



Assessment Policy

Document Control

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Vision and Aims

Fable House is committed to providing an inclusive, personalised and trauma-informed education for learners aged 11–25 with Autism, ADHD, PDA profiles and a wide range of social, emotional and communication needs. Many of our students arrive with negative previous experiences of school, assessment and feedback. Our vision is to provide an environment where every learner feels safe, valued and able to achieve their potential. We aim to restore confidence in learning by building trusting relationships, delivering meaningful and engaging experiences, and celebrating progress of all kinds.

Assessment is a purposeful, continuous process that enables us to understand each learner's starting point, celebrate progress, and ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve meaningful outcomes. Rooted in our student-centred ethos, our assessment approach reflects the unique needs, strengths, and ambitions of each individual. Assessment directly informs our bespoke, trauma-informed curriculum, underpinned by Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Functional Skills in English and Maths and plays a crucial role in helping us understand each learner's needs, strengths and aspirations, and in guiding the personalised pathway they follow.

Legal & Regulatory Framework

Legislation and Guidance

As an Independent School, our assessment practices align with the Independent School Standards (DfE, 2019). As an Open Awards Registered Centre, we deliver accredited Ofqual-regulated qualifications through both portfolio and exam-based routes. Assessment processes are designed to be meaningful, manageable and supportive of both learners and staff.

This policy complies with:

- **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)**
- **Independent School Standards (Part 1: Quality of Education)**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **SEND Code of Practice 2015**
- **Ofqual guidance on regulated qualifications (Open Awards)**

Our Assessment Principles

Assessment at Fable House is:

Principle	Explanation
Student-centred	Focused on the whole learner: strengths, needs, communication styles, and personal goals
Personalised	Adapted to each learner's cognitive, sensory, emotional, and communication needs
Meaningful	Measures real-world skills, knowledge, independence, and personal progress
Inclusive	Accessible to all, with appropriate adjustments and flexibility
Holistic	Considers academic, communication, social, sensory, and emotional development
Trauma-informed	Sensitive to negative educational experiences and reduces anxiety
Transparent	Shared clearly with learners, families, and professionals

Types of Assessment

Baseline Assessments

Each learner completes a thorough, emotionally sensitive baseline once the Transition Manager judges that they are ready. Baseline assessments cover mathematics, English, reading, language and communication, and social and emotional development.

We use the Reading baseline (Lexia PowerUp + in-house reading screening). This is an automatic placement baseline focusing on word study, grammar, and reading comprehension.

For mathematics baselines, we employ Functional Skills diagnostics and tasks created by our Maths lead. Writing baselines are conducted using the Functional Skills writing sample, guided by our literacy lead.

Communication baselines include Language for Behaviour and Emotions (LFBE) or Language for Thinking, if appropriate, along with Speech and Language screenings when necessary. These assessments are carried out and overseen by our Advanced Practitioner in Speech, Language, and Communication Needs.

SDQ, ACE questionnaires and subject-led assessments provide a rounded picture of the learner's starting point and ensure their needs are understood after admission. Throughout their transition period, students complete our introductory Maple 1.1 project, which helps them settle into project-based learning while staff gather meaningful early evidence. This enables us to identify starting points so that the curriculum and timetable can be personalised to the students' needs. Baseline information supports decisions on whether a student needs interventions, targeted vocabulary work, or therapeutic input and is reviewed collaboratively by tutors, Key Stage teachers, the SEND team, school leaders and the Transition Manager before personalised pathways and targets are set. Baselines help to measure progress from arrival to annual review and support EHCP outcomes.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment happens constantly and is woven naturally into teaching. Tutors draw on observations, questioning and discussions, quizzes, practical work, vocabulary and word maps, portfolios, presentations, retrieval activities, digital evidence and student reflections to understand how learning is progressing.

In PBL, emphasis is placed on communication, collaboration, independence and the application of English and Maths within real-world contexts. Every three weeks, key stage teachers monitor students' project books against the Learner evidence tracking form. This enables key stage teachers to highlight progress, identify next steps, and check that work is linked directly to learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Monitoring is stored centrally so tutors can track and respond to feedback effectively.

We use these assessments to adapt teaching, support students, inform next steps, and ensure students are engaging with vocabulary, concepts and project topics.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment provides a more formal measure of progress at key points across the year. Functional Skills assessments take place three times a year during designated Assessment Weeks in the autumn, spring and summer terms. Project portfolios are assessed against learning outcomes, personal targets and qualification requirements. Evidence gathered throughout the year contributes to Annual Reviews and end-of-year reports, which are shared with families and external professionals. Termly IQA is conducted according to the sampling plan by qualified in-house Level 4 IQAs.

Functional Skills Assessment

Students work towards Functional Skills qualifications in English and Maths at a level appropriate to their individual needs. Practice papers from Open Awards form part of ongoing assessment and help tutors identify gaps and prepare learners for formal

exams. Speaking and Listening assessments are carried out in a calm and supportive environment to minimise anxiety. Adaptations are made for students who require alternative evidence, such as verbal explanations, practical demonstrations or chunked assessments.

We use this approach to provide externally validated qualifications, show sustained learning over time, give meaningful recognition of skills in maths, English and Project-Based Learning, and support transitions into college, employment and adult life.

Diagnostic Assessment

Pre-assessments are used to identify strengths, gaps and prior knowledge to inform teaching and support. Speech & Language assessment identifies communication, vocabulary, and social interaction. Literacy diagnostic tools such as Lexia PowerUp are used to identify gaps in word study, grammar and reading comprehension. The Twinkl Phonics programme is used if and when required for students who are at the first stages of reading.

Purpose of Assessment

Assessment at Fable House provides a clear picture of each student's academic, social, emotional and functional abilities. Its purpose is to establish an accurate baseline, identify individual learning needs, and determine the supports and strategies that will enable each learner to succeed. Assessment informs planning, guides target setting and helps shape a curriculum that is responsive, motivating and achievable for every student. It also provides essential evidence for EHCP reviews, supports communication with families and external agencies, and ensures that students achieve qualifications that meaningfully support their future pathways. Above all, assessment helps us celebrate success—whether academic, social or personal—and tracks progress in a way that is encouraging, not overwhelming.

Assessment Approach

Our approach to assessment is holistic, specialist and trauma-informed. It acknowledges the impact that Autism, ADHD, PDA and school-based trauma can have on motivation, communication, memory, executive functioning and emotional regulation. Assessment, therefore, avoids unnecessary pressure and is designed to be flexible, strengths-based and meaningful. The focus is always on what students can do, what helps them to learn best, and what steps will support further progress. Assessment is embedded throughout teaching and learning rather than imposed as a separate or stressful process.

Specialist Feedback Approach

Fable House uses a protective and supportive feedback system. Feedback from assessments is given to tutors first, rather than directly to students. Tutors then share this feedback in a personalised, gentle and constructive way, ensuring the learner feels confident and supported. Success is recognised frequently, and learners are given extended time, scaffolding and flexibility where needed so that assessments never become a source of anxiety or fear.

Assessment in Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning forms a central part of the Fable House curriculum. Assessment within PBL captures conceptual understanding, creativity, teamwork, problem-solving and the practical application of Maths and English. At the end of each project, learners and tutors. These reviews help students recognise their achievements, explore what went well and consider what skills they would like to strengthen in future.

Trauma-Informed Assessment Practice

To reduce anxiety, formal assessments are introduced gradually and always take place in supportive, familiar environments. Students are offered choice in how they demonstrate learning, whether through written, verbal, visual or practical evidence. Emotional readiness is prioritised, and progress is celebrated frequently to help students build resilience, confidence and a renewed belief in themselves.

Marking and Feedback Process

Tutors complete Learner Evidence Tracking Forms to document assessment activities, when they took place, and where the evidence is located. Key Stage Teachers then check this evidence to ensure it meets the required learning outcomes and assessment criteria, providing detailed feedback to tutors. Each project contains several units, which are marked individually. When a unit is complete, the Key Stage Teacher completes a formal Assessment Feedback Form outlining strengths and areas for development. Tutors share this sensitively with the learner before the documentation is filed, and learners provide their own feedback. When all units in a project are complete, the Portfolio Front Sheet is completed and signed off before the portfolio is submitted for internal quality assurance.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Assessment quality is monitored continuously across the school. Key Stage Teachers support planning, provide guidance and carry out work scrutiny. Learning walks are conducted regularly by the Head and Deputy Head to ensure that high-quality teaching, effective assessment practice and a trauma-informed approach are consistently embedded across the school. The IQA and AIV team ensure that assessment decisions are valid, consistent and compliant with awarding body expectations.

Oracy is integrated throughout the curriculum and forms part of our baseline processes for Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN), Maths and English, ensuring early identification of needs and clear communication pathways. Assessment is used actively and continuously to inform planning, personalise learning, adapt teaching approaches, and shape future targets so that every student experiences meaningful progress.

Staff receive regular training and attend INSET days to strengthen assessment practice. Parents and carers receive an annual report and are invited to EHCP reviews and Exhibition Weeks to discuss progress and next steps.

The Senior Leadership Team supports Key Stage Teachers in progress meetings, oversees reports for external professionals and ensures that quality assurance processes remain robust. SLT also monitors target-setting and ensures that expectations are high but achievable for every learner.

Key Stage Monitoring and Progress Tracking

Key Stage Teachers meet with the Literacy Lead and Maths Lead on a half-termly basis to review student progress, discuss assessment evidence, and refine personalised pathways. Progression Maps are used across all subjects and key stages to ensure learning is sequenced, coherent and ambitious. Each student has a One-Page Profile that collates key information, including assessment data, communication needs, EHCP outcomes, baseline results, personal interests, strengths, barriers to learning and ongoing progress updates. These profiles are working documents and are reviewed regularly with input from tutors, support staff, and specialist leads.

Related Policies

Curriculum Policy

Reading Policy

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Assessment Lead. Input from staff, students, families and external professionals helps ensure that the policy remains responsive, up to date and reflective of best practice.

