

**The National Nurturing Schools Programme
Assessment Report**



Establishment name and address	Wittersham CE Primary School The Street Wittersham Tenterden Kent TN30 7EA
Headteacher/Principal	George Hawkins
NNSP trained staff	Stella Coulson
Assessment date	12th July 2024
Assessor	Miranda Collins
Trainer	Jenni Moore/Suus-anna Harscamp
Review date	July 2027

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.			✓

1. 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
<p>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.</p> <p>Welcoming, loving and safe were three words that were used repeatedly by stakeholders during the assessment. It was clear that everyone connected with this school feels the embrace of this supportive and encouraging school. The phrase “it’s who we are” was also used more than once to convey deeply rooted nurture and wellbeing are here.</p> <p>The strong leadership of the school sets the tone for the work that happens readily to support the wellbeing of children, families and colleagues. Parents commented that the current leadership had been “like a breath of fresh air”.</p> <p>Examples of excellent practice include:</p> <p>Inclusion, nurture and wellbeing are embedded. You strive to understand the unique characteristics of all your learners and work hard to provide what's required to meet their needs. Your care and support does not end with the children, as parents/carers told me that you are just as concerned about them.</p>

In a smaller school, all members of staff know children and families well. One colleague spoke about the Headteacher, George, noticing that a child didn't seem like themselves. On mentioning it to a member of the nurture and wellbeing team, he discovered that the need had already been noted and plans made to offer support.

The Boxall Profile is used effectively to challenge the assumptions about a child's needs. Completing an assessment for a child with known complex needs ensured that the school had the complete picture to offer the support indicated and get the provision right for the child. This has positively impacted their attendance and wellbeing in school.

Much was already in place at the school, both in terms of provision and ethos, with the National Nurturing Schools Programme (NNSP) giving a structure for the work. Reflecting on how the Six Principles of Nurture have impacted classroom practice, members of staff said "a lot was already there but the National Nurturing Schools Programme gave us a clearer understanding". The NNSP offered a "dedicated framework to progress SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) – why wouldn't we do it?"

An inclusive ethos permeates children and families. One teacher spoke about how the children have come to understand what is being communicated by different behaviours which has led to some open and mature conversations in class. A child with complex needs is included in birthday party invitations as parents/carers are keen to ensure no child is left out.

The nurture and wellbeing team comprises the nurture lead, an ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) and a Family Liaison Officer – all working together in concert to provide a coordinated offer to children and families.

Parents are supported through in-person and online events to increase their knowledge of a range of SEND issues. Parents were invited to see the new nurture room and have been involved in understanding the renewed behaviour policy and the use of the Six Principles of Nurture.

Communication is much improved with the introduction of Class Dojo which has been taken up by most families. Where families need more encouragement to engage with the school, all members of staff are keen to find ways to form secure relationships. All staff, including senior leaders, are outside school in the morning and afternoon. They adopt a friendly and approachable manner and "allow ourselves to be known", creating fellowship in the shared ups and downs of family life. This openness and lack of judgement provides a rich ground for respectful and caring relationships.

There are clear systems and structures wrapped round nurture and wellbeing at Wittersham. The nurture and wellbeing team come together twice a term for a pastoral care meeting. Here the work to support children and families is considered and plans put in place. The Boxall Profile is used alongside Leuven Scales to understand wellbeing needs. The Boxall Profile is used to understand the needs of the very youngest children in Reception class. This helps them to have a clear foundation of skills, from which to progress through the school. Children joining the school at other points are also assessed to ensure that a clear picture of the usual behaviours can be understood.

Nurture work happens in the moment as well. One parent gave this feedback by email – “Whenever I have mentioned that my daughter is feeling unsettled the staff have shown genuine care, support and making the time to listen. Often following up in the days afterwards.”

The nurture room provides a beautiful space for children to access wellbeing support within planned interventions and at unstructured times such as lunchtime when the room is open and staffed for those who find the playground too busy. One parent said “My daughter has visited the nurture room when the dynamics of the playground get a bit overwhelming. It has helped her to rebalance, restore calm and be ready for the next lesson. Crucially, no child is going to learn in class if they are not happy and centred.”

The nurture room is complemented by the ELSA intervention and Forest School. The impact of these is tracked using the Boxall Profile and Leuven Scales which enables the school to provide hard evidence for the impact of the interventions, alongside observation and pupil voice. The Zones of Regulation approach is embedded in the school to support the development of emotional literacy.

As a result of the work to share the Six Principles of Nurture and Zones of Regulation, children going to nurture feel no stigma – the room is open to all and is fundamental to wellbeing. Members of staff identified many changes within the children – they were more confident, open and trusting. They are calmer because they know they have safe spaces and are more engaged with their learning. One commented “We’re all on our individual journey - we help the children see they don’t need to compare and reassure them that they’re all different; unique and special.”

Many specific examples of the impact of this work on children were given through the assessment. One colleague mentioned a child whose confidence had fallen after an incident. Through working with the ELSA, Kate, this young person now has a range of strategies to use when she needs them and is contemplating undertaking activities that potentially put her in the spotlight.

Staff wellbeing is also integral to the school’s nurturing approach. New colleagues are supported by George and Stella (Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion) to understand this and become confident in implementing wellbeing in the classroom. One teacher commented “it was really supportive for me joining the school to know how to support children”.

The staff wellbeing charter enshrines the expectation that members of staff “are humans first and professionals second”, acknowledging the impact of competing pressures on time. The Wellbeing Charter shared within the portfolio of evidence sets out what the school considers important for staff. For example, staff members are expected to attend their own children’s Sports Days and performances. All staff take a day off in lieu to recognise that they go over and above during the school year. Colleagues spoke about the What’sApp group that pings over the summer as much as it does in term-time. One said “anything we’re proud of, we want to share with our work family, whenever.”

The school has invested in supervision for staff so that they have a safe space for talking about the work they are doing and an opportunity for both problem solving and celebration. These regular opportunities, delivered by an external professional, are consistently over-subscribed.

School leaders and Governors have committed to facilitate support and grow this work. The leadership of the school has been crucial – they set the tone and lead from the front. One of the team said “Stella brings passion for this work to the team and has harnessed the commitment of everybody here.”

This work is embedded within plans for school development. Governors are knowledgeable about nurture and wellbeing, visiting the school weekly. The Chair of Governors has spoken to children about their understanding of courage, co-operation and compassion as foundations of the Wittersham Way. A Governor for wellbeing and nurture has been appointed to support the work and ensure its continued development.

Parents/carers spoke about the changes since leadership changed at the school. They now feel they are in “complete partnership” with the school, seeing them as experts in their child, with their views actively sought. All parents/carers agreed that the school was invested in making the adaptations required for individuals and were keen to know how they could support the wider family.

Responsiveness was highlighted by parents/carers. One said that they had asked to have more sports provision for their active child. Stella spoke about how the siting of the food bank had been changed from its original location outside the school to a more private space where families would feel less exposed in taking what they needed. This happened in response to direct feedback from a parent.

Pupil leadership is strong – the school council is active, meeting regularly to discuss aspects of school life and suggest enhancements such as getting a school pet. The portfolio of evidence also referenced children leading clubs for their peers. There are plans to continue to develop this.

Wittersham is an outward looking school keen to connect with and nurture relationships with a range of professionals for the benefit of children, staff and parents/carers. Stella talked about ensuring that the vision is shared with all external partners “to show that *who we are* is embedded in the school”.

As a Church school, local clergy are regularly in school and the school attends weekly worship in the village church. The wider Church community is active in supporting the wellbeing work which aligns well with Christian values. They fund the provision of equine therapy for a child in the school.

The nurture room was recently blessed by the Bishop of Dover, Reverend Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin. The school commented on the significance of this, saying “her words were captivating and certainly created a sense of harmony, safety, and sacredness within the space.”

The feelings engendered by Bishop Rose’s blessing are sure to be felt both within and beyond the nurture room. Indeed, it seems that everyone who comes into contact with the school is enveloped by warmth and love, like being gathered up in a big hug and given what you need.

With all this in place, it would be easy for the school to rest on its laurels but there is a determination to continue to reflect and develop. Situated in the Isle of Oxney and with a ship in full sail as its emblem, the school is on a voyage - Stella said that the culmination of the NNSP was the starting point. With validation of the school's approach, they would confidently enhance and refine their practice for children.

Quotes from the assessment day:

Well-being is who we are if we can't pour from our cup, our children won't benefit. Member of staff

A lot was already there but the National Nurturing Schools Programme gave us a clearer understanding. Member of staff

There is a genuine love and interest in doing the best for our children and families. Member of staff

The warmth that you feel when you're walking around; the manners; the respect that adults and children have for each other – it's wonderful. Member of staff

We're all on our individual journey - we help the children see they don't need to compare and reassure them that they're all different; unique and special. Member of staff

We look after each other and school leaders wrap us up in cotton wool and can generally tell if someone is OK. If not, we hug it out! Member of staff

I'm so proud to work here and be part of this family. Member of staff

It's who we are, the core of everything we do. Headteacher

There are lots of safe places to go to and loads of lovely teachers. Child

If you're having a hard time, they don't tell you what to do but they support you through it. Child

It's a really thoughtful school; the whole package. Parent

We never feel as if there's a barrier and always feel listened to. Parent

They show such empathy and compassion - there's a lovely feeling every time you go in. It's very family oriented. Parent

Wittersham School recognises the great importance in nurturing children to be well rounded, giving value to their wellbeing. I believe if all schools raised their ambitions for nurture care as they do traditionally with academics, generations of children and the wider society would greatly benefit. Parent – by email

Recommendation

We recommend Wittersham CE Primary School for the National Nurturing Schools Award

Areas for development	Timescale
<p>The Boxall Profile. Continue to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In specific cases as a tool for those needing additional external social or emotional support; for groups of pupils where necessary • As a way of understanding children’s needs as they start at Wittersham in Reception and for new starters as soon as you feel you know the child well. • Explore the whole class learning plans for classes of children so teachers can build targeted support for the needs of their class based on an accurate assessment. 	Ongoing
<p>Nurture Principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote and embed nurture group principles throughout the provision for pupils and staff. • The parents I spoke to were less familiar with the Six Principles so continue to familiarise your families and community with them. You could mention them in reports, on letters and emails and in Newsletters. Keep updates on your website and social media platforms to ensure all stakeholders are familiar with their meaning and impact. • Encourage teachers and members of the clergy to reference the Six Principles of nurture where they are pertinent in the wider curriculum and within worship content. 	Ongoing
<p>Continue to monitor and evaluate the provision within your setting completing the National Nurturing Schools self-assessment on an annual basis. Your continuing development of pupil voice will support this too as you gain some comments on what going to the nurture room has done for children.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Engage with the re-accreditation process for the National Nurturing Schools Programme.</p>	2027