

Assessment Policy

Policy Number:	EDU.POL.004	Policy Owner Job Role	Quality Manager
Issue Number:		Ratified By	Quality Director
Issue Date:	01.07.26	Service Type:	Schools
		Applicable Services:	Education
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Mandatory Policy	No		
Note	This policy must not be amended without prior approval of the Education Director		

Table of Contents

Section

- 1 **Supporting Documents**
- 2 **Introduction**
- 3 **Aim & Scope**
- 4 **Abbreviations/Definitions**
- 5 **Policy Content**
- 6 **Responsibilities**
- 7 **Training Requirements**
- 8 **Equality Impact Statement**
- 9 **Sources of Information / References**
- 10 **Version Control (where else is this policy located, ie. Circle, Nourish, Radar)**
- 11 **Appendices**

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 Sunny Hill 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.

3. Aim & Scope

This policy applies to all staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers at Sunny Hill 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

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.

Keys

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.

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 on Evidence For Learning. 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 Sunny Hill 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 Sunny Hill 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

The Proprietor and Governors at Sunny Hill 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

The assessment lead at Sunny Hill School is Jessica Hocknull, Head Teacher.

7. Training Requirements

Assessment, including formative assessment and moderation, is covered in staff induction at Sunny Hill 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

10. Version Control

This document can also be found in the following locations: Sunny Hill Education Drive and 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 Sunny Hill School is the headteacher.

11. Appendices

Appendix A: School-Specific Assessment Arrangements at Sunny Hill School

This annex outlines the local assessment arrangements that support the implementation of the Assessment Policy at Sunny Hill School. It should be read alongside the main Assessment Policy and reflects the school's personalised approach to assessing learners with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), and complex additional needs.

The SHINE Assessment Framework

At Sunny Hill School, assessment is delivered through the **SHINE Assessment Framework**.

SHINE reflects the core principles that underpin assessment across the school:

S – Strengths

Assessment identifies and celebrates what learners **can do**. We build upon individual strengths, interests, motivators and successes to support further learning and development.

H – Holistic

Assessment considers the whole learner, including:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Physical development
- Emotional wellbeing
- Social development
- Independence and life skills
- Engagement with learning

I – Impact

Assessment focuses on the meaningful difference learning makes to a learner's life. We consider how learners apply, generalise and transfer knowledge and skills across different environments and real-life situations.

N – Next Steps

Keys

Assessment informs future planning by identifying personalised, ambitious and meaningful next steps linked to:

- EHCP outcomes
- Curriculum progression
- Independence
- Communication
- Preparation for Adulthood

E – Evidence

Assessment is evidence-informed and draws upon a range of information collected over time, including:

- Observations
- Photographs and videos
- Work samples
- Practical demonstrations
- Learner responses
- AAC interactions
- Communication records
- Therapy contributions
- Family contributions where appropriate

Professional judgement is used to bring this evidence together and build an accurate picture of progress.

Assessment Framework

SHINE is Sunny Hill School's core developmental assessment framework.

The framework enables staff to:

- Identify starting points
- Recognise and celebrate achievement
- Monitor progress over time
- Track progress through meaningful small steps
- Plan personalised next steps
- Measure progress towards greater independence
- Support Preparation for Adulthood outcomes

SHINE recognises that progress is not always linear and values attainment, engagement, participation, communication, independence and personal development.

Developmental Pathways

SHINE assesses learners through four developmental stages:

Steps 1–3: Early Development

Routes for Learning

Focus on:

- Awareness
- Early developmental responses
- Exploration
- Anticipation
- Readiness for learning

Steps 4–6: Intentional Participation

EYFS/Developmental Learning

Focus on:

- Intentional engagement
- Exploration
- Participation
- Emerging understanding

Steps 7–9: Developing Independence

Pre-Key Stage Standards

Focus on:

- Skill development
- Communication
- Increasing independence
- Application of learning

Steps 10–11: Applying Knowledge and Independence

Preparation for Adulthood

Focus on:

Keys

- Generalisation of learning
- Functional application
- Real-life problem-solving
- Independence across contexts

Assessment Across Curriculum Areas

SHINE is organised through:

- Assessment Strands
- SHINE Steps
- Small-Step Assessment Statements

Progress is recognised through four achievement descriptors:

Encountering

The learner notices, experiences or tolerates the learning experience.

Responding

The learner reacts or responds consistently.

Engaging

The learner actively participates in learning.

Initiating

The learner independently applies or seeks learning.

Assessment decisions are based upon evidence gathered over time and informed by professional judgement.

Engagement Model

The Engagement Model is used, where appropriate, to support professional judgement and provide additional information about how learners engage with learning.

The five areas of engagement are:

- Exploration

Keys

- Realisation
- Anticipation
- Persistence
- Initiation

At Sunny Hill School:

SHINE identifies what a learner can do.

The Engagement Model identifies how a learner engages with learning.

Together, these approaches provide a holistic understanding of learner progress.

Discovery Pathway Assessment

For some learners, attainment of **SHINE Step 11: Applying Knowledge and Independence** indicate readiness to move beyond a developmental framework.

Within the Discovery Pathway, learners may additionally be assessed using subject-specific **"I Can" Statements**.

Assessment focuses on:

- Subject knowledge
- Subject-specific skills
- Conceptual understanding
- Retention and recall
- Application of learning
- Generalisation
- Independence
- Preparation for Adulthood outcomes

Assessment Categories

- **Mastered (Blue)**
- **Expected Standard (Green)**
- **Working Towards (Yellow)**
- **Scaffolded (Amber)**
- **Below Expected (Red)**
- **Not Yet Covered (Grey)**

Baseline Assessment

All learners complete a baseline assessment within six weeks of admission.

This includes:

- Previous attainment
- EHCP outcomes
- Communication and interaction
- Sensory profile
- Physical and medical needs
- Learning behaviours
- Engagement patterns

The information gathered informs each learner's:

- Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)
- Curriculum pathway
- Individual targets
- Therapeutic support

Evidence for Learning

Sunny Hill School uses **Evidence for Learning (EfL)** as its primary digital assessment platform.

Teachers are expected to upload a minimum of:

Four high-quality observations per learner each week.

Evidence may include:

- Photographs
- Videos
- Observations
- AAC interactions
- Work samples
- Learner voice
- Therapy evidence
- Parent contributions

Each observation should identify:

- Learning intention
- Progress demonstrated
- SHINE links

- Curriculum links
 - Next steps
-

Summative Assessment and Progress Reviews

Progress is formally reviewed each term.

Reviews consider:

- SHINE progress
- PLP targets
- EHCP outcomes
- Subject-specific achievement
- Engagement
- Independence
- Therapy outcomes
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Emotional wellbeing

Progress information is used to inform future learning and support planning.

Accreditation Opportunities

Sunny Hill School offers a range of accreditation pathways that celebrate achievement and support Preparation for Adulthood.

OCR Entry Level 1 Life and Living Skills

Delivered through:

- Hobbies
- Careers
- Preparation for Adulthood

Assessment evidence may include:

- Practical demonstrations
 - Photographs
 - Portfolios
 - Observations
 - Videos
-

- Witness statements

AQA Unit Award Scheme

Used to recognise achievement in areas including:

- Independence
 - Communication
 - Personal development
 - Employability skills
 - Functional literacy and numeracy
 - Enrichment activities
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Moderation Arrangements

To ensure consistency and accuracy:

- Internal moderation takes place termly.
 - Cross-school moderation is undertaken where available.
 - Assessment evidence is reviewed collaboratively.
 - Professional discussion supports consistent application of SHINE criteria.
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Reporting to Parents and Carers

Parents and carers receive information about:

- SHINE progress
- EHCP outcomes
- Personalised Learning Plan targets
- Engagement and wellbeing
- Accreditation outcomes
- Preparation for Adulthood progress

Progress is shared through:

- Evidence for Learning
 - Parents' meetings
 - Annual Reviews
 - Termly reports
-
-

Use of Assessment Information

Assessment information is used to:

- Inform curriculum planning
- Shape teaching and intervention strategies
- Support EHCP target setting
- Inform therapy programmes
- Support safeguarding decisions
- Plan transitions
- Monitor engagement and participation
- Evaluate curriculum effectiveness

Senior leaders analyse assessment information termly to identify:

- Strengths
- Trends
- Areas for development
- Curriculum impact
- Learner outcomes

Key Roles and Responsibilities

Assessment Lead

Jessica Hocknull, Headteacher

Responsible for:

- Strategic leadership of assessment
- SHINE implementation
- Quality assurance
- Staff training
- Moderation processes
- Whole-school assessment analysis

Teachers

Responsible for:

- Ongoing assessment
- Recording evidence
- Planning next steps
- Reporting progress to families

Teaching Assistants

Responsible for:

- Gathering observational evidence
- Supporting assessment activities
- Contributing to SHINE assessment judgements

Therapists and Specialists

Responsible for:

- Assessing specialist targets
- Supporting EHCP outcomes
- Contributing to multidisciplinary assessments

Governors

Responsible for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of assessment systems
- Holding leaders to account for learner outcomes

Sunny Hill School Assessment Commitment

At Sunny Hill School, assessment is personalised, meaningful and ambitious. Through the SHINE Assessment Framework, I can statements, the Engagement Model, Evidence for Learning and curriculum-based assessment, we recognise and celebrate every learner's achievement.

Assessment is not simply used to measure progress. It is used to understand each learner as an individual, remove barriers to learning, identify meaningful next steps and ensure that every pupil is supported to achieve greater independence, participation and success in adult life.