



**First Thought
Independent School**

FIRST THOUGHT CARE SERVICES

Assessment Recording and Reporting Policy

2026-2027

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Aims

This policy aims to:

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

Legislation and guidance

Since the removal of National Curriculum levels in 2014, schools have been free to develop their own approaches to assessment.

This policy refers to the recommendations in the [Final Report of the Commission on Assessment without Levels](#).

It also refers to statutory reporting requirements set out in [the Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005: schedule 1](#).

Principles of assessment

Good quality assessment underpins highly effective teaching and learning. First Thought Independent School believes that assessment should acknowledge and encourage the wider development of each individual learner. To this end, learners in and Key Stages 1, 2 are assessed against EQUALS Informal, Semi-formal and Formal Assessment Framework, which looks at the wider skills profile of learners, and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes that focus on developing independence skills and removing barriers to learning.

Areas assessed by the Equals Assessment Framework

- Communication, Language, and Literacy
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding the World

EHCP outcomes

EHCP outcomes are individual learner-specific outcomes which aim to address wider barriers to learning and independence skills.

Accreditation:

- **In Key Stage 2** pupils can gain AQA Unit Awards as recognition for achieving specific learning outcomes within a unit of work across various subject areas.

Assessment approaches

At First Thought Independent School, assessment is integral to understanding each pupil's individual learning journey. Given the complex profiles of our pupils many of whom have a diagnosis of Autism, severe learning difficulties (SLD) assessment must be flexible, holistic, and meaningful. Our approach ensures that assessment supports personalised progress, informs planning, and celebrates small but significant steps.

We use a combination of **formative** and **summative** assessment, carefully adapted to reflect the needs of our pupils and the individualised pathways they follow.

Formative Assessment

Definition:

Formative assessment is an ongoing process that takes place during learning activities. It helps staff understand how pupils are responding to teaching and enables them to adapt strategies to support the next steps in learning.

Purpose:

- Identify what pupils already know, understand and can do
- Inform day-to-day planning and differentiation
- Provide real-time feedback to pupils using appropriate communication methods
- Support individualised learning targets (e.g. EHCP outcomes, IEPs,)
- Build a detailed picture of personal progress across different contexts

Examples of Practice:

- Annotated observations of pupils engaging in tasks (e.g. turn-taking in group play)
- Use of visual prompts, communication aids or switches to record responses
- Video/photo evidence to capture non-verbal communication, sensory exploration or functional skills
- Daily learning logs maintained by staff, linked to curriculum and EHCP targets
- Assessment against individualised 'I can' statements or pre-key stage standards
- Structured interaction sessions (e.g. Attention Autism or Intensive Interaction) monitored for engagement and response
- Use of assessment frameworks such as Engagement Model or Routes for Learning

Summative Assessment

Definition:

Summative assessment is a periodic measure of what a pupil has learned or achieved, used to track longer-term progress and inform reports to parents, professionals, and external bodies.

Purpose:

- Review progress over time against curriculum expectations or personalised targets
- Inform annual review meetings and EHCP updates
- Provide evidence for transition planning and external agency reporting
- Evaluate the impact of interventions or specialist programmes
- Inform school-wide data analysis and strategic planning

Examples of Practice:

- End-of-term reviews of EHCP targets using a traffic light or RAG rating system
- Assessment using frameworks like MAPP (Mapping and Assessing Personal Progress), B Squared, or bespoke school-based progress trackers
- Annual school reports written in parent-friendly language with photographic evidence
- Moderation of pupil learning evidence across staff teams to ensure consistency
- Pupil progress meetings with key staff and therapists to review holistic development

This dual approach ensures that assessment is meaningful, person-centred, and contributes to an in-depth understanding of each pupil's unique learning journey. Our commitment is to ensure that assessment is not simply about data collection, but about recognising every form of progress, however small, and using it to inform positive next steps.

Nationally Standardised Summative Assessment

Nationally standardised assessments are used where appropriate to:

- Monitor school-wide performance and identify trends.
- Assess performance in comparison with national expectations.
- Ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

However, the majority of pupils at First Thought Independent School work below national assessment standards.

Where applicable, assessments may include:

- Phonics Screening Check in Year 1.
- National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

However, it is expected that pupils will more likely work towards gaining AQA Unit Awards as recognition for achieving specific learning outcomes within a unit of work across various subject areas.

Teachers, where applicable will complete statutory teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 when appropriate. However, for our pupils, most of whom will be working below expected standards, disapplication from assessments may be applied.

Tracking and Evidence Collection

All assessments, including formative and summative evidence, are recorded in Tapestry. This ensures that:

- Progress is documented effectively.
- Observations, photos, and videos create a comprehensive learning profile.
- Data can be analysed to monitor trends and inform planning.

Reporting and Feedback Assessment outcomes are shared with parents through termly reports and EHCP reviews. Reports to parents contain information about progress and attainment providing parents with a clear assessment of the performance of their child. Regular meetings with parents, carers, and external professionals ensure that targets remain relevant and achievable. Pupils are also involved in discussions about their progress, fostering self-awareness and motivation.

Collecting and using data

At the start of each academic year, baseline assessments are completed by teachers for all pupils. Baseline assessments at the start of a new academic year are important as they inform the class teacher of prior learning, allow for clear identification of targets and next steps, and ensure that progress within each academic year can be monitored accurately.

Further attainment data is collected during the three summative assessment data drops which occur towards the end of each full term (approximately terms two, four, and six). At these points, teachers formally record progress against the specific assessment frameworks utilised within their class.

Data is collected against the following assessment frameworks during the initial baseline and subsequent termly data drops across the academic year:

- **Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP):** Progress towards specific EHCP outcomes (individualised for each pupil).
- **EQUALS Informal, Semi-formal and Formal Assessment Framework** - Progress towards specific learning aspirations in Communication, Thinking and Problem Solving and wider curriculum areas at three levels Encountering, Exploring and Developing Understanding.

Primary Framework Focus Of the assessment frameworks identified above, each class will use one primary framework (Informal, Semi-formal or Formal), which will form the focus of their evidence collection and data drops. Progress against individual EHCP outcomes applies to all pupils across the school.

Evidence Collection Assessment data is collected using the evidence collection tool Tapestry. Tapestry allows for evidence to be gathered on a day-to-day basis for all assessment frameworks used across the school. This evidence includes:

- Written observations.
- Annotated work samples.
- Photographic and video evidence.

This evidence is then used by teachers to identify accurate attainment levels for each individual statement as the pupil progresses through their assessment framework. This information is formally recorded at termly data drops.

Data Analysis Attainment and progress are analysed within Tapestry using the Insights data analysis tool. Insights enables:

- Tracking of trends in performance.
- Identification of gaps in learning.
- Evaluation of the impact of teaching strategies.

Using Data for Planning and Support The data collected is used to:

- Analyse learner progress.
- Celebrate success and achievements.
- Identify areas where additional support may be required.

Teachers work closely with members of the Leadership Team to review class data, monitor progress, and develop support plans for individual pupils where needed. This process ensures that appropriate interventions and strategies are implemented to help all pupils achieve their potential.

Reporting to parents

There are three parent meetings across the year in addition to the yearly meeting to review each learner's EHCP. Progress data for each learner forms a key component to these discussions. In addition to the planned meetings, parents are welcome to contact class teachers to discuss the progress of their child at any time.

Inclusion

First Thought Independent School is a fully inclusive school, and the principles of this assessment policy apply to all learners. All assessment frameworks utilised across the school are designed to meet the needs of all learners who attend the school and celebrate the wider development of all learners, including the individual progress they make.

Training

All teachers receive training about assessing and recording during their initial induction training. Whole school in service training, including teaching assistants, is used to develop good practice in assessment and recording.

Roles and responsibilities

Senior Leaders

Senior Leaders 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

Head of Education

The Head of Education is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the 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 Senior Leaders on all key aspects of pupil progress and attainment, including current standards and trends over previous years

Teachers

- Teachers are responsible for following the assessment procedures outlined in this policy.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be shared with the advisory board.

All teaching staff are expected to read and follow this policy. The Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is followed.

The Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the school, through:

- Lesson observations
- Learning walks
- Work scrutinies
- Moderation meetings
- Learner progress meetings
- Monitoring of evidence collection (using Evidence for Learning)
- Data analysis of attainment and progress (using Insights)

Links with other policies

This assessment policy is linked to:

Curriculum policy

- Early Years Foundation Stage policy and procedures
- Formal accreditation and examination policy
- Examination contingency plan

