

EYFS Assessment



Teaching & Learning Guide



**CASTLEWARD
SPENCER ACADEMY**

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Author	LT

Assessment

At Castleward Spencer Academy we make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Observations take place daily both formally and informally. Those which are more formal are recorded either as snapshot observations which may or may not contain excerpts of the child's speech during the observation. These are recorded electronically with the use of tablets and the app "Evidence Me" or handwritten and added to the child's Learning Journey. Observations are referenced to learning and both the Birth to 5 Matters and Development Matters documentation to allow attainment and progress to be shown.

Practitioners use observations and work samples to support their developing knowledge of the child. It informs them of the child's abilities, needs, interests, schemas and learning styles. The observations are then evaluated and used to identify the child's next steps and progress over time. They are then showcased in personal Learning Journey records, which are always available to parents and carers, who are encouraged to comment and contribute with information from home as much as possible.

During FS1 and FS2 the children's learning is referenced to the statements in Development Matters under the following stages of development

- birth to 3
- 3 and 4-year-olds
- children in reception.

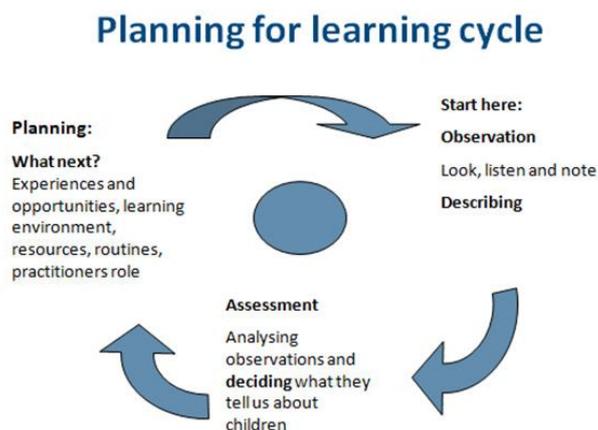
There are four assessment points each year; on Entry, Autumn 2, Spring 2, and Summer 2. The children are assessed as being Beginning, Working Towards or Secure at the relevant Age and Stage for each area of learning. These are used to assess attainment and progress. At the end of FS2 (Summer 2) the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is used alongside Development Matters and the children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning as being Emerging (have not yet met the required standard) or Expected. Those children achieving at least the expected level in the three Prime Areas and

Literacy and Mathematics (from the Specific Areas) achieve a Good Level of Development.

Reception Baseline Assessment

The reception baseline assessment (RBA) is a short and simple check of a child's early literacy, communication, language and maths skills when they begin school, which is statutory for all schools from September 2021. The assessment will form the start of a new measure of how schools are helping their pupils to progress between reception and year 6. During a 20-minute one-to-one session with their teacher or teaching assistant, each child will individually do a number of practical and interactive tasks. They can answer questions verbally or by pointing or moving objects. The tasks are carefully designed to check early maths and early literacy, communication and language skills.

The results will be used at school level to measure the progress of the year group from primary education to year 6. Individual results or scores for each child are not kept. However teachers will receive a series of short, narrative statements on how each child did to help them plan teaching and learning in the first term of school. There will be no published score.



Observations

'Practitioners should complete their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations. Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. Paperwork should be limited to that which is absolutely necessary to promote

children's successful learning and development.' Here, the focus is on short-term observations which ensure that all children are observed on a regular basis. An observation needs to be of something that is significant to an individual - a 'wow' moment - not a tick list.

Each observation has a clear storyline. They begin with a spark of interest, are followed by a pursuit of that interest, and then finish with some sort of completion of the whole journey. In between, practitioners might have facilitated an extending of that interest, conversations, or new ideas. The best way to identify a great topic for observation is by identifying that clear spark and the follow up of that spark to its conclusion. That is what tells you a learning experience has taken place.

What is observation?

- Watching
- Listening
- Noticing what children are doing as a whole - their personality, behaviour, what they say, and their learning
- Noticing how they respond to the setting, to different approaches, to different people
- Noticing how they respond to new experiences, signs of how they are feeling

Why observe?

We gather essential information about the children:

- their individuality
- their stage of development
- their interests
- their needs and
- their learning styles

This gives us information to share with parents and an insight into the received curriculum, thereby challenging assumptions. The observation needs to add value and not be an end in itself. It is crucial that all members of the team are involved in the observation process, as children respond differently depending on the adult, and adults pick up on different aspects of learning.

At the beginning of each week, practitioners discuss who their focused children are going to be for the week. This will allow ample time to be with these

children, playing, exploring, and observing throughout the week, ensuring that the focused children have been observed during a variety of self-initiated or adult initiated challenges.

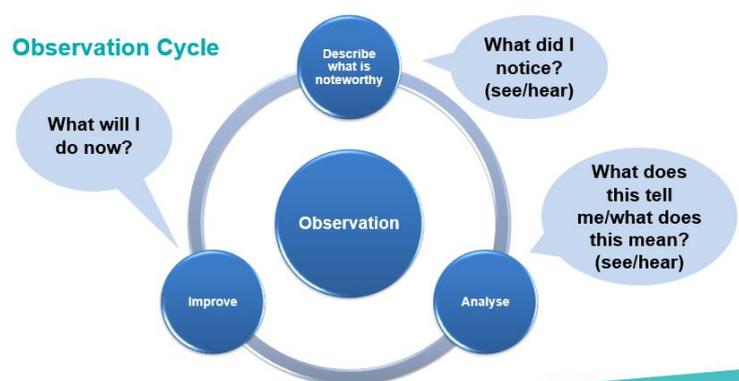
Observations and evidence are finalised by the end of each session either by being stuck into the child's learning journey or uploaded to Evidence Me. Practitioners set aside time to reflect and discuss what happened during the day, who was doing what and where, and how this can be developed the next day to extend learning opportunities. Practitioners use the Coverage Tracker Report on Evidence Me to monitor observations, to ensure that there is coverage and that children have access to all areas of learning. This is then used to inform planning, as the provision is evaluated to consider where the learning is happening and what areas are being covered, which less so.

Practitioners consider the following questions:

- What have I observed?
- Why was it important?
- How has it improved my knowledge of the child?

Observations should show 'significant' moments in the child's learning. If it is something that has been noted before then it is not necessary to repeat again.

What does a good observation look like at CWSA?



Describe- A good observation describes the interaction that is taking place between the child and either another child, an adult, or an object. The observation should be descriptive and tell the full story of the interaction. Practitioners focus on the length of time that the child was engaged in the

activity, write exactly what they were doing, with details about resources and words they used and consider what does this mean for the child's learning?

Using the child's voice is a great way to show how the child has engaged with their learning. Quoting the child is a very effective way to do this as it clearly shows the child's ideas, thought processes and how they are engaging with others around them. They are always recorded in a non-biased, context free, non-judgemental, and factual way.

Look for progress- Good observations give a clear insight into the child's learning and, over time, they should show progression.

When observing a child, we look for:

- New skills that the child demonstrates that have not been seen in previous observations
- Learning which builds upon skills or knowledge
- Interests that the child demonstrates
- How they are showing the characteristics of effective learning in their play.

The *Characteristics of Effective Learning* poster, provides suggestions as to what adults can do, as well as the ideas of what resources can be provided within the setting, to encourage children to become fully engaged in their learning.

We also acknowledge if there are areas that a child is having difficulty with, in order to be able to provide opportunities to rectify this. Planning is amended to consider skills that the child would benefit from practising, such as counting or fine motor skills. For example, whilst observing a child using the construction toys it is observed that the child is finding it difficult to fasten the small pieces together, this would then be recorded as a next step. The planning would then be adapted so that either later that day, or later in the week, fine motor skills activities would be provided to encourage the child to build the muscles in their hands to make fastening small objects easier.

A reflective adult-Practitioners at CWSA acknowledge the importance of their role in observations. In order to move the children's learning on, it is important that practitioners are able to:

- Recognise the learning that the child is engaged in
- Scaffold the learning of the child to get the best of the 'teachable moment'
- Use open-ended questioning to help the child provide their reasoning and ideas.

Staff are encouraged to use the lanyard-sized questioning prompts available to help structure open-ended questions and ensure that accurate objectives and next steps are identified.

How are observations used to support learning at CWSA?

It is important to remember that observation is not just a box-ticking exercise. The purpose is to provide information, such as next steps that help to inform decision making for planning in the setting, so that practitioners can move the child's learning on as quickly as possible. The insights that observations provide, such as the child's interests, skill progression or barriers to learning are vital for setting up provision that reflects the individual child's learning needs.

The more the learning is tailored to the individual, by reflecting on their next steps from observations, the further the child will be able to go on their learning journey in the EYFS.

Next steps

Child development- Once the child's current developmental stage has been determined from observations, the next step can be formed using the practitioner's knowledge of child development, supported by the next steps in the EYFS. Practitioners are aware that these steps may be too large or too small for the child. This will be especially true for children who have special educational needs or who are gifted and talented.

Extending an interest- If a clear interest has been identified from the observations it can be scaffolded and extended. This may be through further, similar activities such as extending an interest in fire engines into other transport vehicles or into people who help us. This is a good next step for a child who has a strong interest, such as a schema. Activities that link to the child's interest may be used to encourage children to access different areas of the curriculum. For example, the interest in fire engines could be extended to water play by introducing hoses outdoors or extended to numbers by introducing the idea of phoning 999.

Embed a learning point-

It is important to embed learning that may only just be emerging. This could be as simple as re-reading a story or repeating activities again. Once the practitioner feels that the learning is embedded, the activity can be changed slightly to move the learning on. For example, the child may be investigating conservation of number using coins. Once embedded, this can be extended to include objects such as teddies or cars. Or to take the learning in a different direction. This form of next step may seem very small but can reinforce learning. If children are moved on too quickly, the learning does not become embedded.

Personal social and emotional development-

Children who are secure and have a mastery disposition have a good base from which to learn. Developing children's personal, social, and emotional skills allows many other sorts of learning to take place. This next step is most suited for whole group work, as well as individual children. Generally, children respond well to repetition and enjoy the security of knowing what is happening next

Choosing the next steps should not be a random action; it should be considered, and the reasons why a choice has been made should be clear. The choice of next step must be part of a bigger picture to support the child's holistic development. Sometimes there is an unintentional bias by the practitioner because they may view children's development through the lens of their own experience and knowledge. Practitioners review their observations and assessments to ensure that all areas of the EYFS, including the characteristics of effective learning (Development Matters), have been covered. Equally, there will be occasions when some observations do not require a next step, it may be that once they have achieved this there is no way to move them on.