

Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School

Assessment Statement

Thomas Coram Centre and
Nursery School
49 Mecklenburgh Square
London WC1N 2NY



Approved: Autumn 2023	Next review: Autumn 2025
Reviewed every 2 years	

At Thomas Coram Centre, we meet statutory requirements using a variety of strategies as assessment should draw on a range of evidence of what children know, understand and can do across the curriculum. An effective start with young children relies on getting to know their strengths and weaknesses, interests and fascinations, aptitudes and attitudes quickly. Only then can they be provided with the right balance of activities to suit their needs, interests and abilities. When children have access to teaching and learning experiences that challenge and engage them, they make rapid progress, regardless of their age and stage of development.

Assessment does not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. Paperwork should be limited to that which is absolutely necessary to promote children's successful learning and development.

Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

In their interactions with children, practitioners respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents and carers share.

We have an increased focus on:

- children's starting points
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable children

At Thomas Coram, our practitioners use assessment for establishing children's starting points and to modify teaching so that children achieve their potential by the end of the year or key stage. Assessment draws on a range of evidence of what children know, understand and can do across the curriculum. This will also involve talking to children about their learning and assessing pupil's prior knowledge in the early stages of an activity or task, and adapting their teaching accordingly:

- Careful questioning will enable practitioners to identify progress and move learning on
- Children learn through a range of effectively planned activities, some of which are self-initiated, some directed by adults.
- Adults know when and how to intervene to further children's learning

- Adults know when to intervene and when to stand back and allow children to explore and solve problems
- Adults model language effectively and extend children's vocabulary
- Adults use open ended questions to develop children's thinking
- We are passionate about working with children to become active independent and lifelong learners and make almost all judgements based on contextualised assessment as the children play.

In order for in-depth knowledge of each child is ensured. The following assessment programme is followed for each child:

- **Key Person-** Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. They take prime responsibility for gathering daily, detailed information and communicating with the parents/ carers of their key children. Each day, parents are asked to arrive on time so they can spend 10-15 minutes with their child and key worker in the learning environment. This is an ideal time for informally sharing information and news. At the end of each daily session, the key person will feed back any important information to the parent or carer who collects. Parents are regularly reminded that they are very welcome to make an appointment at any time should they wish to have a private or more in depth discussion.
- **Whole Group Review-** At the end of the teaching day, the majority of Key People meet to evaluate learning which informs the following days provision.
- **Focus Child-** Each term, every child is a Focus Child. This is when all the practitioners observe specific children extra closely to monitor their interests, their learning, development and progress. Parents are informed when their child is a focus child and this provides a valuable opportunity for information sharing.
- **Start and end of year Summative Assessment-** During the Autumn Term and Summer Term, each team meets as group to assess progress of each child. An action plan then ensures that any strength or gaps are quickly addressed. Any child who is struggling to meet expected levels in their first term is then assessed further, a meeting is held with parents

and an "early concerns" form may be completed which helps the practitioners focus on strengths and areas for support in a structured way.

- **Special Books** All children have a Special Book, this is a visual and tangible assessment tool to outline the children's learning journey throughout their time at Comet. Each month the key person will add evidence of the child's learning and participation at nursery. Annotated comments highlight the child's learning including the child's voice and any learning questions. The key person will often complete this activity with the child, encouraging the child to talk about their learning. This also works as a self-assessment tool for the children as they revisit work/photos and notice the progress they have made. Parents are always welcome to look at these books with their child when they bring their child to nursery. The key person will bring this book to any formal review meetings too.
- **Camden Kids Talk**
The programme of support utilises a synthesis of recent academic research by Professor Kathryn Hirsh -Pasak (2020) on ways of supporting optimal language and communication.

They are

- 1) Children learn what they hear most
- 2) Children learn words for things and events that interest them
- 3) Interactive and responsive environments build language learning
- 4) Children learn best in meaningful contexts
- 5) Children need to hear diverse examples of words and language structures
- 6) Vocabulary and syntax (grammar) development are reciprocal processes

Children are assessed using the Wellcomm assessment tool in the Autumn term and reassessed in the Summer term having been supported throughout the year by a series of techniques which are advised by Camden's speech therapist service. Either the key person or the SENCO will meet with the parent of any child with a significant concern to agree the next steps. This will include in-house additional support and may lead to a referral for speech and language therapy.

- **End of nursery summative reports**

These reports are written by the key person and input by any Learning Support Assistant that has supported the child. The reports are shared with the parents and also the new primary school so that each child's successes can continue to be celebrated.

- **Building on home experiences.**

At Thomas Coram, we understand that children learn in many different ways and will show strengths and talents in different areas. Our pedagogical approach allows children to learn at their pace and values each child's starting point. At Thomas Coram, we believe that the successful inclusion of parents in all assessment processes leads to an increased understanding of their child's development. We meet regularly with parents both formally and informally. Formal meetings are termly as a minimum.

Children with Special Educational Needs (SEND)

Our assessment helps us identify children with an additional or special educational needs in a timely way.

Some children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) may need some additional assessment alongside the approach used with typically developing children. This provides detailed information about their strengths and the areas they need more support with. We review children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs) around every eight weeks with their families. At the review we make notes assessing their progress towards specific targets and in other areas of development which informs new targets.

We seek any assessment of a child from outside agencies, for example the Speech and Language Therapy Service or Child Development Team and use this information to inform our assessment and planning.

We also use a range of tools to assess and record the progress of children with SEND including:

- The Early Years Profile (also referred to as the Talk, Think checklist)
- Tools and proforma to collect data related to particular interventions such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System); Intensive Interaction, Workstation or specific language based interventions.

When children with SEND transfer to a new setting we make careful arrangements to share information about their progress and their ongoing needs via sharing of assessment materials including IEPs and through transition meetings with the new school and families. When possible, the receiving schools are invited to jointly observe the child with nursery staff before they transfer.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are assessed across the seven areas of learning as defined by Development Matters and also with regard to Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning.

The Prime Areas of Learning

- Communication and Language
- PSED
- Physical Development

The Specific Areas of Learning

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The Characteristic of Effective Teaching and Learning

- Playing and Exploring
 - Finding out and Exploring
 - Playing with what they know
 - Being willing to have a go
- Active Learning
 - Being involved and concentrating
 - Keep trying
 - Enjoying achieving what they set out to do
- Creative and Critical Thinking
 - Having their own ideas
 - Making links
 - Working with ideas

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for Children from Birth to Five, 2021, states:

Section 2 - Assessment

2.1. Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

2.2. Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence.

2.3. Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals. Assessment should inform an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and year 1 practitioners about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to key stage 1.

Progress check at age two

2.4. When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners must review their progress, and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas. This progress check must identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals (for example, the provider's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or health professionals) as appropriate.

2.5. Beyond the prime areas, it is for practitioners to decide what the written summary should include, reflecting the development level and needs of the individual child. The summary must highlight: areas in which a child is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed; and focus particularly on any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate a special educational need or disability). It must describe the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns. If a child moves settings between the ages of two and three it is expected that the progress check would usually be undertaken by the setting where the child has spent most time. Practitioners must

discuss with parents and/or carers how the summary of development can be used to support learning at home.

2.6. Practitioners should encourage parents and/or carers to share information from the progress check with other relevant professionals, including their health visitor and the staff of any new provision the child may transfer to. Practitioners must agree with parents and/or carers when will be the most useful point to provide a summary. Where possible, the progress check and the Healthy Child Programme health and development review at age two (when health visitors gather information on a child's health and development) should inform each other and support integrated working. This will allow health and education professionals to identify strengths as well as any developmental delay and any particular support from which they think the child/family might benefit. Providers must have the consent of parents and/or carers to share information directly with other relevant professionals.