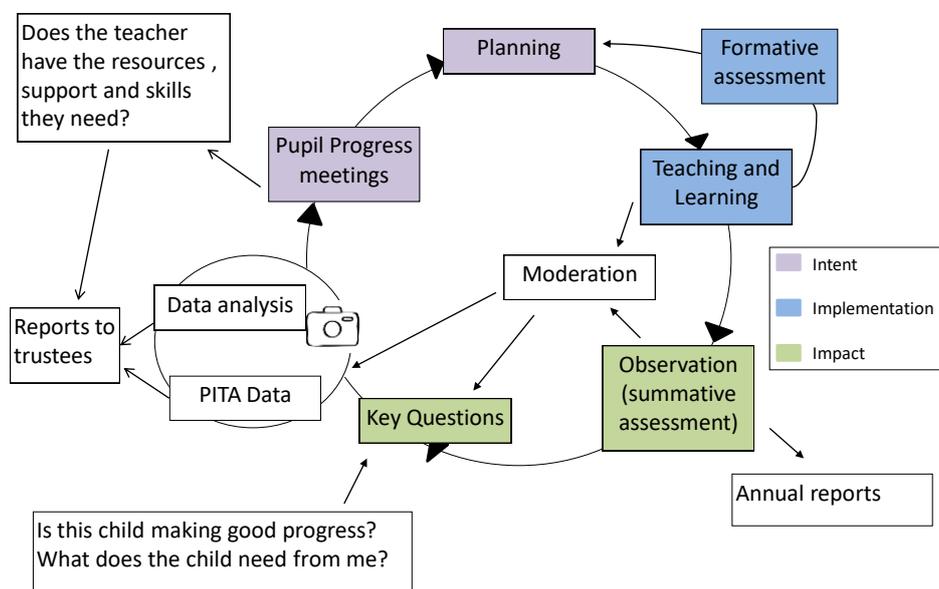
Comprehensive model of assessment that keeps key questions at the centre:
Are children making progress? What do they need from the teacher?

Thank you for taking the time to read this policy/procedure.