



Observation and assessment policy

Setting's Name:	Morning Star Nursery
Date Last Reviewed:	17 th September 2026
Date of Next Review:	17 th February 2027

Planning Assessment and Record Keeping

Observation, record keeping, evaluation and planning are interrelated and inter-dependent. They are the cornerstone for ensuring the provision in the nursery is of high quality and appropriate for all children.

Effective planning enables staff to provide meaningful learning experiences that will bring out the full potential in each child. Research has confirmed that teachers must observe and listen to children to enable them to make a match between the curriculum offered and the developmental needs and current interests of the children.

“The nursery is a natural extension up of the family, not the natural extension down of the school” D.W.Winnicott

All planning should start with individual children and their families –their cultures, religions, languages, family compositions, economic backgrounds, homes, interests, concerns and abilities.

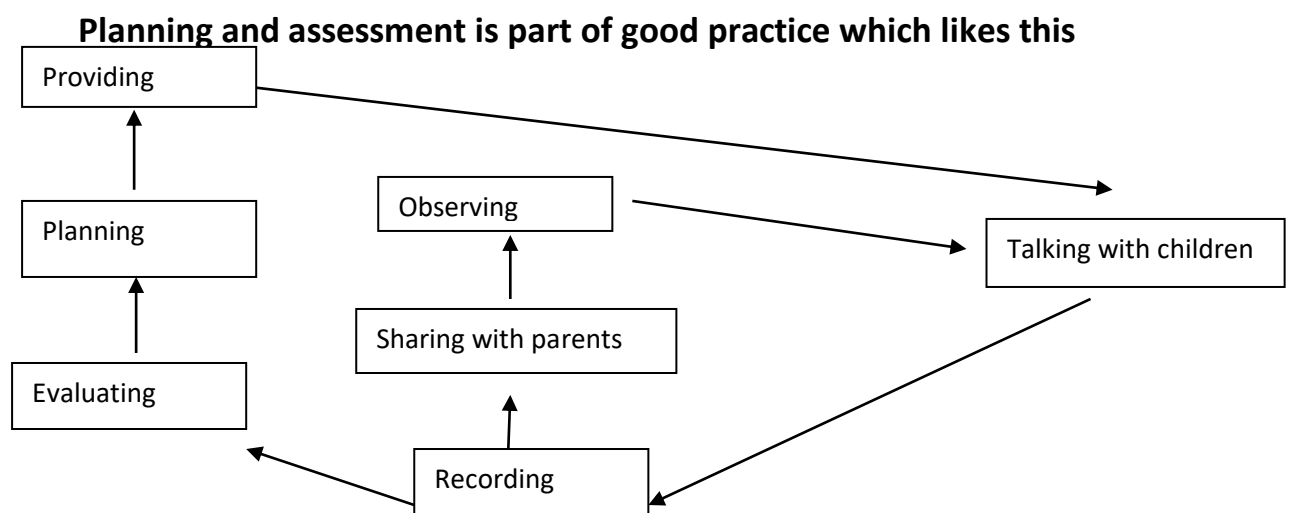
Planning takes place in many ways and on many levels within the early year's environment. Planning should enable the organisation of learning for the development of the whole child – including their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic and emotional needs.

There are four essential aspects for the provision of an effective early years curriculum that provides the quality of learning:

- ✓ Observation
- ✓ Record keeping
- ✓ Evaluation
- ✓ Planning

Record keeping and planning are the only successful and useful if they are inspired by detailed observations of the children and their responses to different activities.

This diagram shows an effective cycle that links the four essential aspects for quality learning.



“When observation comes first adults can discover what children can do and what children already know before jumping into action”

Bruce 1997

- Planning for the under threes should follow the birth to three matters framework guidelines and plans should show clear links to the interests and characteristics of the babies and toddlers.

- Planning for the over threes should be in line with the foundation stage curriculum with written plans showing clear links to both children's interests and the Early learning Goals.
- Children learn and should specify the role of practitioners in supporting and extending children's play experience.

“Play is the child's main business in life; through play you learn skills to survive and find some pattern into the confusing world into which you was born”. Lee 1977(Moyles 1989)

We keep records on children to:

- ✓ Find about children as individuals leading to a deeper understanding of different learning styles, interests and developmental level.
- ✓ Monitor progress, it is necessary to regularly review children's achievements in order that plans can be made to support progress.
- ✓ Inform curriculum planning, record keeping highlights the differences between the plans and the received curriculum.
- ✓ Enable staff to evaluate provision.
- ✓ To provide a focus for communication with others including practitioners, parents, Ofsted inspectors and advisors teachers.

Recording and accessing children's progress and evaluating the curriculum is much easier when there is a lot of concrete evidence from practitioners and parents.

Records should include:

- ✓ Profile books with dated photographs and samples of Art work and mark making
- ✓ Relevant observations
- ✓ Parent/career comments
- ✓ Simple headings
- ✓ Samples and observations from home
- ✓ Summary reports of progress and next steps
- ✓ Settling in reviews and initial information provided by the parents/career

Records should be stored so that they are easily accessible to staff, children and parents in the child group room. All records should be kept in a confidential way.

- Staff teams and management must support each key person to keep up to date with their records and provide opportunities for regular discussion with colleagues. Planning for all children in the nursery should start from observations and assessment from the children. This results in planned experiences being more meaningful and satisfying to children. The links between the nursery's long term goals and the children's current interest should be included in the planning format.
- As children's needs and interest develop and grow so rapidly, planning must be flexible enough to allow for practitioners to follow the leads from children and to adapt provision accordingly.
- Long, medium and short term planning should be displayed in all rooms to allow parents and other practitioners to be aware of what is happening and to ensure continuity of children's experiences.
- Plans should focus on play as the main way that young children learn and should specify the role of practitioners in supporting and extending children's play experiences.

“Play is the child's main business in life; through play he learns the skills to survive and finds some patterns into the confusing world into which he was born”.

Lee 1977 (in Moyles 1989)