



St Michael's
C.E. Primary School

**On-Entry Assessment and
Early Identification
Framework: Helping Every
Child Achieve, Belong and
Thrive**



"Courage to Flourish in the Love of God"

1. Purpose

At St Michael's CE Primary School, we aim to establish an accurate understanding of every child's strengths, starting points and needs as quickly as possible when they join the school.

This framework should be read alongside the school's **Transition Curriculum and Framework: Helping Every Child Achieve, Belong and Thrive**.

The Transition Curriculum and Framework sets out how children are welcomed, prepared and supported through transition. This document complements that process by setting out how we:

- establish academic and developmental starting points;
- identify gaps in learning;
- identify possible communication, SEND, SEMH or EAL needs;
- adapt teaching and provision;
- provide targeted support where required; and
- review progress from a meaningful starting point.

Assessment is proportionate to the individual child. Not every child will complete every assessment within this framework.

The key principle is:

Assess what is needed, use what we find and avoid unnecessary duplication.

2. Our Approach

On entry, staff draw together information from:

- previous settings or schools;
- parents and carers;
- pupil voice;
- classroom observation;
- existing assessment information;
- attendance, SEND, safeguarding and medical information where relevant; and
- age-appropriate baseline or diagnostic assessment.

Where reliable information already exists, this is used rather than unnecessarily reassessing the child.

Initial judgements are treated as **provisional**. Children may initially perform below their true level because of anxiety, unfamiliar routines, differences in curriculum sequencing, interrupted education or being new to English. Teachers therefore refine the baseline as they get to know the child.

The aim is to establish an accurate picture **within an appropriate settling period**, rather than within a fixed number of days.

3. Children Starting in EYFS

Assessment in EYFS is rooted in observation, interaction and professional knowledge of the child.

Birth to 5 Matters

Practitioners use Birth to 5 Matters to support the establishment of children's developmental starting points across the areas of learning.

This is used alongside:

- professional observation;
- information from parents and previous settings;
- interactions with the child; and
- the school's curriculum expectations.

Birth to 5 Matters is used as a professional assessment tool rather than as a checklist.

Strong Foundational Skills and Knowledge

Practitioners also establish starting points against the school's Strong Foundational Skills and Knowledge.

This helps identify what children already know and can do, and what needs to be taught next.

Together:

Birth to 5 Matters + Strong Foundations + observation + family/previous-setting information

provide the school's holistic EYFS baseline.

Reception Baseline Assessment

Children entering Reception complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment where required.

This forms one part of the wider assessment picture and does not replace professional assessment.

4. Communication and Language

Speech, language and communication are considered carefully because they underpin access to learning across the curriculum.

EYFS and Year 1

WellComm may be used where further screening or assessment of communication and language is appropriate.

Year 2 and Key Stage 2

Speech and Language Link may be used where speech, language or communication concerns are identified.

Assessment outcomes are considered alongside:

- classroom observation;
- parent/carer information;
- previous school information;
- pupil voice; and
- the child's wider learning profile.

A low score on a screening tool is not used in isolation to identify SEND.

5. Reading

Reading is assessed carefully on entry because it is fundamental to accessing the wider curriculum.

The starting point is always to **hear the child read and observe how they approach an age-appropriate text or book.**

Teachers consider:

- decoding;
- accuracy;
- fluency;
- automaticity;
- expression and phrasing;
- vocabulary;
- understanding of the text;
- retrieval;

- inference; and
- overall comprehension.

The assessment is matched to the child's age and apparent reading level. Where an age-appropriate text is too challenging, teachers select a more accessible text so that they can identify precisely where the child is secure and where gaps begin.

Fluency

Where appropriate, teachers consider reading fluency more specifically, including:

- accuracy;
- pace;
- automatic word recognition;
- phrasing;
- expression; and
- the extent to which decoding affects comprehension.

A fluency assessment may be used where this would provide useful additional information, particularly where a pupil can decode but reads slowly, hesitantly or without sufficient automaticity.

Phonics

Where a child is within, or may require, phonics teaching, an appropriate **Little Wandle assessment** is completed.

Depending on the pupil's age and needs, this may include:

- Little Wandle Placement Assessment;
- Keep-up baseline assessment;
- Rapid Catch-up baseline assessment; or
- a PSC-style baseline where relevant.

This helps identify:

- securely known grapheme-phoneme correspondences;
- blending;
- decoding;
- word-reading accuracy;
- fluency;
- gaps within the phonics sequence; and
- the most appropriate teaching or intervention starting point.

Phonics assessment is particularly important where a pupil:

- is in Reception or Key Stage 1;
- has not previously met the Phonics Screening Check standard;
- is reading below age-related expectations;
- demonstrates insecure decoding; or
- joins without reliable phonics information.

Salford Reading Test

The Salford Reading Test may be used where a pupil appears to be reading below age-related expectations or where further diagnostic information is needed.

This provides additional information about reading accuracy and comprehension and helps staff understand the extent and nature of the reading difficulty.

Salford is used alongside teacher observation and the child's actual reading behaviour rather than as a standalone measure.

NFER Reading

Pupils in Years 2–6 complete NFER Reading as part of the school's normal termly assessment cycle.

For a newly admitted pupil, the NFER assessment contributes useful standardised information about reading attainment and comprehension.

NFER outcomes are considered alongside:

- hearing the child read;
- fluency;
- phonics where relevant;
- Salford where required;
- teacher assessment;
- previous school information; and
- classroom performance.

Where a child joins between normal assessment points, an additional NFER Reading assessment is not automatically required unless there is a clear diagnostic reason.

Reading Assessment Pathway

In practice, the process is:

Hear the child read an appropriate text or book

↓

Consider decoding, accuracy, fluency and comprehension

↓

Is the child reading broadly in line with expectations?

Yes

Continue normal reading provision and monitor through classroom assessment and the school's usual NFER cycle.

No / concerns identified

Use the most appropriate diagnostic assessment:

- **Little Wandle** where phonics or decoding is insecure;
- **fluency assessment** where automaticity, pace or phrasing is a barrier;
- **Salford Reading Test** where reading is below age-related expectations or further diagnostic information is needed;
- **NFER Reading** as part of the normal Y2–6 assessment cycle.

The purpose is to identify **why** the child is experiencing difficulty and ensure that subsequent teaching or intervention is matched precisely to need.

6. Writing

An age-appropriate independent writing opportunity may be used to establish the child's starting point.

Teachers may consider:

- spelling;
- handwriting;
- phonics application;
- sentence construction;
- grammar;
- punctuation;
- vocabulary;
- composition; and
- independence.

The purpose is to identify strengths and next steps for teaching rather than to generate an additional standalone level or score.

7. Mathematics

Teachers establish children's mathematical starting points through classroom assessment and, where appropriate, diagnostic assessment.

This may include:

- number sense;
- place value;
- calculation;
- arithmetic;
- fluency;
- multiplication and division;
- reasoning; and
- problem-solving.

MTC-Style Baseline

For relevant pupils, particularly in Years 4–6, an **MTC-style baseline** may be used to establish multiplication-table fluency and identify specific gaps.

8. NFER Assessment

Pupils in **Years 2–6** complete NFER assessments as part of the school's normal termly assessment cycle.

A newly admitted pupil therefore completes NFER assessments in line with normal year-group practice.

Depending on the year group, this may include:

- Reading;
- Mathematics; and
- Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling.

NFER outcomes are considered alongside teacher assessment and the child's wider profile rather than in isolation.

9. Strong Foundations for Older Pupils

Strong Foundations may also be used with older pupils where significant gaps in foundational learning are identified.

This may be particularly useful for pupils who:

- have experienced interrupted education;
- are working significantly below age-related expectations;
- have significant literacy or numeracy gaps;
- have SEND;

- are new to the English education system; or
- have not secured important prerequisite knowledge.

This helps staff identify precisely what needs to be taught rather than simply describing a pupil as working below age-related expectations.

10. English as an Additional Language

Where a pupil speaks English as an additional language (EAL), assessment considers:

- home language(s) and competence in the pupil's first language, where known;
- previous schooling and any interruptions to education;
- previous exposure to, and education through, English;
- spoken English and understanding of classroom language; and
- reading and writing in English.

Teachers build a picture of the pupil's strengths and needs through observation, interaction, accessible curriculum activities, information from families and previous settings, and assessment over time.

Staff distinguish carefully between English language acquisition, gaps in learning, interrupted education, speech and language needs, and possible SEND. Being new to English is not in itself a special educational need.

Standardised, reading and language-based assessments are interpreted cautiously where a pupil is new to English. Further guidance is provided in **Appendix 10: Assessment of Pupils New to School with EAL**.

11. Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Teachers consider emotional wellbeing and learning behaviours alongside academic starting points.

Where concerns are identified, a **Boxall Profile baseline** may be completed.

This may inform:

- classroom strategies;
- pastoral provision;
- nurture support;
- ELSA;
- NEST provision; or
- further assessment.

Boxall is not automatically completed for every new pupil.

12. When SEND Concerns Arise

On-entry assessment may identify possible additional needs, but a low score or gap in learning does not automatically mean that a pupil has SEND.

Concerns may be raised by:

- the class teacher;
- a parent or carer;
- the child;
- another member of staff;
- an external professional; or
- emerging assessment, observation or progress information.

Where concerns arise, discussion with the **SENCO can begin early**.

The school then follows its established **Early Identification and graduated SEND process**.

This framework does not duplicate that process.

On-entry information contributes to the developing evidence base, which may include:

- classroom observation;
- teacher assessment;
- response to high-quality teaching and adaptation;
- pupil and parent/carers views;
- intervention information;
- WellComm;
- Speech and Language Link;
- Salford;
- Little Wandle assessment;
- NFER;
- Boxall Profile;
- Birmingham SEND Continuums;
- Strong Foundations; and
- other relevant professional information.

There is an important distinction between:

identifying and responding to a concern early

and

formally identifying SEND following appropriate assessment, monitoring and evidence gathering.

The SENCO can become involved immediately, but SEND Monitoring, placement on the SEND Register, development of an SSPP and any subsequent consideration of an Education, Health and Care needs assessment follow the school's established graduated process.

Where a pupil joins with an existing SSPP, EHCP or established SEND provision, this information is reviewed so that appropriate support can continue without unnecessary delay.

13. Recording Assessment Information

Assessment information is recorded through the school's existing systems.

This may include:

- school assessment trackers;
- Arbor;
- NFER records;
- Little Wandle assessment records;
- WellComm;
- Speech and Language Link;
- Salford;
- Boxall Profile;
- SEND monitoring and assessment records; and
- other established school systems.

14. Professional Discussion and Oversight

The **class teacher** has primary responsibility for developing an understanding of a newly admitted pupil's starting points.

They are supported, where appropriate, by:

- Phase Leaders;
- SENCO;
- SLT;
- DSLs;
- phonics/English leaders;
- mathematics leaders; and
- other relevant staff.

Newly admitted pupils are discussed through **phase meetings and pupil progress meetings**.

Discussion may consider:

- attainment and progress;
- phonics and reading;
- writing;
- mathematics;
- attendance;
- engagement and wellbeing;
- EAL;
- intervention;
- SEND concerns;
- pastoral or safeguarding factors; and
- whether further assessment or support is required.

Where there are significant concerns, pupils are discussed and reviewed more frequently rather than waiting for the next scheduled meeting.

15. Quality Assurance

Leaders quality assure on-entry assessment through existing school processes.

This includes consideration through:

- phase meetings;
- pupil progress meetings;
- assessment monitoring;
- phonics and reading monitoring;
- SEND monitoring;
- intervention review; and
- SLT oversight.

Leaders consider whether:

- staff understand the child's starting point;
- assessment is proportionate;
- previous information has been used effectively;
- identified gaps have led to action;
- teaching has been adapted where needed;
- intervention is appropriately matched;
- concerns have been escalated appropriately; and
- progress is being reviewed from the child's initial starting point.

This aligns with the wider Transition Framework, which already expects staff to understand pupils' strengths, needs, prior learning and successful support strategies, with support and interventions continuing appropriately across transition.

16. On-Entry Assessment Overview

Area	Assessment / Information	When Used
EYFS development	Birth to 5 Matters	EYFS
Foundational learning	Strong Foundational Skills and Knowledge	EYFS and selected older pupils
Communication	WellComm	EYFS/Y1 where appropriate
Communication	Speech and Language Link	Y2/KS2 where appropriate
Phonics	Little Wandle Placement / Keep-up / Rapid Catch-up	Where relevant
Phonics	PSC-style baseline	Relevant pupils
Reading	Age-appropriate text/book, fluency and comprehension assessment	All pupils as appropriate
Reading	Salford Reading Test	Where reading is below age-related expectations or further diagnostic information is needed
Reading	NFER Reading	Y2–6 as part of normal assessment cycle
Writing	Independent age-appropriate writing	As appropriate
Mathematics	Teacher assessment using age-appropriate tasks	As appropriate
Mathematics	MTC-style baseline	Relevant pupils
Mathematics	NFER Mathematics	Y2–6 as part of normal assessment cycle
GPS	NFER GPS	As part of normal assessment cycle where applicable

EAL	Family/previous-setting information; home and strongest language; first-language literacy where known; previous schooling and exposure to English; structured observation of listening, speaking, reading and writing; practical/visual curriculum and mathematics activities; ongoing assessment over time	Pupils new to school with EAL
SEMH	Boxall Profile	Where concerns are identified
SEND	Birmingham SEND Continuums / further diagnostic assessment	Where indicated

17. From Entry to Progress

The process can be summarised as:

Transition and information transfer

↓

Settling, observation and initial assessment

↓

Age-appropriate baseline established

↓

Further diagnostic assessment where required

↓

Starting point identified

↓

Teaching and provision adapted

↓

Discussed through phase and pupil progress meetings

↓

Further leader/SENCO involvement where required

↓

Progress reviewed and initial judgements refined

The key evidence trail is:

What did we know? → What did we identify? → What did we do? → What difference did it make?

18. Intended Impact

An effective on-entry assessment process ensures that pupils do not spend unnecessary time accessing teaching or provision that does not match their needs.

Through purposeful information gathering, observation and proportionate assessment, staff are able to:

- establish meaningful starting points;
- recognise strengths;
- identify gaps quickly;
- place pupils appropriately within phonics;
- identify reading and mathematical needs;
- identify communication needs;
- distinguish EAL from SEND appropriately;
- recognise emerging SEND or SEMH concerns;
- adapt teaching and provision;
- implement targeted support where needed; and
- evaluate subsequent progress.

The purpose of the framework is not to increase assessment workload.

It is to ensure that **every child joining St Michael's is understood quickly and receives the teaching, support and opportunities they need to Achieve, Belong and Thrive.**

Appendix 1: Assessment of Pupils New to School with EAL

For pupils who are new to the school and have EAL, assessment is carried out gradually and in a way that reduces unnecessary language demands.

On admission

Staff gather information from the family and previous setting, where available, including:

- home language(s) and strongest language;
- literacy in the first language;
- previous schooling and any gaps in education;
- previous exposure to English; and
- any previous additional support or identified needs.

First weeks in school

Teachers build an initial picture through classroom observation and accessible activities. Assessment considers:

- **Listening and understanding:** response to classroom language, instructions, visual prompts and modelling.
- **Speaking:** communication through gesture, single words, phrases and sentences.
- **Reading and writing:** skills in English and, where known, the pupil's first language.
- **Curriculum knowledge:** practical and visual activities are used where possible to establish what the pupil knows independently of their English proficiency.
- **Mathematics:** practical resources, numbers and calculations may be used to reduce the language demands of assessment.

Understanding and spoken expression are considered separately. A pupil may understand significantly more English than they are able or confident to use.

Ongoing assessment

Evidence is gathered through normal classroom teaching rather than relying on a single assessment. An initial baseline is reviewed as the pupil settles and develops confidence in English.

Staff consider whether difficulties are best explained by:

- normal EAL development;
- limited previous exposure to English;
- curriculum gaps or interrupted education; or
- a possible additional or special educational need.

Where concerns remain over time, further assessment should draw on evidence from different contexts and, where possible, information about the pupil's development and functioning in their first language.

EAL should not be treated as SEND, but EAL should not prevent a pupil with additional needs from being identified and supported.