Assessment Policy

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		Applicable Services:	Education
Contributors	Rob Arrowsmith		
Mandatory Policy	No		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

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1. Supporting Documents

- Curriculum, SMSC and Fundamental British Values Policy (EDU.POL.008)
- SEND Policy (EDU.POL.022)
- Behaviour Policy (EDU.POL.027)
- PSHE & RSHE Policy (EDE.POL.003)

Related policies are held within RADAR in the School's policy folder.

2. Introduction

At Acorns School, we use assessment to understand what each pupil knows, can do and needs next, so we can teach them well and help them progress. Many of our pupils arrive with gaps in their learning and a history of disrupted education, so knowing their true starting points matters more here than almost anywhere.

This policy sets out how we assess pupils, how we use what we find to plan teaching, and how we report progress. It works alongside our Curriculum policy (EDU.POL.008), which sets out what we teach and why.

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3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers at Acorns School. It aims to:

- make sure assessment is purposeful and supports learning rather than creating work for its own sake
- set out how we assess pupils' starting points, day-to-day learning and longer-term progress
- explain how we use assessment information to plan teaching so pupils can progress
- show how we assess fairly and accurately, including for pupils with SEND
- explain how we report progress to pupils, parents and carers

4. Abbreviations and Definitions

Baseline assessment. The assessment we carry out when a pupil joins, to understand their starting points in learning and wellbeing.

Formative assessment. The day-to-day checking of how well pupils are learning during lessons, used to adapt teaching there and then. It is also called assessment for learning.

Summative assessment. Assessment at the end of a unit, term or course that sums up what a pupil has learned, for example a test or a qualification.

Moderation. Staff comparing and agreeing judgements about pupils' work, so that assessment is fair and consistent.

5. Policy Content

5.1 Principles and Approach

Our approach rests on the following principles.

- Assessment serves learning. We assess to help pupils progress, not for its own sake.
- Know the pupil. We use assessment to understand each pupil's starting points, needs and next steps.
- Proportionate and manageable. We keep assessment purposeful and avoid creating unnecessary workload.
- Inclusive. We adapt assessment so every pupil, including those with SEND, can show what they know and can do.
- Honest and accurate. Our judgements are based on evidence and are moderated.
- The whole pupil. We track personal, social and emotional development alongside academic progress.

5.2 Assessment in Practice

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Baseline assessment on entry

We assess each pupil's starting points as soon as is practical after they join, in both academic and social, emotional and developmental areas, and we request records from previous settings to build the clearest possible picture. This baseline informs planning, target setting and the support a pupil receives.

The baseline identifies the foundational knowledge and skills each pupil needs, for example in reading, communication and self-regulation, as the basis for accessing the wider curriculum and for the targets we set.

Formative assessment and same-day intervention

In every lesson, teachers check how well pupils are learning and how much they have retained, and adapt their teaching in response. Where a pupil needs it, we provide same-day intervention, which may mean pre-teaching, support within the lesson or focused help afterwards, matched to the pupil's needs.

Summative assessment and tracking progress

We assess and record progress at planned points across the year against personalised and recognised benchmarks. We track each pupil's progress over time so that leaders, staff and governors can see whether pupils are progressing from their starting points and can act where they are not.

Assessing pupils with SEND

For pupils with SEND, assessment follows the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review, and is linked to EHCP outcomes where a pupil has a plan. We adapt assessment and make reasonable adjustments so pupils can show what they know, and we assess small steps of progress where that is the right measure. This section is read alongside the SEND policy (EDU.POL.022).

External accreditation and qualifications

Pupils access external accreditation at levels that are right for them, which may include GCSEs, Entry Level, Functional Skills, ASDAN, AQA awards and vocational qualifications. We enter pupils for qualifications that recognise their achievement and support their next steps, and we follow the relevant awarding body and access arrangements.

Moderation and quality assurance

Staff moderate pupils' work, within school and with other schools where possible, so that judgements are fair and consistent. Leaders quality-assure assessment through work scrutiny and data reviews, and use the findings to improve practice.

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Reporting to pupils, parents and carers

We give pupils regular, clear feedback they can act on. We report progress to parents and carers in accordance with the school's reporting calendar.

Using assessment to plan teaching

Assessment is only useful if it changes what happens next. We use what assessment tells us to plan teaching, target support and adapt the curriculum, so that pupils progress. This closes the loop required by the quality of teaching standard.

5.3 Recording, Monitoring and Reporting

Assessment information is recorded internally on Tutorshare. Leaders monitor progress data, including by pupil group such as pupils with SEND, and report to the proprietor and governors at least termly, with a fuller review at least annually.

Assessment data will never be used in isolation to evaluate the quality of teaching, staff performance or pupil potential.

5.4 Equality and Inclusion

At Acorns School, this policy is applied fairly and without discrimination, in line with the Equality Act 2010. We make reasonable adjustments so assessment is accessible to all pupils, and we monitor progress across pupil groups so we can act to remove any disadvantage.

For pupils working significantly below age-related expectations, assessment may focus on engagement, communication, independence, self-regulation and functional learning outcomes.

6. Responsibilities

6.1 Pupils

Take part in assessing their own learning, respond to feedback, and help set their next steps.

6.2 Staff

Assess pupils' learning regularly, give clear feedback, adapt teaching in response, keep accurate records of progress, and contribute to moderation.

6.3 Leadership and the assessment lead

Leadership at Acorns School sets the assessment framework, makes sure it is manageable and used well, and quality-assures it. The assessment lead oversees assessment systems, the assessment calendar and moderation.

6.4 Governance

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The proprietor and governors at Acorns School hold the school to account for pupils' progress and for the quality and impact of assessment, through reports and scrutiny of evidence.

6.5 Parents and carers

Are kept informed about their child's progress and are supported to help with next steps.

6.6 Named leads

Acorns School Marple

The assessment lead at Acorns School is Liam Morrison, Deputy Headteacher.

Acorns School Ashley

The assessment lead at Acorns School, Ashley is Naomi Mitchell, Deputy Headteacher.

7. Training Requirements

Assessment, including formative assessment and moderation, is covered in staff induction at Acorns School and through ongoing professional development. Staff are supported to assess pupils with SEND accurately and to make reasonable adjustments and access arrangements.

8. Equality Impact Statement

All policies will be developed and implemented in a manner that promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all individuals. Policies must align with relevant equality legislation and reflect the expectations and standards set by our regulatory bodies. They will demonstrate a commitment to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering an inclusive environment that respects and values the diverse needs, backgrounds, and experiences of those we support, as well as our workforce.

9. Sources of Information / References

This policy reflects current statutory guidance and legislation, including:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, standard 3, which requires teaching that takes account of pupils' needs and prior attainment and a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use it to plan teaching
- Independent School Standards: guidance for independent schools (DfE, April 2026), on the quality of education standards
- The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years (2015), on assessing and reviewing the progress of pupils with SEND
- The Equality Act 2010, including reasonable adjustments to assessment

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10. Version Control

This document can also be found on Radar.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes. The next review date and version history are recorded in the control table above. The named owner for review at Acorns School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

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11.1 Appendix A: School-Specific Annex

At Acorns School Marple, the following local arrangements apply:

- Assessment lead: Liam Morrison, Deputy Headteacher

At Acorns Ashley, the following local arrangements apply:

- Assessment lead: Naomi Mitchell, Deputy Headteacher

Assessment and tracking systems used to record academic progress have been developed by the school and are linked to White Rose for Maths and Science, Jigsaw for PSHE and Oak Academy for other subjects.

- **Assessment calendar and the points at which progress is recorded and reported:**

  September: Baseline assessment completed by the end of the month.
  December: Autumn term assessment point.
  April: Spring term assessment point.
  July: Summer term assessment point and end-of-year review.
  Annual Written Report: Issued to parents/carers at the end of the academic year.

  Accreditation and qualification routes offered, and any access arrangements:

  Acorns School Marple

- Access arrangements are applied for through JCQ
- Our curriculum offers pupils the opportunity to access the following accreditations:
  Asdan
  Entry Level Certificates
  Functional Skills
  GCSEs

  Acorns School Ashley

  Acorns Ashley offers a range of accreditation pathways to ensure that all students are able to access qualifications that are appropriate to their individual needs, abilities, aspirations and future destinations.
  Qualification routes include GCSEs, BTEC qualifications, ASDAN programmes and Functional Skills qualifications.

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Pathway decisions are made through a person-centred approach, considering each student's academic profile, EHCP outcomes, strengths, interests and long-term goals.

Regular assessment and progress monitoring inform ongoing decisions about accreditation pathways, ensuring that students are appropriately challenged and supported to achieve meaningful and recognised outcomes.

Access arrangements are identified and applied for by the SENDCo, where required, in accordance with awarding body regulations and evidence of the student's normal way of working.

The Exams Lead for both sites is Miranda Rathmell.

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