

The National Nurturing Schools Programme
Assessment Report



Establishment name and address	Blean Primary School Whitstable Road Canterbury Kent CT29ED
Headteacher/Principal	Ian Rowden
NNSP trained staff	Nicki Llewellyn & Gemma Jarvis
Assessment date	11 th July 2025
Assessor	Miranda Collins
Trainer	Jenni Moore and Carrie Thorne
Review date	July 2028

STANDARDS

1. Stakeholders		1a. Pupils		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
1a.1	The social and emotional needs of pupils are assessed and tracked.			✓
1a.2	Nurture principles are defined and explained to pupils.			✓
1a.3	Pupils are encouraged to develop responsibility for themselves and learn self-efficacy			✓

1. Stakeholders		1b. Parents and Carers		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
1b.1	Parents and carers feel valued and welcomed in the establishment.			✓
1b.2	Nurture principles are defined and explained to parents and carers.			✓
1b.3	Reports to parents and carers reflect pupils' strengths and areas of need.			✓

1. Stakeholders		1c. Staff		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
1c.1	There are systems and procedures to welcome, support and induct new staff and visitors.			✓
1c.2	Nurture principles are defined and explained to all staff.			✓
1c.3	Staff are given opportunities to discuss, develop and review shared values.			✓
1c.4	There are clear expectations of how all adults in school relate to children when in or out of class.			✓
1c.5	Staff are actively involved in The National Nurturing Schools Programme.			✓

1. Stakeholders		1d. The Community		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
1d.1	The establishment works with stakeholders within the community.			✓
1d.2	Nurture principles are defined and explained to stakeholders.			✓
1d.3	The establishment is used as a resource within the community.			✓
1d.4	The community is included in development plans.			✓

2. Delivery		2a. Meeting Pupils Needs		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
2a.1	Nurture principles are incorporated in curriculum planning and delivery.			✓
2a.2	The social and emotional needs of pupils are addressed.			✓
2a.3	Behaviour is dealt with consistently by all staff.			✓
2a.4	Pupils are involved in developing and evaluating their learning.			✓

2. Delivery		2b. Wellbeing: Pupils		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
2b.1	Provision and strategies promote pupil welfare and wellbeing			✓
2b.2	Pupils feel safe and secure.			✓
2b.3	Pupils feel valued, respected, included and listened to.			✓
2b.4	Pupils are prepared for transitions in life.			✓

2 Delivery		2b. Wellbeing: Staff		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
2b.5	Provision and strategies promote staff welfare and wellbeing			✓
2b.6	Staff feel valued, respected, included and listened to.			✓
2b.7	Staff access relevant professional development.			✓
2b.8	There are opportunities for reflective collaborative problem solving for staff			✓

2 Delivery		2c. Environment		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
2c.1	Nurture principles are reflected in the development of the environment.			✓
2c.2	The environment is safe and welcoming for all stakeholders.			✓

3. Leadership and Management		3a. Policy		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
3a.1	Organisational and curriculum policies reflect and support nurture principles.			✓
3a.2	Stakeholders are involved in the development and review of policies.			✓

3. Leadership and Management		3b. Partnership		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
3b.1	Partnership working reflects a nurturing rationale.			✓

3. Leadership and Management		3c. Resources		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
3c.1	There are clear development priorities regarding nurture principles and practice.			✓
3c.2	Resources are deployed to develop nurturing principles and practice across the setting.			✓

3 Leadership and Management		3d. Monitoring and evaluation		
Standard		Developing	Establishing	Enhancing
3d.1	Monitoring and evaluation protocols include evidence of planning, reviewing and evaluating processes for the National Nurturing Schools Programme (please include attendance and exclusion data from the first self-assessment and in all subsequent self-assessments).			✓

Assessors Summary
This report cannot reflect the hard work that goes on at school every day. A comprehensive evidence file and related documents have been provided as part of the assessment process by the school. This includes attendance and exclusion data and Case Studies for Partnership, Community and The Boxall Profile® along with a clear understanding of The Six Principles of Nurture, evidenced in the application and Principles into Practice report. When stakeholders were asked to describe the school, the most commonly used word was <i>nurturing</i>, with a range of words aligned to this concept also used, such as <i>empowering, homely and compassionate</i>. Reflecting on the National Nurturing Schools Programme (NNSP), the Headteacher, Ian Rowden and Inclusion Lead, Nicki Llewellyn said that it had celebrated the authentic strengths of nurture and wellbeing in the school and given clarity that the school was doing the right thing. Mr. Rowden said that the NNSP had refined the offer so that the school was “living and breathing” nurture. Behaviour management systems are aligned with the Six Principles. Training has enabled staff to confidently unpick behaviours, setting their own views aside to understand the child’s needs. Moving to three school rules is a simple code for children to follow and parents are supportive of this. Moving away from traditional classroom

behaviour systems to a relational approach that encompasses everyone provides a more equitable response.

A relational approach is also adopted to support attendance. Overall attendance is high because children want to be at school and parents have high levels of confidence with the school. A consistent response to a child's absence is a phone call home to check in with the family. Where attendance concerns persist, meetings with families are supportive with the intention of understanding what additional help is needed. Thinking out of the box is encouraged to find creative ways to enable children to access school calmly and happily.

Examples of excellent practice include:

There is great clarity of vision and ethos here. The vision for children at the school is to support them to become physically and mentally healthy so that they are in the best place to learn. One parent commented, "The nurturing ethos is well-articulated- there is a strong leadership drive but the approach is implemented from the ground up."

The Boxall Profile® is used systematically to understand 'the story behind the child' and inclusive practice is a typical part of practice. Children start from a range of points and are given appropriate support to progress. One of the parents said. "The wellbeing of the children is central here."

Reflection and research is a cornerstone of the approach here. Members of staff constantly review approaches to determine what will work well and changes are made. The change to therapeutic classrooms and development of the playground offer striking examples of this. Playtimes have been enhanced here through careful thought about what children need and ways to resource improvements. Children and members of staff have been an integral part of the process, expressing wishes for future developments – the sand pit is coming soon! Children benefit from an increased range of play opportunities, whether they are active, such as den building or quiet such as crochet club. Mr. Rowden often DJ's on the field too. A reduction in recorded behaviour incidents demonstrates a notable impact.

Nurture is for everyone, by everyone. All stakeholders benefit from the nurturing environment and culture here. A full and rich curriculum and an emphasis on building strong relationships ensures that children feel safe in school and are confident that their needs will be met. They are inspired to be the best they can be.

The children I spoke to clearly articulated the ways in which their wellbeing is looked after, referring to the therapeutic classroom design, calm zones in every classroom and the benefit of being outside in nature in the beautiful school grounds. Friends and adults in school were referred to as being equally helpful when there was a problem.

They talked about how the three simple rules make it easy to know and follow the expectations in school. A number of provisions and strategies support and reinforce them. When asked what advice they would give a new child starting at the school, they talked about the “really fun lessons” and the support from a buddy. One child said that when their teacher had asked the class about who would like to be a buddy for a child, “everyone’s hand went up straightaway”.

Nurturing relationships that are based on special interests happens here. Two children were paired up to share a mutual interest even though they are in different years groups, being encouraged to share time together looking at books and related objects. This comes from knowing the children well. Colouring pages featuring a well known singer are provided specifically for fans in the lunchtime nurture club. When it became known that children had learned to crochet, a club was set up so they could teach others, including members of staff.

The inclusive culture allows children to recognise that peers learn differently and may need different things through the school day. Even the youngest children in the school are able to show support for their friends by coaching each other with strategies and recognising when a child needs time out.

Parents spoke movingly about how their children, and they, are nurtured. They feel that nurture is obviously ingrained in practice and commented that they have ‘felt it every aspect’ since their child has been at the school. Another said that they had “nurtured him and us through the whole of his experience”, showing persistence and sensitivity in suggesting strategies.

They all appreciate the efforts made to make personal adjustments for the needs of their children and the creative pragmatism that underpins this. They value the strong communication with them and the respect for their own input. Parents recognise that their school looks to adopt best practice for all children and are grateful that strategies and support will be put in place without the need for a diagnosis.

Parents were complimentary about members of staff at the school, saying they are friendly and approachable. Enjoying the warm welcome in school, they realise that all families and children get this, not just those who have more frequent contact due to additional needs. Mr. Rowden got special mention for knowing the names of all the children, even those not yet on roll at the school, and family dogs too! New families joining the school are sent a welcome video to support them to become part of the Blean family.

Members of staff spoke about the focus on providing what’s best and what’s needed for children but also commented on their relationships with families too, saying, “We know them, not just the child.”

To offer a trauma informed and attachment aligned environment, the school has created therapeutic classrooms. Exploring the research confirmed this was right for the school so the implementation was considered thoughtfully and deliberately. Starting with Reception, Year 1, Year 5 and Year 6 classrooms, the intention is to change Year 3 and Year 4 classrooms in time.

The environment is now stripped back and has been decluttered with things put away and brought out as they are needed. This reduces the sensory and cognitive load for children enabling them to stay regulated and focused. Natural materials and softer tones are pleasing to the eye, while sofas and lamps create a relaxed feeling. A member of the Early Years team spoke about the benefit of the school looking more like home to enable children to develop a more concrete concept of school, rather than an abstract one. Whilst one may think that sitting on sofas for learning or using a standing desk for independent tasks might result in a lack of engagement, children are said to be more productive because they are more relaxed and don't have the discomforts of conventional classroom seating.

High importance is placed on staff wellbeing and there is a strong offer to support this. One member of staff said, "This is the most nurturing workplace I've ever worked in." There are open doors throughout the school, not just with leaders but for everyone. It is commonplace to check in and offer a cup of tea and listening ear. Members of staff are confident that they can ask questions at any time and that all colleagues will be happy to support. One teacher spoke about being nurtured through her early years in the profession, saying, "I am a product of this school. I came with some ideas and have been guided and encouraged."

The wider staff team has adopted a nurturing approach to their work as well. Relevant training has been extended to include the office and wraparound care teams. The impact of this has been apparent in the use of language by these colleagues and their caring approaches. The school's business manager often sees children when they may need a bit of extra support and has requested a nurture grab and go bag, containing resources to help a child to regulate, for their office. The catering team is not employed by the school but they are informed of different dietary needs and food preferences, and are happy to accommodate specific requirements. They get to know the children and their personalities. It is not uncommon for the site manager to pass by an adult responding to a dysregulated child and ask whether there is anything they can do to help. They are often accompanied by children when doing jobs. On one occasion they created a Golden Snitch and hid it for a Harry Potter enthusiast to find.

The school values and welcomes collaboration. On the website, there is information about nurture with this encouragement - *We invite parents, carers, and the wider community to be part of our nurturing journey. Together, we can create a supportive environment that empowers every child to succeed, both academically and emotionally.*

Children are encouraged to become agents of change in their community and the wider world. They are involved in supporting a range of projects and have autonomy to decide what they want to support and how, giving them direct experience of democracy and high levels of engagement. Feedback ensures that children learn the impact of their involvement and are motivated to think about further opportunities to make a difference.

Authentic curriculum opportunities are provided, drawing in members of the wider community. For example, in a topic called *Communicators* a parent who is a local postman was invited in to speak about their work. Tea and Topics sessions are offered to parents in order to build knowledge and skills. Sessions include Zones of Regulation, supporting behaviour and curriculum areas such as early reading, phonics and maths. Take up varies according to what is being delivered and by whom. Recently a session delivered by a renowned expert and parent in the school attracted fifty registrations. In general, however, parent workshops are well supported because of the openness of the school and the genuine rapport between parents and school staff.

The school offers parent groups based on the Solihull Approach which are greatly appreciated by parents. Ms. Llewellyn, who facilitates these groups observed that the groups support each other so that parents feel safe to share experiences. The Pupil Parent Mentor supports families both day to day and by co-delivering the Solihull Approach. She also offers informal 'Stop, Drop and Choc' sessions to build relationships with families.

The submission also gave numerous examples of collaborative work with partners from the community, Local Authority, including other schools, and charities. Another nurturing school has been welcomed to see the design and impact of the therapeutic classrooms.

The inspirational ethos is supported by robust systems. There is a clear framework for assessment. Speech and language assessments and the Boxall Profile® (among others) are used to establish a baseline for children.

The Boxall Profile® has strengthened staff knowledge and supported looking at behaviours as an expression of need. Initially used to have a clear understanding of the needs of children accessing ELSA sessions, it is now used more extensively and is woven in.

Teachers feel that the Boxall Profile® assessments have helped them to meet children where they are and see where there are gaps in development. One commented, "We put an intervention in hoping it would work but now the Boxall Profile® shows us where and how it will work." They value the progress it shows holistically. One teacher explained that they value the way in which the Boxall Profile® groups behaviours together so that it all makes sense.

Parents also value the Boxall Profile® assessments with clear plans for moving forward and targets that can be measured. They enjoy the insights that assessments bring, seeing how it makes a difference to their children.

There is a drive to strengthen referral processes for interventions so that different levels of support are utilised consistently and that wellbeing, intervention and support remains the responsibility of the class teacher in the same way learning does. Progression grids set out expectations for the development of values and subject specific vocabulary have been created which show how a child's development is supported through each stage of their learning journey.

Routines such as wonderful walking and the use of visual timetables establish predictability to support children to feel safe, contained and supported by attuned adults. The Zones of Regulation is used across the school to provide consistency with check ins and develop the language of emotion.

Thank you for all you do to nurture and include all members of your school community. It was a privilege to feel that welcome for a short time.

Quotes from the assessment day:

- This is the most nurturing workplace I've ever worked in. (member of staff)
- We've just felt it (nurture) in every aspect since our son started here. (parent)
- The voice of the child is really heard. (parent)
- The well-being of the child is central to everything. (parent)
- We see children coaching each other on the playground. (member of staff)
- We facilitate what each child needs. (member of staff)
- My friends help me calm down when I'm angry. (child)
- I can relax if it's overwhelming so I can get on with my learning. (child)
- It's OK - everyone is really friendly here. (child suggesting advice to a new arrival)

Recommendation

We recommend Blean Primary School for the National Nurturing Schools Award

Areas for development	Timescale
The Boxall Profile® Continue to use: • In specific cases as a tool for those needing additional external social or emotional support; for groups of pupils where necessary. You have plans for rolling out the use of the Boxall Profile® which I think will be embraced by staff. • Add reference to the Boxall Profile® to the behaviour policy and Behaviour Blueprint to recognise where some children need additional support to meet the expectations of behaviour and how that will be achieved. • Add this link to your list of resources for parents on the Wellbeing page https://www.boxallprofile.org/parent-and-carer-guide-to-the-boxall-profile-online/ It will support parents to understand how the Boxall Profile will help their child.	Ongoing
The Six Principles of Nurture • Continue to promote and embed nurture principles throughout the provision for pupils and staff. • Continue to familiarise your families and community with the Six Principles, for example, mention them in reports, on letters and emails, in Newsletters and keep updates on your website and social media platforms to ensure all stakeholders are familiar with their meaning and impact. • Add reference to the Six Principles of nurture to the behaviour policy and Behaviour Blueprint. • Embed the Six Principles within your curriculum. Ask subject leads to identify where the Six Principles are relevant to topics and texts. • Consider having Six Principles days to immerse your stakeholders in what each one means.	Ongoing
Continue to monitor and evaluate the provision within your setting completing the National Nurturing Schools self-assessment on an annual basis.	Ongoing
Engage with the re-accreditation process for the National Nurturing Schools Programme.	2028

