Brabyns Nursery School

Assessment Policy

Date of last review July 2026
Date of next review July 2027

Introduction and Purpose

At Brabyns Nursery School, assessment is an integral part of our approach to supporting children's learning, development and wellbeing. Through ongoing observation, professional knowledge and responsive assessment, practitioners build a clear understanding of each child's individual interests, strengths, needs and stage of development.

Our assessment approach is rooted in the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the Development Matters guidance. We recognise that every child is unique and that children develop at different rates and in different ways. Assessment is therefore used to understand each child as an individual and to ensure that our provision, interactions and teaching are responsive to their needs.

Assessment at Brabyns is purposeful, manageable and meaningful. It is not about creating unnecessary paperwork or testing children. Instead, it is about knowing our children well, identifying what they know and can do, recognising their achievements, identifying areas where they may need additional support or challenge and enrichment, and planning appropriate next steps.

Our assessment process begins from the moment a child joins Brabyns and continues throughout their nursery journey, from Baby Explorers, through Little Adventurers, to Pre-School Pioneers. Our ultimate aim is to ensure that every child develops the skills, knowledge, confidence and independence they need to become school ready and make a successful transition to their next stage of education.

Aims of Assessment

At Brabyns Nursery School, assessment aims to:

- Build a detailed understanding of each child as an individual.
- Identify children's interests, strengths, achievements and areas for development.
- Monitor children's progress across all areas of learning and development.
- Inform planning and identify appropriate next steps.
- Ensure that teaching and learning are responsive to individual children's needs.
- Identify children who may require additional support at an early stage.
- Recognise children who may benefit from further challenge or enrichment.
- Support children's emotional wellbeing, confidence and independence.
- Ensure children are developing the skills needed for their next stage of learning.
- Support effective transition between rooms and ultimately into school.
- Encourage meaningful partnership with parents and carers.
- Provide a clear record of children's learning and development throughout their time at Brabyns.

Our Assessment Approach

Assessment at Brabyns is an ongoing process. Practitioners continually assess children through their everyday interactions, play, routines, conversations and experiences.

We recognise that some of the most valuable assessment takes place naturally during children's self-chosen play and everyday experiences. Practitioners observe how children communicate, solve problems, build relationships, manage their emotions, develop independence and apply their developing knowledge and skills.

Assessment includes:

- Observations of children at play and during adult-led experiences.
- Conversations and interactions with children.
- Information shared by parents and carers.
- Children's own contributions and interests.
- Samples of children's work and achievements.
- Practitioners' knowledge of children's learning and development.
- Tapestry observations and learning records.
- Half-termly assessments.
- Transition information between rooms.
- Discussions between practitioners and room leaders.
- Parent meetings and regular communication.
- Information from other professionals where appropriate.

Assessment is used to inform practice, rather than becoming an activity in itself.

Tapestry

At Brabyns Nursery School, Tapestry is used to record, collate and share children's learning and development.

Practitioners use Tapestry to capture meaningful observations, photographs and examples of children's learning. These records help to build a picture of each child's development over time and provide evidence of their achievements, interests and progress.

Tapestry observations should be:

- Meaningful and purposeful.
- Linked to children's learning and development.
- Reflective of children's individual interests and experiences.
- Used to identify possible next steps.
- A true representation of children's experiences at nursery.

- Balanced between adult-led and child-initiated learning.

Practitioners do not need to record every learning experience. Quality is more important than quantity. Our assessment system should support practitioners to spend the majority of their time interacting with and teaching children rather than being behind a screen.

Observations are shared with parents regularly through Tapestry, but they are not expected to be shared constantly or immediately after every observation. Our priority is always to be present and engaged with the children, and practitioners complete and collate observations during designated time away from the children, wherever possible. This ensures that the quality of interactions and experiences provided to the children remains the priority, while still keeping parents meaningfully informed about their child's learning and development.

Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to their child's Tapestry journal by sharing experiences, achievements and interests from home. These contributions help practitioners develop a more complete understanding of each child and strengthen the partnership between home and nursery.

Observation

Observation is central to assessment at Brabyns.

Practitioners observe children throughout the nursery day to understand:

- What children are interested in.
- What children already know and can do.
- How children approach learning.
- How children communicate and interact with others.
- How children respond to challenges.
- How children use and apply their developing skills.
- What support or challenge may be appropriate.
- What their next steps in learning may be.

Practitioners use both planned and spontaneous observations. Some observations may be brief and recorded through Tapestry, while others may be developed into a more detailed learning story where this provides valuable information about the child's learning.

Assessment Through Our Nursery Stages

Assessment takes place throughout the child's journey at Brabyns, with expectations and focus adapted to the child's age, stage and individual development.

Baby Explorers

For our youngest children, assessment focuses heavily on developing secure relationships, communication, physical development, sensory exploration, emotional wellbeing and early independence.

Practitioners observe children's responses, interactions and emerging skills and use this knowledge to provide appropriate experiences and interactions.

Particular consideration is given to:

- Building secure attachments.
- Communication and early language.
- Responding to sounds, voices and interactions.
- Physical development and movement.
- Sensory exploration.
- Developing curiosity.
- Early social interactions.
- Emotional regulation and wellbeing.
- Developing independence through everyday routines.

Little Adventurers

As children become more independent, assessment focuses on their developing communication, confidence, relationships, physical skills, curiosity and ability to engage with learning.

Practitioners support children to develop:

- Increasingly confident communication.
- Vocabulary and understanding.
- Positive relationships with adults and children.
- Independence and self-care skills.
- Physical coordination and control.
- Early mathematical understanding.
- Interest in books, stories and mark-making.
- Problem-solving and exploration.
- Creativity and imagination.
- Confidence to make choices and become involved in their learning.

Pre-School Pioneers

In Pre-School Pioneers, assessment increasingly focuses on preparing children for their transition to school, while continuing to recognise and respond to each child's individual development, interests, strengths and needs.

Practitioners support children to develop the knowledge, skills and characteristics they need to become confident, independent and successful learners. Through a balance of child-initiated play, adult-led experiences, daily routines and meaningful interactions, practitioners identify children's progress and plan appropriate next steps.

This includes:

- Developing independence and confidence in managing everyday routines.
- Listening carefully and following instructions.
- Communicating confidently with adults and other children.
- Developing positive relationships and learning to cooperate with others.
- Managing emotions and beginning to resolve conflicts appropriately.
- Developing concentration, perseverance and the ability to sustain attention.
- Developing early literacy skills through stories, books, mark-making and meaningful writing experiences.
- Developing early phonological awareness and phonics skills, including listening carefully to sounds, recognising rhyme and alliteration, identifying initial sounds and beginning to make links between sounds and letters.
- Developing early mathematical understanding, including counting, number recognition, counting reliably, comparing quantities, exploring shape, space and measure, and using mathematical language.
- Developing physical skills, coordination and confidence.
- Developing self-care skills and personal responsibility.
- Developing confidence in unfamiliar situations and new experiences.
- Being able to adapt to routines, changes and transitions.
- Developing curiosity, creativity and a positive attitude towards learning.
- Developing the ability to make choices, solve problems and think independently.
- Building resilience and learning to keep trying when something is challenging.
- Developing the confidence to ask for help and express their needs.
- Developing the skills needed to participate positively in a school environment.

Being school ready does not mean that every child must have achieved the same level of development or reached the same milestones. It means supporting each child to be as prepared as possible for their next stage of learning, taking into account their individual starting points, strengths, interests and needs.

Our assessment process helps practitioners identify where children may benefit from additional support, further practice or greater challenge, ensuring that every child is

given the opportunity to develop the confidence, independence and skills they need to make a positive transition to school.

Two-Year Progress Review

At Brabyns Nursery School, we complete a two-year progress review for children during the year in which they turn two. This review provides an opportunity to look closely at the child's learning, development and wellbeing and to work collaboratively with parents to ensure that they are making progress and receiving the appropriate support.

Parents are sent a letter explaining the two-year review and are invited to participate in the process. The review is completed in partnership with parents, recognising the valuable knowledge and insight they have about their child's development, interests, personality and experiences at home.

The two-year review will often form part of the child's first parent meeting, particularly alongside discussions about settling into nursery. This provides an opportunity for the key person and parents to share information, discuss how the child has settled, celebrate their progress and consider any areas where further support or opportunities may be beneficial.

The review considers the child's development across the areas of learning and development, including:

- Communication and language.
- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Physical development.
- Early literacy and interest in books and mark-making.
- Early mathematical development.
- Understanding of the world.
- Expressive arts and creativity.
- Independence and self-care.
- Relationships and emotional wellbeing.

Practitioners use their ongoing knowledge of the child, observations, Tapestry records, professional judgement and information shared by parents to inform the review.

The two-year review is not a test or checklist. It is an opportunity to build a shared understanding of the child's development and to identify appropriate next steps. Where there are areas of concern or where additional support may be beneficial, these will be discussed openly with parents and appropriate strategies or further support will be considered.

The review should take place within the year in which the child turns two, ensuring that any emerging developmental needs can be identified and responded to at an appropriate stage.

Following the review, practitioners will continue to monitor the child's progress and use the information gathered to inform planning, provision and future assessment. Parents are

encouraged to continue sharing their observations and experiences from home so that nursery and home can work together to support the child's development.

WellComm Assessment

At Brabyns Nursery School, we use the WellComm assessment tool alongside our ongoing observations and professional knowledge of each child. WellComm supports practitioners in identifying children's understanding and use of language and communication and helps us to recognise where a child may benefit from additional support.

WellComm assessments are completed at baseline and reviewed regularly as part of our ongoing assessment process. The information gathered helps practitioners to:

- Identify children's current communication and language skills.
- Recognise areas of strength and areas where additional support may be beneficial.
- Plan appropriate activities and experiences to develop communication and language.
- Monitor children's progress over time.
- Identify children who may benefit from further assessment or support.
- Share appropriate information and next steps with parents and carers.
- Work with the SENCO and other professionals where additional support may be required.

WellComm is used alongside Tapestry observations, day-to-day interactions, practitioner knowledge, children's individual interests and experiences, and information shared by parents and carers. It is not used in isolation or as a measure of a child's overall development.

Where WellComm identifies an area of concern, practitioners will discuss this with the Room Leader and, where appropriate, the SENCO and parents/carers. Further support, strategies or referral to relevant professionals may be considered where appropriate.

The information gained through WellComm helps us to ensure that communication and language opportunities are appropriately matched to each child's individual stage of development and supports us in planning meaningful next steps.

Half-Termly Assessment

Formal assessment points take place half-termly.

These assessments provide an opportunity for practitioners to step back and consider each child's overall development rather than focusing solely on individual observations.

Practitioners consider:

- What the child can currently do independently.
- What skills are emerging.
- Areas where the child is making progress.
- Areas where progress may be slower or where additional support is required.
- The child's interests and motivations.
- The impact of previous planned next steps.
- Appropriate next steps for the coming period.

Half-termly assessments are informed by practitioners' ongoing knowledge of the child, observations, Tapestry records, interactions and information shared by parents.

Assessment information is discussed within the team and used to inform future planning and provision.

Development Matters

Brabyns Nursery School uses Development Matters as a key reference point when considering children's learning and development.

Practitioners use Development Matters to support their professional judgement and to help identify appropriate learning opportunities and next steps.

Development Matters is not used as a checklist. Children develop at different rates, and practitioners consider the whole child when assessing development.

Our assessment approach recognises that children may demonstrate skills in different ways and that their individual experiences, interests and circumstances will influence their development.

Planning for Next Steps

Assessment is used to inform next steps in learning.

Practitioners consider what children are currently able to do and identify appropriate opportunities to extend their learning.

Next steps may involve:

- Introducing a new skill.
- Extending an existing skill.
- Providing additional challenge.
- Supporting a child to develop confidence.
- Revisiting previous learning.
- Providing additional opportunities for practice.

- Supporting communication or language development.
- Encouraging independence.
- Supporting social and emotional development.

Next steps are incorporated into the nursery's planning and everyday interactions rather than being treated as separate tasks.

Practitioners respond to children's interests and needs and adapt the environment and experiences accordingly.

Assessment and Additional Needs

Assessment enables practitioners to identify when a child may require additional support.

Where concerns arise about a child's development, practitioners will:

1. Discuss their observations with the Room Leader.
2. Review the child's development and existing support.
3. Consider the child's individual circumstances and experiences.
4. Discuss concerns with parents/carers.
5. Identify appropriate strategies and support.
6. Monitor the child's progress.
7. Involve the groups SENCO and/or other appropriate professionals where necessary.

Parents and carers are kept informed and involved throughout this process.

Assessment should never be used to label a child. Its purpose is to identify how we can best support each individual child to make progress.

Parent Partnership

Parents and carers are an essential part of the assessment process.

We recognise that parents know their children exceptionally well and can provide valuable information about their child's interests, experiences, development and achievements outside nursery.

We encourage parents to share:

- Achievements from home.
- New interests.
- Changes in behaviour or circumstances.

- New skills.
- Family experiences.
- Information that may support their child's learning and wellbeing.

This information may be shared verbally, through Tapestry observations, during meetings or through other appropriate communication.

We value an open and honest relationship with families and encourage parents to speak to their child's key person or Room Leader whenever they have questions or concerns.

Settling-In Assessment

A child's starting point is considered as part of the settling-in process.

After a child has completed their first half term at Brabyns, practitioners will review their settling-in progress and development.

This provides an opportunity to consider:

- How the child has settled into nursery.
- Relationships with key adults and peers.
- Communication and interaction.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Independence.
- Engagement with the nursery environment.
- Interests and preferences.
- Any emerging areas requiring support.

Where appropriate, this information is shared and discussed with parents, helping to establish a strong partnership from the beginning of the child's nursery journey.

Parent Meetings and Reports

Brabyns Nursery School recognises the importance of regular communication with parents and carers.

We provide two formal written reports each year, issued at the start of the Spring Term and towards the end of the Summer Term.

These reports provide parents with an overview of their child's development, achievements, progress and areas for continued development.

Parent evenings are held following the Autumn and Summer reports, providing an opportunity for parents to meet with practitioners and discuss their child's learning and development in greater detail.

These meetings allow us to:

- Celebrate children's achievements.
- Discuss progress.
- Share areas for development.
- Discuss next steps.
- Listen to parents' views and experiences.
- Address any concerns.
- Agree how nursery and home can work together to support the child.

Parents are also welcome to speak to their child's key person or Room Leader throughout the year rather than waiting for a formal parent evening.

Transition Between Nursery Rooms

Assessment information supports children's transitions between Baby Explorers, Little Adventurers and Pre-School Pioneers.

Practitioners share relevant information to ensure continuity of care, learning and development.

Transition information may include:

- Children's strengths and interests.
- Current development.
- Communication needs.
- Emotional and social development.
- Independence and self-care.
- Areas requiring additional support.
- Effective strategies.
- Current next steps.

This helps children experience a smooth transition and ensures that practitioners have a strong understanding of each child before they move into their new room.

Preparing Children for School

A key purpose of our assessment process is to support children in becoming confident, capable and enthusiastic learners who are ready for their transition to school.

We work closely with parents and, where appropriate, receiving schools to support this transition.

Assessment information helps us identify areas where children may benefit from additional opportunities before starting school.

School readiness at Brabyns includes supporting children to:

- Communicate their needs.
- Listen and respond to others.
- Develop independence.
- Manage their personal care.
- Build positive relationships.
- Develop confidence.
- Follow routines and instructions.
- Develop concentration and perseverance.
- Manage emotions.
- Develop early literacy and mathematical skills.
- Explore, investigate and solve problems.
- Enjoy learning and feel confident in new situations.

We recognise that school readiness is about the whole child, rather than simply academic achievement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Nursery Manager

The Nursery Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring the assessment policy is implemented effectively.
- Monitoring the quality of assessment across the nursery.
- Ensuring assessment is consistent with EYFS requirements.
- Supporting staff in developing effective assessment practice.
- Monitoring children's progress and identifying areas requiring further action.
- Ensuring parents are appropriately informed.
- Ensuring staff have appropriate training and support.

Room Leaders

Room Leaders are responsible for:

- Supporting practitioners with effective observation and assessment.
- Monitoring children's progress within their room.
- Ensuring half-termly assessments are completed.
- Supporting practitioners to identify appropriate next steps.
- Monitoring the quality and purpose of Tapestry observations.
- Sharing relevant information with parents.
- Supporting effective transitions between rooms.

Key Persons and Practitioners

Practitioners are responsible for:

- Getting to know their key children well.
- Observing and interacting with children.
- Recording meaningful learning on Tapestry.
- Identifying and planning appropriate next steps.
- Contributing to half-termly assessments.
- Sharing information with parents.
- Raising concerns about children's development promptly.
- Working collaboratively with colleagues.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Share information about their child's learning and development.
- Contribute to Tapestry.
- Attend parent meetings where possible.
- Discuss their child's development with practitioners.
- Share concerns or changes that may affect their child's wellbeing or learning.
- Work in partnership with Brabyns nursery to support their child's next steps.

Quality Assurance

Assessment practice is regularly monitored by management to ensure that it is accurate, meaningful and consistent.

This may include:

- Reviewing Tapestry journals.
- Reviewing half-termly assessments.
- Discussions with Room Leaders and practitioners.

- Moderation of assessments.
- Monitoring children's progress.
- Reviewing identified next steps.
- Discussing assessment during staff meetings and supervision.
- Monitoring the quality of parent communication.

Where inconsistencies are identified, staff will be supported through discussion, coaching, training and professional development.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information relating to children's learning, development and assessment is confidential and must be handled in accordance with Brabyns Nursery School's confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Tapestry accounts must be used appropriately and securely. Staff must only access information that they are authorised to access and must not share confidential information with unauthorised individuals.

Assessment information should only be shared with parents/carers and professionals where there is an appropriate reason and in accordance with nursery procedures and relevant data protection requirements.

Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains current, effective and consistent with:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.
- Development Matters.
- Current safeguarding and data protection requirements.
- Bellevue Schools and Nurseries policies and procedures.
- Brabyns Nursery School's assessment practice.

Feedback from practitioners and parents may be considered as part of the review process.

Policy reviewed: September 2026
Next review: September 2027
Policy lead: Nursery Manager - Mrs Cheryl Edwards