



Identifying Student Starting Points at The Meadows School

At The Meadows School, identifying accurate starting points is essential to ensure that teaching, learning, and support are meaningful, individualised, and aspirational. Given the complex range of needs within our setting, this process is highly personalised and draws on a combination of assessment tools, professional collaboration, and holistic understanding of each pupil.



1. Holistic Baseline Assessment

- When pupils join the school, a comprehensive baseline assessment is completed within the first half-term.
- This includes observations of communication, interaction, cognition, physical, sensory, social, and emotional development.
- Staff use multi-disciplinary information from education, health, and care professionals to develop a full picture of each learner's abilities and needs.

2. Use of Prior Information

- Starting points are informed by existing documentation, including EHCP outcomes, previous school reports, therapy assessments, and family input.
- Transition meetings with parents/carers and professionals ensure continuity and accuracy in understanding what each pupil can do and what they need next.

3. PLG Baselines

- Baseline assessments are completed in relation to individual PLGs (linked to EHCP outcomes) to ensure that targets are meaningful, personalised, and aligned with each pupil's identified areas of need.
- PLGs are highly individualised, reflecting each pupil's unique needs, strengths, and aspirations. Where possible, PLGs are woven into the curriculum so they are lived, practised, and evidenced within meaningful learning contexts — rather than being treated as a separate or isolated process.

- For pupils working below subject-specific levels, the Engagement Model is used to identify key learning behaviours such as *exploration, anticipation, realisation, persistence, and initiation*.

4. Curriculum Baselines

- For pupils working below subject-specific levels, observations inform understanding of pupils' emerging skills in early literacy, early numeracy, early science, and other foundational areas of learning, aligned with the school's curriculum frameworks (e.g. *Foundations for Life* pathway).
- Pupils working within the semi-formal and formal pathways complete pathway-appropriate baseline tasks linked to the school's curriculum frameworks (e.g. *Learning for Life, Options for Life*).
- These baselines identify key competencies across the core areas of communication, cognition, independence, physical development, and social interaction, providing a structured overview of each pupil's stage of learning.
- Baseline data informs curriculum targets, differentiation, and planning, ensuring that teaching builds on existing skills and knowledge while addressing identified gaps.
- This process ensures that both PLGs and curriculum targets are relevant, measurable, and informed by accurate starting points, enabling progress to be tracked meaningfully across EHCP priorities and curriculum learning intentions.

5. Therapeutic and Specialist Input

- Specialist teams (e.g. *Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy*) contribute specialist assessments that inform pupils' functional starting points and help shape targets within EHCP outcomes.
- Sensory profiles, physiotherapy assessments and programmes, along with communication passports, are used to identify individual barriers to learning and ensure that appropriate access strategies and support plans are in place.

6. Family and Pupil Voice

- Families provide essential insight into pupils' abilities, preferences, and regulation strategies at home.
- Where appropriate, pupils are encouraged to express their likes, dislikes, and interests through communication tools or visual supports to inform planning and engagement.

7. Ongoing Review

- Starting points are not static; they are refined during the first term as pupils settle, and staff build a fuller picture of each learner's profile.

- Teachers review and adjust initial baselines through moderation, multi-agency discussion, and professional dialogue to ensure accuracy and consistency.

Outcome

Through this holistic and collaborative approach, The Meadows School establishes meaningful, accurate starting points that inform Personal Learning Goals (PLGs), curriculum access, and support planning. This ensures that every pupil's learning journey begins with a clear understanding of their abilities, needs, and potential for progress across all areas of development.