



Policy for Observing, Assessing and Recording Learning



September 2023



Nursery School Mission Statement -

In Dunclug Nursery School we are committed to providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment to support young children’s learning and development.

We recognise that the children in our care have individual interests, characteristics and needs and aim to enable each child to develop positive attitudes about themselves and towards their learning by –

- providing experiences that extend learning and challenge thinking
- maintaining positive relationships as a staff team, with our children, their parents, the community, the Board of Governors and other relevant agencies
- promoting the health and wellbeing of our staff, children and their families
- inspiring and developing all members of our school community



Observing, Assessing and Recording Learning in Dunclug Nursery School

‘Assessment of children’s learning is based on day-to day observations and interactions with the children in a range of situations. Observations allow staff to gain a better insight into the children’s needs, experiences, interests, thinking, strengths and areas for development.’

Curriculum Guidance for Pre-School Education (CEA)

This policy reflects the current practice of all staff at Dunclug Nursery School regarding Observing, Assessing and Recording Learning.



ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN'S PROGRESS

In Dunclug Nursery School we believe that Assessment should –

- be based on on-going observation of children participating in everyday activities
- include spontaneous and planned for, focused observations
- take equal account of all areas of the child's development and learning
- actively engage parents in developing an accurate picture of a child's development
- be based on judgements of children's development and learning including skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviour, demonstrated consistently and independently.

We therefore –

- Observe children to find out about their needs, what they are interested in and what they can do, or cannot do yet.
- Note children's responses in different situations.
- Analyse observations and highlight children's achievements or their need for further support to plan for their next steps.
- Involve parents as part of the ongoing observation and assessment process.



PLANNING FOR OBSERVING LEARNING

Assessment on Entry to Nursery School –

Parents are asked to complete a Questionnaire when they accept offer of a place in our Nursery School.

Observations of children begin at the initial 'Play Session' in August, when children come to Nursery, accompanied by their parents, to meet staff and begin to become more familiar with their new setting (Appendix 1). During this play session staff also speak with the child's parent or carer, on an informal basis, noting any relevant information that has been shared.

Parents are asked at this meeting to return Pupil Information forms ([Appendix 2](#)) about their child, which give information on their interests, strengths, likes and dislikes, physical and speech and language development, peer interactions and some family background information. Parents have a further opportunity to discuss their child with staff if they wish to, prior to their child's start date.

To ensure a smooth transition from home or from their previous setting, staff observe children's responses to play opportunities and their growing awareness of Nursery rules and routines during the induction programme, increasing children's session times as they settle into their new environment.

We also speak with staff from previous settings, regarding the child's development, interests and strengths and peer interaction, visiting to observe them during the last term of their pre-Pre School setting where possible.

Transition profiles from previous settings are used to build a picture of where the child currently is and plan for how to take the child on to the next stage of their learning or development.

Reports or information shared by Health Professionals or other services are received, read and information disseminated to staff who will be working with the child.

Child Centred Observations

All staff working with children in Dunclug Nursery School make observations on a day to day basis, noting children's responses to learning opportunities, based on –

- their general well-being
- their ability to recognise and regulate their emotions
- their interests and current passions
- their interaction and communication with peers and adults
- their ability to concentrate and persevere with a task
- the level of engagement with activities and their use of resources and equipment
- their developing relationships
- their responses to the play and learning opportunities and progress in learning in the six curricular areas.

These observations are noted in a termly record (See [Appendix 3](#)).

Focused Observations

Each month staff work together to plan play based learning activities to promote learning in each area of the Pre-School Curriculum, as identified in our Early Learning Goals ([Appendix 4](#)).

In each area of learning we plan to observe children's responses and outcomes of their play to assess their progress and plan for next steps. We adopt a '*Every adult for every child*' approach to observing and assessing using monthly focused observations, which means that all staff are involved in the observing, assessing and recording process ([Appendix 5](#)).

The information gained through spontaneous and focused observations is recorded and analysed to gain a picture of how children are progressing, and used to inform next steps in planning for and supporting children's learning and development.

The WELLCOMM Assessment is used to screen children who have been observed to have speech, language or communication difficulties. The results from this are used to inform PLPs, referrals or for target setting and in-Nursery support.



RECORDING OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

Observations of children's learning take place on an ongoing basis. Short informal notes or voice recordings are made while playing alongside children to note any significant achievements towards next steps, understanding or interactions. Photographs and short video clips may also be taken to record observations. Children's language is often recorded, as this gives insight into a child's thinking and understanding.

Observations are then analysed and recorded in the child's profile as evidence that he or she -

- has learned something new
- has grown in confidence or shows a particular interest in something
- is experiencing a specific difficulty
- demonstrates learning that confirms or contradicts staff's expectations
- shows an understanding beyond what is expected
- demonstrates that there is a gap in their understanding

Observations build a picture of children's progress over time and are used to inform planning for next steps, in a process that involves all staff.

Records may also include –

- photographs of outcomes or responses to play
- examples of early mark making
- examples of art work



PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS

Children's progress in learning is reported to parents formally and informally, throughout the school year.

Staff may let a parent know about their child's achievements at drop off or pick up times, by sending home a note in line with our Positive Behaviour (Rewards) Policy, by speaking to them informally about achievements or concerns they may have, or by sharing photographs or messages via the Seesaw app.

Parents are also encouraged to share news of progress or concerns with staff informally as the need arises.

There are further scheduled opportunities to share observations and assessments of children's progress during Parent / Teacher Consultations in October and March, regarding –

- their child's achievements
- areas where further support is needed
- parents' views are listened to and recorded along with staff's observations
- next steps are discussed along with some suggestions of how parents may support their child's learning

Pupil attainment is recorded a Transition report, which is shared with parents in June. Parents also receive a Profile Book of memories and creations their child has made during their Pre-School year.

To ensure a smooth transition to Primary School, relevant information is also shared with the receiving School, when Year 1 staff observe children in the Nursery setting, through meetings, phone calls and by forwarding a copy of the child's transition report.

Initial Observations -

Appendix 1

Name - _____

Staff Member - _____

Engagement with activities

- willing to explore play areas
- favoured area(s)

Interaction with others

- willing to interact with staff
- willing to interact with other children

Additional Comments

- information shared with you by parent
- general *observations*

Appendix 2



Please attach a recent
photograph
of your child here.

PUPIL INFORMATION

Please complete the following information on behalf of your child -

My full name is	
At home I am known as	
I live at home with	
I have previously attended playgroup / pre-school setting Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (please provide name) No <input type="checkbox"/>	

My Personal Care

Please tick as appropriate –

	I can do this independently	I need help with this	I am not able to do this yet
Dressing and undressing			
Feeding myself			
Using the toilet			

My Favourite Activities and Special Interests

My favourite character (from a story/TV/movie is	
My favourite thing to do is	
I am really good at	

Physical Development

I can -

Walk	
Run	
Climb	
Use cutlery	

Speech and Language Development

Can you always understand what your child is saying?	
Do you have any concerns about your child's speech or their understanding of language?	

Children with English as an additional language

What is your child's first / strongest language?	
Does he / she speak or understand any other language(s)?	

Early Literacy Development

Does your child enjoy looking at books and / or listening to stories?	
Does he / she have a favourite song or nursery rhyme?	

Interacting with others

Is there anyone that your child is particularly close to?	
Does he / she know anyone else who is starting Dunclug Nursery School this year?	

Additional Information

Is there anything else that you feel would be useful for us to know about your child that may help us as we settle them into our Nursery?

Many Thanks for taking the time to provide us with the requested information about your child. Please be assured that we will protect your child's privacy by filing this information securely and only sharing the information you have given with staff that will be working directly with your child in our Nursery School.



Name - _____

Date	Well-being / Ability to recognise and regulate emotions
Date	Child's Interests and current passions
Date	Interaction / Communication with peers and other adults
Date	Level of engagement with activities / use of resources and equipment
Date	Ability to concentrate, persevere, use initiative and reflect

Potential for development

Date	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Date	Language Development
Date	Early Mathematical Experiences
Date	The Arts
Date	World Around Us
Date	Physical Development and Movement

<p>Well-being / Ability to recognise and regulate emotions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general mood and well-being • can recognise and talk about how they feel at different times • recognises and can talk about how others may be feeling • can name a range of emotions • is developing relationships with one or more child(ren) • can talk about their actions and how they may affect others • feels secure in the setting • can manage their own behaviour
<p>Child's Interests and current passions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can talk about their interests at home and in Nursery School • can communicate likes and dislikes and give reasons • recognises that we may have shared or different interests and passions • show interest in, and respect for, others' interests and passions
<p>Interaction / Communication with peers and adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will interact socially as they play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - will initiate conversation with adults / peers - will join in conversation in small group setting - can answer questions asked by others - will take turns to speak - is confident making contributions in the whole group setting • will offer help to others • complies with adult instructions • can play collaboratively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - taking turns - sharing - following - leading • can negotiate / resolve conflicts • can work independently / as part of a group
<p>Level of engagement with activities / Use of resources and equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows and interest in, and care for, their resources and the classroom environment • can transition around play areas independently • will visit all play areas / tends to choose favoured activities and areas • uses resources imaginatively • accesses additional resources to enhance play experiences • knows what the resources can be used for and uses them appropriately • is developing independence at play areas • eagerly explores new learning
<p>Ability to concentrate, persevere, use initiative and reflect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can persevere with a task of their choosing until its completion • can concentrate on a task for a reasonable / prolonged period of time • can explain and give reasons for decisions they have made during play • can re-call an activity or recent event in sequence • can predict what may happen and is willing to test their predictions • is developing problem solving skills • takes time to reflect and re-plan • is willing to experiment



Language Development – Progress in Learning

Expressive Language

Child can –

- use a growing vocabulary appropriately
- express thoughts, ideas and feelings with increasing confidence
- engage in role play using appropriate language to express their feelings and experiences
- listen and engage in conversation
- talk about experiences, ask questions
- speak within small group / whole group setting

Receptive Language

Child can –

- respond to instructions and follow directions – one, two, three word level
- make an appropriate response or answer a question – 5 Ws

Listening skills – incorporating stories, rhymes and book handling skills

Child can –

- share stories with adults and peers or enjoy them independently
- demonstrate increasing phonological awareness, including an awareness of rhyme, syllable and sound
- demonstrate appropriate book handling skills
- access and use books independently
- sustain attentive listening for an increasing amount of time
- respond to stories, rhymes, poems, jingles and songs

Awareness of Print / Early Writing skills –

Child can–

- understand that pictures, symbols and words carry meaning
- mark-make to convey thoughts and ideas by drawing, painting and writing using a variety of materials



Early Mathematical Development – Progress in Learning

Early Number

Child can -

- listen to and engage in number rhymes, jingles and songs
- listen to stories that contain elements of mathematics
- count in the course of their play

Relationships

Child can –

- appreciate that objects are stored in particular boxes or areas
- sort and match in the course of their play
- talk about similarities and differences in objects

Size and Quantity

Child can –

- use some mathematical language – big, small/little, full, empty, more, another, long, short, heavy and light

Sequencing and Time

Child can –

- talk about the steps involved in completing an activity
- talk about being first, last and next when taking turns
- talk about daily routines and seasonal events
- sequence in the course of their play

Space

Child can –

- understand and use some prepositional words – in, on, at, above, below and under
- talk about objects in the distance and those that are near, or close to the reader when sharing story books
- observe equipment from a variety of positions and talk about what they notice

Shape

Child can –

- recognise and talk about some shapes in their environment
- talk about photos of familiar objects taken from different angles and decide what objects they are

Thinking Skills

Child can - solve problems, question, predict and experiment



Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Progress in Learning

Self-Care / Self-Regulation

Child can –

- **show an awareness of personal worth, displaying increasing self-confidence, self-control and self-discipline**
- **show some independence in dressing and in personal hygiene**
- **show an increasing awareness of the importance of healthy food, hygienic habits, exercise and rest**
- happily leave parent / carer at drop off time
- show growing pleasure in own achievements
- react appropriately during play contexts – e.g. to turn-taking disputes
- cope well with challenges and changes to daily routines

Interactions with others –

Child can –

- **enjoy relationships with adults and other children**
- **work independently and as part of a small group**
- **share, take turns, follow, lead**
- **be increasingly sensitive to the needs and feelings of others**
- **demonstrate consideration for others by caring for and helping one another**
- show willingness to engage in play with adults / accept guidance from adults
- seek out others to share experiences with

Engagement in Learning /Play Skills

Child can –

- **eagerly explore new learning**
- display good levels of interest, excitement and motivation
- play in isolation / alongside / actively with peers
- make play choices independently
- display a high level of engagement in activities

Behaviour and Attitudes

Child can –

- **understand rules and routines and engage in acceptable behaviour**
- **persevere with tasks and seek help when needed**
- **treat living things and their environment with respect, care and concern**
- understand consequences of their choices
- display a positive attitude to school and to new learning experiences



Physical Development and Movement – Progress in Learning

Child can -

- **show an awareness of space and of others**
- **begin to use space imaginatively**
- **understand simple rules**
- **move confidently with control and co-ordination**
- **use a wide range of large and small equipment with increasing confidence and skill**
- **use tools and equipment appropriately and safely**
- **demonstrate gross motor skills** – he/she can – Run
 - Jump
 - Climb
 - Hop
 - Throw
 - Catch
 - Kick
 - Balance
 - Pedal trike
- **demonstrate fine motor skills** – he/she can – Pour and fill
 - Manipulate malleable resources
 - Thread rods, spools, beads
 - Hold pencil / tools with preferred hand
 - Use small tools competently
 - Pinch using pincer grasp
 - Use scissors
 - Put on coat independently
 - Use cutlery at snack / dinner time
 - Fasten Coat



World Around Us – Progress in Learning

Child can –

- observe, explore, investigate and select materials and equipment in a range of situations
- ask questions about why things happen and how things work
- use skills of cutting, sticking, folding, pouring and building as they work with a variety of materials
- begin to name parts of the body
- identify a variety of familiar sounds
- show an awareness of time as they talk about seasonal and festive events and take part in daily routines
- show an interest in, and care for, their environment
- talk about themselves, their families, their pre-school setting and their wider environment
- talk about their observations and make simple predictions about things
- recognise the role of some people who work in the pre-school setting and the local community
- show an awareness of some environmental and safety issues
- care for and respect living things and handle them sensitively



The Arts – Progress in Learning

Child can –

- explore a variety of materials, appreciating colour, shape, texture and sound
- express their ideas, communicate their feelings/imaginings through making simple representations using a range of materials, becoming more detailed as their concentration and observational skills increase
- develop manipulative skills as they handle appropriate tools and instruments
- begin to value their own and other children's work
- express their ideas and feelings during role play, beginning to assume different roles
- learn songs, listen and respond to music
- can make their own music by singing, clapping and playing percussion instruments
- develop an awareness of rhythm and steady beat
- take part in creative activities –
 - paint
 - craft / junk art
 - role - play
 - malleable
 - sensory area
 - music

Appendix 5



October Focused Observations

Name - _____

Personal Social and Emotional Development

- is beginning to show an awareness of classroom routines in Nursery
- is happy to play alongside others / beginning to form some friendships

Language Development

- shows evidence of developing listening skills by sustaining attentive listening during group story time
- early mark making – can copy / draw a circle shape

Mathematical Development

- experiments with using weighing scales and is beginning to use simple language heavy(ier)/light(er)
- is developing an understanding of 'same' and 'different' – able to sort items for colour

Physical Development

- GROSS – can climb / balance on larger play equipment outside
- FINE – is able to manipulate small toys or objects with some/good/developing control

World Around Us

- observes and talks about seasonal changes associated with autumn.

The Arts

- can make a simple representational drawing or model and talk about what they have done

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT**ACTIONS**