Early Childhood
Observation and Assessment Policy and Procedure

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Policy Statement:

Observation and assessment are an important part of good educational practice and reflect the Steiner Waldorf philosophy and educational approach of viewing the child as a unique, active and developing human being. Good teaching practice occurs when the self-reflective teacher also regularly appraises and assesses his/her own teaching as well as the progress of each individual child, supported and affirmed by both colleagues and parents/carers of the child.

Assessment for the very young child is based on the adult’s knowledge of child development, and in line with the statutory regulation, also has regard of the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for children from birth to 5 years. It is related to long, medium and short term planning.

We work with a differentiated curriculum for our 5 and 6 year olds. A differentiated approach is used for children with SEND, the gifted and talented and children with EFL.

The person who compiles the assessment/reports etc, is known in Steiner Waldorf terms as the Kindergarten ‘teacher’ or ‘practitioner.’ This person is the same as the EYFS ‘key person.’ We are aware however, that in order to properly meet the individual needs of each child and to properly observe and assess their learning and development, each key person should be attentive to around 8-10 children in the group. Therefore the kindergarten assistant will work with us to observe and share information with the kindergarten teacher on a regular basis. (Please also refer to: ‘Key workers in the SDSS Early Childhood Department’ document.)
Procedure:

Initial Meetings
On entry into the kindergarten, there is a meeting with parents to establish background information, including a brief biography forming a picture of the child. A baseline assessment for the child will be completed by the Kindergarten teacher during or after the first parent conversation. This will be shared with the parents.

Shared Observation
Adults in contact with the child on a daily basis observe their development and progress and make notes on their observations and any teachable moments. These on-going observations, drawings, photographs of the child’s work etc., as well as any contributions and observations from parents/carers, contribute to the child’s summative assessment, which is recorded on each child’s individual observation and planning form and ultimately on their progress tracking grid. Each child is a “focus child” for at least one week a term, during which teaching staff focus on teachable moments and observations for that child. The progress tracking grid forms part of the formative assessment process.

The in-depth yearly conversation with parents.
This in-depth conversation is shared with parents every year and celebrates the child’s individual experiences, growth and development through the year. It may take the form of notes, observations and actions taken by staff in relation to the child’s developmental progress, as well as planning to support their development in the kindergarten, with due regard to others in the group and the rhythm and routine of the day. Parents are asked to contribute to the conversation, so that a real ‘picture’ of the child emerges and can be shared together. Out of this, suggestions may be made as to ways of supporting the child’s learning and development in the home as well as at school. The child’s progress tracking grid may be shared at these meetings.

End of year reporting for 5 & 6 year olds and the Progress Tracking Grid.
A short written report is given to the parents when the child is 5 and 6. (Please refer to ‘Yearly Report’ proforma.) The areas of learning and development will reflect the EYFS in line with statutory requirements, apart from the areas from which our school is exempt (please refer to our Exemption documents). Each child has a progress tracking grid based on the Early Learning Goals outlined in the EYFS, which is completed once a term.

Child Study
A more detailed study may sometimes be undertaken of individual children which is shared between all teaching staff, parents may be asked to contribute to the study.

SEND
There may be times when the child may need some extra support if there are questions around their learning and development, language and communication, or in any other area. We ask parents to give consent in order that we may share information with other agencies, or the school SENDco, a speech therapist, educational psychiatrist etc. Parents will always be informed and consulted should this be necessary. Please refer to the school’s SEND policy for further information.
Transition to Class 1
Before entering class 1, a summative assessment is completed for each child. The child’s Kindergarten teacher contributes the bulk of this assessment, and others may also contribute, e.g. the new Class 1 teacher will be invited to do in-class observations of the children during the Kindergarten morning. Where there is a concern about a child’s readiness for Class 1, the SENDco may also be invited to observe the child in Kindergarten and contribute to the assessment. The parents can also contribute to this, particularly during their school readiness meeting with the new Class 1 teacher. A picture of the child is also shared in the lower school faculty meeting in the summer term.

Compliance:
EYFS Guidelines
Exemptions and Modifications

Information, Advice, Guidance:
EYFS Foundation Stage Handbook
EYFS Steiner Interpretation and Readover
The older child in the Kindergarten and the embedded curriculum Framework for Children aged 5 – 7
Indicative Outline
SDSS SEND policy
Key worker statement
Guidelines for parent conversations

References:
Non-judgemental assessment in Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Settings
SDSS Curriculum Policy, Kindergarten section

Supporting documents:
Individual Observations and Planning (form)
Kindergarten Progress Tracking Grid (form)
Kindergarten Parent Meeting (form)
Graduated Approach (form)
Year Report for Children of Statutory School Age (form)
Baseline for children entering Kindergarten (form)