

Beechtree Steiner Initiative: Quality Assurance Cycles

Introduction and Aims

At Beechtree the children are at the centre of all that we do. The overarching aim of this Quality Assurance (QA) system is therefore to ensure that the experiences and outcomes for the children at Beechtree are of the best possible quality and continuously improving.

Our Q A system is designed to hold us accountable to the families of Beechtree, to ourselves and one another as professionals and to the wider educational community, as represented by Ofsted and the Steiner Waldorf Fellowship, for example.

We aim to ensure that there is always time and space for reflection, challenge and continuous professional development and that teachers and staff are motivated, engaged and supported and have ownership of their learning and their practice. Innovation and risk taking are important within this.

This approach mirrors and supports our aims for the children at Beechtree:

“To allow each child in the setting to progress and develop to fulfil their potential;

To cultivate motivated, responsible and competent young people who have a life-long love of learning and a strong sense of the contribution that they can make to society.

To provide a high level of individual care and time for each child.”

The system was designed in consultation with staff and trustees and is a concrete example of the collegial and participatory way in which we work at Beechtree. It pulls together existing staff support, self evaluation and assessment processes into one coherent monitoring system and reflects and supports the weekly, monthly, termly and yearly rhythms that give structure to the work of Beechtree.

Please see our supervision, staff support and assessment policies and procedures for further information.

This work is a living document.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff

All staff at Beechtree are expected:

to reflect on their work both informally and formally, to take part in staff development meetings, supervision and appraisals and their individual continuous professional development This includes yearly setting and review of individual and team objectives and regular review of these.

to take part in the formative assessment of the children as required and as appropriate for their roles.

to work within Beechtree’s policies and procedures so that Beechtree meets the standards

required to be an Independent School and a member school of the Steiner Waldorf Fellowship

General Manager

To work with the Trustees, Kindergarten Manager, Lead Teacher for the Class Years and Parent and Child Manager to ensure that the setting is meeting the standards required to be an Independent School and a member school of the Steiner Waldorf Fellowship

To oversee the procedures set out here and ensure that the qualitative and quantitative data from pupil assessment, staff appraisals and supervisions and feedback from parents is gathered, analysed by the appropriate staff and trustees and used to inform the development of the setting, and that staff and trustees and when appropriate parents and children, are aware of and involved in these processes.

To keep the trustees informed of the above processes and outcomes, including achievements and areas of concern and for development.

Operations Management Group To work closely with the general manager to analyse the data gathered as necessary

The General Manager and the Operations Management Group are responsible for the following:

Ensure that all staff and trustee understand the Q A processes in place and that the purpose of QA is to enable Beechtree to develop and improve and that it is about identifying achievements and areas for development and ensuring that innovation and risk taking are part of this.

Identify areas that need to be quality assured on an ongoing basis

Delegate quality assurance activities to the appropriate staff or trustees

Carry out staff support, supervisions and appraisals

Ensure that the data generated for QA including pupil performance is collated, analysed and is used to review progress, recognise achievement and inform future planning

Report to the trustees on what the data is showing and how the information can be used to best advantage

Secure and sustain high quality teaching, learning, and assessment, evaluate the quality of teaching and the quality and development of the curriculum

Monitor and evaluate the strategic direction and development of the different areas of the school, parent and child groups, kindergarten or the class years

Trustees

The trustees are responsible for supporting the quality assurance process, in particular they shall:

Ensure that Beechtree is meeting the standards required to be an Independent School and a member school of the Steiner Waldorf Fellowship

Agree the QA process and the areas to be monitored and evaluated along with the General Manager and the Operations Management Group.

Monitor achievements and areas for development

Work with staff linked to individual trustees' areas of responsibility and to report at each trustee meeting about these areas.

Reflect on their own work and that of the Board of Trustees, recognising and taking part in development needed to ensure that Beechtree continues to grow and improve.

Establishing realistic targets for continuous improvement and school development

Informing parents about the school's progress and performance

Specific Trustee Responsibilities

The trustee for Curriculum and Pedagogy meets with teachers once a month to observe teaching, review record keeping and children's work and assessment data and check the admission register. There is a termly report back to other trustees

The Trustee for Staffing and Personnel checks the Single Central Register monthly

Parents

Staff work closely with parents at Beechtree as children are more likely to thrive when there is this close relationship between school and home. Parents are responsible for: supporting the QA process to:

Ensure that the children get the most out of their time at Beechtree we need parents:

Give Beechtree staff information about the children and their home lives before the children start and keep staff informed on an ongoing basis about changes at home, illness etc. so that staff know and can support the children as fully as possible.

Be open and honest with the teachers

Give us feedback about our work; parental feedback is essential to our work; This is gathered formally through regular meetings with parents and written and on line information gathering opportunities, and informally through the strong relationships we aim to build with each family,

Attend and participate in group and individual parents evenings. We hold two group parent evenings a year in the kindergartens and classes years at Beechtree, where the parents meet as a group with their child's teacher. Teachers present how the classes are doing as a whole, any general issues that are coming up and will share pertinent information such as internet safety advice, articles on child development and Steiner education. The group evenings emphasise the importance of the whole class development, and reflect our ethos; of the importance of the community as well as each individual child who is part and

reflects the community. There is always a chance to speak to your child's teacher individually at the evenings and at yearly individual parent- teacher meetings. In addition, such meetings can be set up as requested by parents/teacher throughout the year.

Complete yearly questionnaires about more general issues or about specific topics.

Ensure that each child has good attendance and is at school on time ready to play and learn

Be part of the Beechtree community, to work with the staff to take care of the premises and grounds, and to contribute to fairs and other fundraising events, modelling to the children the importance of these.

Children

At Beechtree the children are at the heart of everything we do. The ethos of the organisation, the community of staff and families of which Beechtree is made, the striving to have strong, positive relationships with each other, the supportive, collegial way we work as a team and the importance that we place on being worthy of imitation, all mirror and support our relationships with the children and their learning and development.

Methods used :

Staff Support:

On-going observations of teaching. These are conducted regularly by the Trustee for Curriculum and Pedagogy, the General Manager, and by colleagues. It is important to staff at Beechtree that we observe each other regularly as part of our culture of trust, openness and continuous development. The observation tools have been developed jointly by the Trustee for Curriculum and Pedagogy and teaching staff. These tools incorporate elements of instruments developed by the SWFS and are aligned with the grade descriptors set out in Ofsted's Inspection Framework.

Each observation is followed by a feedback session where the teacher observed and the observer reflect freely constructively and critically together.

Where observations reveal weaknesses or areas that need improvement, these are incorporated into the staff member's on-going development plan and reviewed in supervision.

Annual Objective Setting

1. Meeting to set team Objectives, Intentions and Priorities for the year. This takes place at the beginning of term usually at pre term training day where staff meet as a team to set their objectives and priorities for Beechtree for the year, which then sit within the established long standing aims and objectives of Beechtree as a whole. As part of this process, we always revisit the essence of our work, what we do and why to ensure that we have a shared understanding and purpose. The results of this exercise are shared and displayed for all to see, in the office, in the parents and staff handbooks and on the website.

2. Individual Objective Meeting These take place towards the beginning of the Autumn

term to allow individual staff to set their objectives and targets for the year; these form part of each staff member's longer term development plan. Objectives may as appropriate include targets for children's progress as well as staff development.

Supervision Sessions These provide time and space for each staff member to reflect on their work, to discuss any concerns and for the supervisor to bring any concerns they may have too. They take place at least once a term but can take place more frequently if needed. Newly appointed teachers will have supervision sessions monthly for the first term. The sessions may include feedback from observations and analysis of the children's progress. During supervision there will be time and space to look at the staff member's short term and long term objectives as well as an opportunity to discuss any issues and concerns from their work and to get some feedback.

Appraisal meeting. All staff have an appraisal meeting with the general manager or a member of the Operations Management Group in the summer term. This is based on a self appraisal completed by the staff member prior to the meeting and is an opportunity to review the objectives set for the year. Appraisals allow staff members to reflect on what has gone well/what could have gone better and to look at training needs going forward. They are an opportunity to review progress of the individual's development plan and to identify additional support as needed.

Staff Development Meetings/ Training Days provide opportunities for on going staff training and development, in areas identified collectively and individually as outlined above,

Team review of the Year: Towards the end of the academic year, staff development meeting is assigned to reflect on the past year; This includes a review of what has gone well, what do we want to take forward and develop and what leave behind and improve on as well as a celebration of achievements as a team.

Planning Planning takes place on a daily, weekly, monthly, half termly basis with regard to individual children, staff development, and at an organisation level. Kindergarten and Class teachers have a morning meeting for daily planning before the teaching day begins. In the Class years, there is a weekly meeting to review observations, weekly and daily intentions and focus and complete curriculum coverage.

“In The Moment Planning” Planning and adjustment of activities also takes place in the moment in the Kindergarten and Class Years, as staff respond to children's needs as they arise or are expressed. This supports overall learning objectives in an effective, appropriate and child centred way,

On going Reviews Both Staff development meetings and trustees meeting include an ongoing process of review of our policies (at what we call “policy corner”) and our Self evaluation form. This process ensures that staff, trustees and families understand the policies and are able to ask questions and explore issues in relation to these. It also ensures that policies are reflective of and inform our current practice. Our self evaluation form which is completed by staff and trustees on a yearly basis and explores and reflects on our work is linked to our school improvement plan which sets out our main priorities for improvement and how we intend to address these. We also have a five year development plan that incorporates our aims and objectives, our short and long terms vision and how we can achieve these. The five year plan that created in consultation with parents, staff

and trustees, this is a living document held and reviewed by the trustees on a yearly basis.

Assessment of Children's Learning Procedures. Our assessment procedures are carried out continuously from daily observations and planning, point in time data entry, data tracking and summative assessments as timetabled in the cycles below. Information is analysed by individual teachers and the Operations Management Group and used for further planning to ensure that all children are progressing.

Point in time Assessments/Baseline Assessments: These are data entry points to allow children's progress to be tracked. This takes place termly in the Class years for non care subjects and the Human Values Framework and half termly for the core subjects and termly for all kindergarten children. Baseline assessments are done within six week of all children starting and at the beginning of each academic year. Staff also complete a curriculum coverage form that is used in conjunction with the data

Pupil progress meetings: These take place once per half term. They should be attended by the class teacher and a member of the Operations Management Group. Meetings last 30-40 minutes, so need to be tightly timetabled and managed. The meetings draw on data for the half term from the tracking form and any concerns the teacher may have. They may identify which children are not making the expected progress and barriers to progress, children are making better than expected or accelerated progress and how they can they be further challenged, children on the boundary of emerging/expected, or expected/exceeding and what could be done to boost them over that line, other concerns about children and if there any interventions that teachers believe could have a significant impact on children's progress? (these could be physical – e.g. a one-legged stool to support concentration – or academic – e.g. daily reading with a learning support assistant)

A 'Pupil Progress Meeting' pro-forma is used to support discussions of children and how to best support their progress . Staff involved use analysis of class data to identify children whose progress is less than expected, or to spot trends, for example lack of progress for children with SEND, a low number of children working at above expected levels etc.

Learning walks- minimum once a term by a member of OMG

Each learning walk should have a pre-determined focus, which may range from academic to housekeeping, some examples might include:

Academic:

- Is the content of the lesson tailored to children's starting points?
- Level of challenge for the most able
- Level of differentiation for lower achieving or SEND children
- The pace of the lesson – does it keep children engaged, without losing slower graspers

Children's learning dispositions:

- Are children engaged in their lessons and their learning?
- Do children persist when they find something tricky?
- Do children ask and answer questions confidently?

Housekeeping:

- Is the classroom is tidy and inviting
- Is recent children's work on display
- Are corridors are clean, tidy and clutter free

Observations: In the kindergarten the staff observe the children continually, with, at any one time, focus on particular children and focus areas (from the EYFS) The observations are collated on a termly basis, and a profile sheet with observations and development is completed for each child to back up the curriculum checklist per term. Evidence of work, including handwork and examples of mark making are also collected as well as photos. Some photos and observations are shared with parents via tapestry, which is an online profile for each child allowing parents to have quick access to photos and observations about their child at Beechtree.

Child Study Focused meditative studies of individual children are can be used along side observations and data entry to gain further clarity and understanding.

Reports End of year written summative reports of progress are provided for each child.

Quality Assurance Cycles

Daily/ Weekly/Monthly/Termly/Yearly rhythms and cycles underpin and give structure to the work at Beechtree; this helps to manage behaviour as it gives security and predictability. In accordance with Steiner pedagogy, Kindergarten sessions are built to reflect breathing in (coming together with a teacher led activity) and breathing out (child led activities and play) connecting the children and staff to a shared fundamental rhythm. These cycles also encompass and reflect the seasons, giving us all an awareness of the seasons and the world around

The role/group responsible for each point in the cycle is in bold.

1. Yearly

Autumn Term

Staff Team/General Manager:- Individual and Team Objective Setting

OMG/General Manager: Yearly Planning and date setting.

Sendco:- overview of children and any interventions needed,

Trustees:- AGM, Planning and Role filling for the year.

OMG/ Trustees:- review school improvement plan,

Class/ Kindergarten:- Group Parents Evening

Spring Term

Teachers: Individual one to one meetings with parents

General Manager/OMG: Parent questionnaire

Summer Term:

Teachers:

Final kindergarten/ Class group parents evening

Prepare reports for each child.

Staff Team:- Staff review of the year as a team

Trustees:-- plan AGM

OMG/Staff Team/General Manager:- Staff Appraisal Meetings

2. Termly

Each Term:

General Manager/OMG

Individual Staff Supervision Sessions

Attendance figures to trustees

Report to trustees re assessment and progress (alongside the trustee for curriculum and pedagogy)

On going policy review at staff meetings and trustee meetings.

Peer Staff Observations

Learning Walks by member of OMG

Parents Involvement Group meeting,

Fire Practice

Pupil Progress Meetings

Full Staff Development Meeting

Teachers:- Point in Time Assessments for all children in Kindergarten and Class years; analysis given to OMG and trustee for pedagogy and curriculum.

One completed profile sheet with observations for each kindergarten child

Baseline Assessment for all new children.

Kindergarten/Class planning.

Individual festival planning.

3 Half Termly

Class Years Teachers: Data Entry for tracking re core subjects.

General Manager:- Observations of either class years, kindergarten or parent and child groups.

Either a Full Staff Team Development Meeting or Kindergarten Staff Development Meetings.

Report to Trustees.

OMG/:- Review section of self evaluation form – with both staff and trustees

4 Monthly

Trustee for Curriculum and Pedagogy:- Observe teaching and meet with teachers to

review progress and support needs

Attendance Officer:- Review attendance figures and pass to OMG.

Health and Safety Officer:- review accident, incident and daily sweep forms.

Trustees- Check admissions register and single central register.

Parent and Child Manager:-Parent and Child Development and Planning Meeting

H and S officer and General manager:- H and S check of building

5.Weekly

Teachers: Individual differentiated planning for children (Kindergarten and Class Years).

Set focus for observations using EYFS (kindergarten)

Complete one profile sheet per child, with observations,(Kindergarten)

Complete curriculum coverage sheet (Kindergarten and Class Years.)

Enter photos and observations for one kindergarten child on Tapestry (Kindergarten)

Gather any evidence of individual work including handwork, mark making (kindergarten)

Teachers meet to review observations, weekly daily intentions and focus and complete curriculum coverage (Class Years)

Chair of Trustee/General manager weekly meeting.

6. Daily

Teachers: Kindergarten and Class Years morning meeting

Observations of each child (Kindergarten)

Assessment/planning sheets completed (Class years)