Planning, Observation & Assessment Policy

(2025–2026)

Planning, Observation & Assessment Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures for planning, observing, and assessing children's learning and development in line with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (2023)**.
It ensures that assessment at **Little Wonders** is purposeful, manageable, and used effectively to inform teaching, track progress, and ensure every child achieves the best possible outcomes.

2. Scope

This policy applies to **all staff** involved in the planning, observation, and assessment processes within **Little Wonders**.
It covers all children from **birth to five years** and aligns with statutory EYFS requirements.

3. Principles of Assessment

Our assessment approach is:

- **Meaningful** – informs planning and next steps for individual children.
- **Manageable** – reduces unnecessary paperwork and focuses on what matters most.
- **Motivating** – celebrates achievement, supports confidence, and shares progress with families.
- **Inclusive** – reflects the progress of **all children**, including those with **SEND**, **EAL**, and **disadvantaged** backgrounds.

Assessment supports high-quality teaching, responsive planning, and early identification of any additional needs.

Planning, Observation & Assessment Policy

4. Planning

Planning at Little Wonders is a **dynamic and responsive process** based on ongoing assessment and the individual needs, interests, and stages of development of each child.

Planning is informed by:

- **Ongoing Observations** – daily insights into learning and development guide future provision.
- **Development Matters** and the **Little Wonders Progression Map** – ensuring coverage of all areas of learning and progression.
- **Children's Interests** – incorporating children's curiosity and preferences to promote engagement.
- **Assessment Information** – using formative and summative data to shape next steps.

Planning remains **flexible**, balancing adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities, and adapts continuously based on children's progress.

5. Observation

Observations are central to understanding each child's development and informing teaching practice.
They may include:

- **Written Records** – capturing significant learning moments.
- **Photographs and Video Clips** – documenting learning visually.
- **Anecdotal Notes** – recording spontaneous interactions and achievements.

Observations are primarily **in the moment**, with **spotlight observations** recorded digitally (e.g., via Tapestry).
They are used to:

- Identify individual learning needs.
- Inform next steps and enhance provision.
- Track progress over time.

- Engage parents in their child's learning journey.

Parent voice and home observations are also valued and incorporated into each child's learning record.

6. Types of Assessment

Formative Assessment (Ongoing Daily Practice)

- Staff observe children's play, interactions, and learning throughout the day.
- These observations inform next steps and enhance provision.
- Assessment happens primarily **in the moment**, with only key ("spotlight") observations recorded.
- Parental contributions are encouraged to support a holistic understanding of each child.

Summative Assessment

- **Birth–4 Years:**
  - Progress is tracked against the **Little Wonders Progression Map** and **Termly Overviews**.
  - **Spotlight assessments** are completed termly for each child.
  - **2-Year-Old Progress Check:**
    - Completed between ages 2–3 by the **key person**, in partnership with parents/carers and (where appropriate) health visitors.
    - Summarises development in **Communication & Language**, **Physical Development**, and **Personal, Social & Emotional Development**.
    - Identifies strengths, areas for development, and potential SEND concerns.
    - Informs planning, supports early intervention, and ensures smooth transitions between rooms.
- **Reception (Age 4–5):**
  - **Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** completed within the first 6 weeks.
  - **Ongoing phonics assessments** (e.g., RWI) are carried out half-termly.

- **Teacher assessments** are made against **Early Learning Goals (ELGs)** using daily evidence.
- **Good Level of Development (GLD)** outcomes are reported at the end of Reception.

Diagnostic Assessment

- Used when children show signs of delay or potential **SEND**.
- Conducted in collaboration with the **SENDCo** and, where necessary, **external agencies**.
- May include specialist tools such as **SALT assessments**, **developmental checklists**, or **health visitor input**.

7. Recording and Reporting

- Records focus on **significant learning moments**, keeping documentation manageable.
- **Digital or paper-based systems** are used for spotlight observations.
- Parents receive **regular updates** through daily handovers, **termly reports**, and **parent meetings**.
- Assessment data is used to monitor progress of key groups (**SEND, EAL, disadvantaged**) while avoiding unnecessary workload.

8. Moderation

- **Internal moderation** takes place termly across nursery age groups.
- **Reception–Year 1 moderation** ensures accuracy of ELG judgements and smooth transition into Key Stage 1.
- **External moderation** by the Local Authority or Trust is welcomed to maintain accuracy and consistency.

Planning, Observation & Assessment Policy

9. Use of Assessment

Assessment outcomes directly inform:

- Planning and provision enhancements.
- Early interventions for children not on track.
- Conversations with parents and professionals.
- Evaluation of curriculum impact and the quality of education.

10. Policy Review

- This policy is **reviewed annually** by the **Quality of Education Lead**.
- It will be updated in line with any changes to the **EYFS Statutory Framework** or **assessment guidance**.