



Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest Assessment Policy (Linked to Birth to 5 Matters)

Aims of Assessment

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and Nest, we believe that assessment is a vital tool to support each child's learning and development. Our assessment practices are grounded in the values and principles of *Birth to 5 Matters*, reflecting a holistic, inclusive, and play-based approach to early childhood education. We use assessment to understand each child's progress, plan next steps, and work in partnership with families and other professionals.

Our assessment policy aims to:

- Support children's individual learning journeys through ongoing, formative assessment.
- Build a rich picture of each child's development across all areas of the EYFS.
- Involve children and their families as active participants in assessment.
- Ensure that assessment is meaningful, not burdensome, and supports professional decision-making.
- Promote equity and anti-bias practice through reflective and inclusive approaches.

Principles of Assessment (Aligned with Birth to 5 Matters)

Our assessments follow these principles outlined in Birth to 5 Matters:

- **Respect for the child:** Children are seen as competent learners.
- **Relationship-based:** Learning is observed and assessed through warm, trusting relationships.
- **Play-based:** Learning is embedded in play and real experiences.
- **Narrative not numerical:** Assessment is formative and descriptive, not tick-box or data-led.
- **Reflective:** Involves practitioner reflection and informed professional judgment.
- **Developmentally appropriate:** Based on the non-linear, holistic development of children.

Our Guiding Principles (Aligned with Birth to 5 Matters)

We are guided by the following key principles:

- Assessment is for learning, not of learning.
- Observation is central to understanding each unique child.

- Assessment should be broad and narrative, not tick-list-based.
- Children's interests, identities, cultures and voices must be visible in assessments.
- Practitioners' professional judgement is trusted and supported.

Assessment Procedures

On Entry:

Initial baseline observations during the first 6 weeks, focusing on the Characteristics of Effective Learning and Prime Areas of Development.

Parent/carer input gathered through home visits or settling-in open events.

Ongoing Formative Assessment:

Our core assessment process is embedded in everyday interactions:

- Practitioners engage in purposeful observation of children as they play, explore, and interact.

Observations may be:

- Spontaneous or planned
- Individual or group-based
- Written, photographic, or audio/visual
- Through room floor books

Practitioners note:

- What the child is doing or saying
- Levels of involvement and well-being
- Possible learning or development taking place
- Links to the child's interests, culture, or prior experience

These observations inform responsive planning and environmental adjustments. Linked to the Birth to 5 Matters Developmental Pathways but not used as a checklist.

Summative Assessments:

- Conducted termly through review of learning journals, key person reflections, and professional discussion.
- Outcomes are summarised in narrative form, covering the child's development across the Prime and Specific areas.
- Key person will record children's success and areas to work on, on a 'Progress on a Page Document'. These targets will then be followed up through 1-1, group and whole class teaching.
- Shared with parents/carers and used to inform planning and support.

Transition to Reception / Other Settings

- A copy of the child's yearly report is created and shared with the new class teacher of each child.
- This includes key strengths, interests, dispositions, and areas for further development.
- Practitioners meet with receiving teachers through school-to-school visits. (where possible).

Inclusion and Equalities

- We are committed to equity, inclusion, and anti-discriminatory practice. Our assessment practices reflect and uphold every child's right to be recognised, understood, and supported as an individual within a diverse community. We ensure that assessment is used to celebrate each child's unique identity and learning pathway, not to compare or label.

Inclusive Practice in Assessment

- Assessment is rooted in knowledge of the whole child, including their cultural, linguistic, physical, and emotional context.
- We recognise that children may express learning in diverse ways, and we value multiple forms of communication (verbal, non-verbal, creative, physical).
- Practitioners are aware of and actively challenge bias or deficit thinking in the interpretation of observations or progress.

Equity Over Equality

- We recognise that equal treatment does not always lead to equal outcomes.
- Assessment is adapted to meet individual needs, including: Children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL), Children from minority ethnic or marginalised backgrounds, Children from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.
- We use assessment to ensure barriers to learning are identified and addressed early, with appropriate, timely support.

Anti-Bias Approach

In line with *Birth to 5 Matters*, our assessments:

- Avoid assumptions based on gender, class, disability, race, or language.
- Challenge stereotypes and promote a positive self-identity for all children.
- Reflect diverse cultures, family structures, and life experiences.

Culturally Sensitive Practice

- We value the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our families.

- Assessment considers how children's learning and development may be influenced by cultural norms and expectations.
- We involve parents and carers in culturally respectful ways, ensuring their knowledge and views are central to understanding their child.

Accessibility and Communication

- Assessment information is shared with families using accessible formats and clear language.
- Where needed, we provide translation, interpretation, or visual support to ensure families understand and can contribute meaningfully.
- We ensure children with communication difficulties or sensory needs are assessed using appropriate and sensitive approaches.

Staff Training and Reflection

- Staff engage in ongoing training to develop anti-bias awareness and inclusive assessment skills.

Reflective practice is used to:

- Identify unconscious bias.
- Ensure assessments do not reflect stereotypes or low expectations.
- Improve how we recognise and celebrate different ways of knowing, learning, and being.

Working in Partnership

- We work collaboratively with families and external professionals (e.g., SENDCo, speech and language therapists) to ensure assessments are accurate, supportive, and inclusive.
- Assessment is a shared process, not a judgement on the child or family.

Role of the Key Person

- The key person plays a crucial role in assessment, forming a secure attachment with the child and building strong, trusting relationships with families. Informed by the guidance in *Birth to 5 Matters*, the key person is best placed to understand and interpret a child's development through everyday interactions and meaningful relationships.
- The key person provides emotional security and continuity, which are essential for effective learning and observation.
- A strong relationship enables the child to express their thoughts, interests, and needs openly creating a richer basis for assessment.
- The key person observes the child in context, during play, interactions, and routines.

- Observations focus on the whole child, including emotional well-being, social relationships, communication, and learning behaviours- not just developmental outcomes.
- Through daily interactions, the key person develops deep insight into the child's interests, strengths, needs, and developmental pathways.
- They use professional judgement, supported by *Birth to 5 Matters* guidance, to assess learning without relying on checklists or narrow data tracking.
- The key person is responsible for collecting and curating purposeful documentation (e.g., photos, narrative observations, child voice).
- They maintain the child's Learning Journal or portfolio, ensuring it reflects the child's identity, voice, and progress over time.
- The key person forms strong partnerships with parents and carers, sharing assessments and valuing family contributions.
- They gather information about the child's learning and interests at home to inform a holistic picture of development.
- Using their observations and knowledge, the key person helps plan responsive, play-based experiences that build on the child's interests and needs.
- They adapt provision to ensure it is inclusive and challenging for the individual child.
- The key person shares observations and insights with colleagues in team discussions and planning meetings.
- They take part in peer moderation and reflective practice to maintain consistency and develop their own assessment skills.
- The key person plays a central role in supporting the child during transitions, preparing meaningful transition summaries and sharing knowledge with receiving staff or settings.
- They ensure transitions are child-centred and smooth, maintaining continuity of care and understanding.

Family Partnership

- We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. In line with the guidance in *Birth to 5 Matters*, we value parents as active partners in the assessment process and involve them meaningfully in understanding and supporting their child's development.

We foster strong, two-way communication by:

- Holding regular meetings and informal discussions about children's learning.
- Sharing learning journals, observations, and progress summaries in accessible formats.
- Using photos, stories, or home observations contributed by parents to enrich the child's assessment record.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Senior leaders review assessment practice to ensure consistency and quality.
- The impact of assessment is monitored through staff meetings, moderation, and professional development.

Professional Development

Practitioners engage in:

- Regular reflection and training on observation and assessment, this will be carried out through staff meeting or external agency training.
- Peer moderation to build shared understanding and confidence
- Use *Birth to 5 Matters* as a flexible guide, not a checklist.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The SLT (Senior Leadership Team) monitors assessment through:

- Planning and documentation audits.
- Learning walks and peer observations.
- Staff feedback and parent consultation.

The Policy is reviewed annually with staff and governor input.

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| Signed: | |
| Headteacher: | J. Croft |
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