

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDGEHOGS NURSERY & SUNBEAMS CLUB



Observation, Planning & Assessment Policy

Updated: Sept 2026
Review Date: Sept 2027

1. Introduction

This policy ensures that staff in the Hedgehogs, Squirrels, Foxes and Reception rooms conduct effective observation, assessment, and planning in line with EYFS statutory requirements. It supports each child's learning, development, and well-being within a nurturing, inclusive environment, a core tenet of our learning expectations at Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs Nursery and Sunbeams Club (the school).

2. Our Principles

- **Child-centred and responsive** – where we prioritise individual interests, developmental stage, and cultural background.
- **Balanced assessment approach:**
 1. **Formative:** ongoing, built into daily routines without disrupting interactions.
 2. **Summative:** includes any age-specific baseline/development checks/milestones.
 3. Wellcomm will be completed to support language and understanding.

3. Observation

Purpose

- To understand a child's capabilities, preferences, and progress through natural play and interaction.
- To inform planning and know when to share insights with parents and possible health professionals.

Methods

- **In-the-moment observations:** Quick notes will record short, significant achievements or behaviours during play. These are then recorded onto Tapestry, with annotations as appropriate.

Recording Standards

- Ensure all observations are accurate, making sure we document precisely what the child said or did (e.g., "child A stacked three blocks).
- Keep it brief and purposeful then add on to their learning journeys on Tapestry.
- Use both, adult-child shared observations, and parent contributions, this supports partnership with parents as well as the child's individual development.

4. Assessment

Ongoing

- Continuously embedded in daily practice through observation, interaction.
- Avoid lengthy breaks for paperwork observations should support engagement

5. Planning

Responsive & "In-the-Moment" Planning

- Practitioners follow children's lead, engaging during play to support and extend learning.

Objective-Led Planning

- Set short term/long term goals based on individual developmental milestones (e.g., “encourage stacking objects of different sizes to develop fine motor skills”).
- Ensure the environment supports exploration across prime (and specific with older children) areas.

Next Steps

- When appropriate observations will have a “Next Step” for the child’s progress
- Incorporate parent-shared insights into planning and adjust strategies. Partnership with Parents & Shared Understanding
- Engage parents: Encourage parents to share observations, pictures from the weekends and home news (e.g., WOW moment boards, digital journals)

6. Roles & Responsibilities

- Key workers/staff in EYFS will observe, record, evaluate progress, plan next steps, update parents, and ensure assessments remain child-centred.
- EYFS Lead/Room Leader/Deputy Room Leader will oversee and moderate assessments to ensure consistency.
- EYFS Lead/SLT will provide training, and ensure compliance with EYFS.
- Parents: Contribute home observations and support goal-setting; attend Progress Check and regular meetings.

8. Monitoring & Quality Assurance

- Conduct regular internal moderation of observations and assessments to ensure consistency.
- Track cohort progress to identify any emerging needs and inform resource allocation.

9. Record-Keeping & Data Protection

- Store records securely, either in individual learning journals or digital platforms.
- Comply with GDPR - ensure confidential handling, limited access, and secure disposal.
- Maintain availability for parents and Ofsted inspections.

10. Safeguarding

- Observations must never compromise active supervision. Immediately report any safeguarding concerns as per policy.
- Do not use observation time as cover for other tasks; maintain ratios and direct interaction.