



## Observation, Planning and Assessment (OPA) Policy

### Policy statement

Little Elms recognises the importance of having an effective observation, planning, and assessment process in place to enhance the delivery of high-quality care and learning for children. Observation, Planning and Assessment is a critical process which enables effective parent partnership and the appropriate sharing of information relating to the child's levels of development and progress.

### Observation

Our skilled practitioners carry out observations all the time in their normal day to day practice whilst working with the children. These every day observations enable each practitioner to build a secure and sound knowledge of each child and they use these day-to-day observations and their knowledge of each child to:

- Assess the effectiveness of their teaching approaches
- Assess children's responses and engagement in activities, and use these observations to evaluate their effectiveness
- Identify appropriate next steps for their key children
- Assess and tune into children's particular interests
- Identify children's needs, and adapt their practice and approaches to meet them
- Capture, and share information with parents about their child's learning, development and care
- Identify any areas of focus for each individual child, including to identify any areas of SEND

Little Elms uses the Learning Book as a tool to capture observations, pictures and videos that are shared with parents to promote partnerships. The observations, pictures and videos that are captured on the Learning Book play a small part in the overall OPA process.

Little Elms does not promote an excessive requirement to document observations on the Learning Book. The Learning Book observation tool is used by practitioners to celebrate and share WOW moments with parents.

### Planning

We know that children learn from a range of child led and open-ended play experiences and we ensure that practitioners and leaders have high expectations of children and what they can achieve.

We recognise that, as well as child led experiences and opportunities for learning, children need to be taught new skills and should be given information and experiences which will enable them to develop their knowledge and skills.

### *Planning Process / Cycle*

#### *Stage 1: Identifying what practitioners want children to learn*

It is essential that practitioners use their knowledge of individual children to identify what they want children to learn. Children will learn and develop at different age and stages and there is no 'one size fits all'.

What practitioners want children to learn will be dependant on individual children's needs.

An example of what a practitioner wants a child to learn is learning to walk.

### *Stage 2: Identifying the stages of what practitioners want children to learn*

After identifying what the child needs to learn, it is essential that practitioners use their knowledge and expertise to then identify the stages for that learning.

For example, children do not just go from crawling to walking. There are stages in which children will gradually develop skills which will enable them to learn to walk. These stages may look like:

1. Pulling up to stand
2. Cruising (from 1 piece of furniture to another)
3. Walking / standing with the support of an adult
4. Standing unassisted for a short period of time
5. Taking steps independently.

During this identification process, practitioners will use their knowledge of the child to identify which stage the child is currently in, and what stage they aim to progress to.

### *Stage 3: Identifying how practitioners will facilitate children to learn / progress to the next stage in learning*

Once the stages of that learning have been identified, practitioners will then use their knowledge of that child's interests to plan for suitable activities to encourage further development.

For example, if a child is currently able to stand with the support of an adult, practitioners will plan for activities which will be supportive of encouraging more opportunity for the child to take steps independently, incorporating the child's individual interest, and practice the skills they have already learnt so they can develop them.

### *Stage 4: Evaluate what children have learnt / quality of teaching*

Practitioners will continuously assess and evaluate the quality of teaching & learning experiences provided and children's achievements using the following documentation:

#### ***Individual Planning Sheet***

Each key person will be responsible for completing an 'Individual Planning Sheet' for their key children each half term. They will use this as a basis to support the overall set up of the continuous provision, and the adult led activities that they offer children each day.

#### ***Monthly Teaching & Learning Evaluation Form***

Each month during a team meeting, practitioners will work together as a team to contribute to completing a 'Monthly Teaching & Learning Evaluation Form'.

The Evaluation aims to focus on various areas detailed within the form and is used as a reflection tool to support future teaching and learning objectives.

#### **Assessment**

Assessment forms part of the Little Elms process for monitoring and supporting the learning and development of children who attend. Little Elms undertakes all statutory assessments as follows and will undertake further assessment above and beyond those that are required where it is deemed necessary and appropriate for the individual child / family.

### ***Baseline (Via the Learning Book)***

It is important to establish the level of learning and development for each child as they join the nursery. At Little Elms, the following is carried out by the key person in partnership with parents:

- During the initial settling in session, the key person will complete an 'All About Me' and the child's current levels of development will be requested from the parent.
- During the first 4 weeks of a child joining the setting, the key person and other colleagues will carry out daily observations of the child, spending time with the child to assess their level of learning and development.
- After a period of 4 weeks from when the child joins the setting, the key person will use their knowledge of the child to undertake a '*Baseline Assessment*' via the online learning portal. This information will be shared with the child's parent and if there are any areas of concern, the nursery will refer to and follow guidance detailed in the company SEND policy.

### ***2 Year Check (Paper based)***

Each key person is responsible for ensuring they complete a Little Elms 2 Year Check Form for their key children. The 2 year check will mainly focus on the prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language Development
2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
3. Physical Development

The 2 year check for every child will include the following:

- Identifies 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, the key person will develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals in line with the SEND Policy.
- Beyond the prime areas, it is for the key person to decide what the written summary should include, reflecting the development level and needs of the individual child.
- The summary will 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 will describe the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns.

As children are approaching turning 2 years old, the key person will undertake the following:

- Establish with the parent when they are scheduled to have their progress check with the health visitor under the '*Healthy Child Programme*'.
- The key person will complete a Little Elms 2 Year Check Form and arrange a time with the parent to share the information, seek a parent signature and provide the parent with a photocopy.
- The key person will encourage the parent to share this document with other relevant professionals.
- A copy of the 2 year check, complete with parent signature must be available on the nursery premises.

### ***Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (Paper based)***

The EYFSP is not normally completed by Little Elms. This will only need to be completed by Little Elms if:

- *A child is still in attendance at Little Elms in the final term of the year in which a child reaches age 5 – for example, if a child's school start has been deferred.*

In the final term of the year in which a child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, Little Elms must complete the EYFS Profile. This form is individual to each local authority and Little Elms will use the most up to date local authority document to complete the EYFSP.

In accordance with the Statutory Framework, the EYFSP will be an assessment of a child's learning and development against the Early Learning Goals.

At Little Elms, the following process is implemented:

- The key person is responsible for completing the EYFSP Form for their key children.
- The Nursery Manager is responsible for collecting these, checking them for quality purposes and passing them onto the relevant school in preparation for the child's transition.
- The Nursery Manager will report EYFSP results to the local authority, upon request.

**This policy should be used in conjunction with the Teaching, Learning and Education Programmes Policy which together, form the overall approach for our provision of high-quality teaching and learning.**

#### *Associated Documents:*

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (31<sup>st</sup> March 2021)
- Non-Statutory Development Matters (September 2020)
- Teaching, Learning and Educational Programmes Policy
- Individual Planning Sheet
- Teaching and Learning Monthly Evaluation Form
- Early Learning Goals
- 2 Year Check Form