

The National Nurturing Schools Programme
Assessment Report



Establishment name and address	Leighfield Primary School Newtown Road Uppingham LE15 9TS
Headteacher/Principal	Sarah Eaton
NNSP trained staff	Steph Wallace and Carissa Laird
Assessment date	6 th March 2026
Assessor	Miranda Collins
Trainer	Carrie Thorne
Review date	March 2029

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>Hearing children, families and members of staff speak about this school is like being wrapped in a warm hug. Words like <i>calm</i>, <i>kind</i> and <i>gentle</i> describe its safe and protective nature. Parents spoke about the family feel and caring support offered by the school, and a child summed up its inclusive ethos by saying, “There’s something for everyone here.” Such is the devotion of colleagues to the school that many of the staff team send their own children to the school.</p> <p>Examples of excellent practice include:</p> <p>Clarity of vision led resolutely and with passion. Wellbeing is embedded as a priority here. The school has already gained recognition for how it supports stakeholders in this respect, so extending this focus through the National Nurturing Schools Programme (NNSP) was a natural next step. Leading the NNSP, Deputy Head Steph Wallace said that she’d “enjoyed it because it’s just what we do”.</p>	

Adding to this, the Headteacher, Sarah Eaton, said that the NNSP had given a clear and shared language with which to frame conversations with children and parents, and focused the school team on the culture of the school.

Since starting NNSP, the school has reviewed the behaviour policy and made significant changes to it. Now aligned with The Six Principles of Nurture, positive praise and rewards are given to children with a focus on effort rather than outcome. Restorative practices and relational approaches are now embedded, and members of staff are increasingly confident in utilising strategies that build intrinsic motivation in children.

Sarah spoke about being nervous initially but seeing the success of the new policy in action, saying, “It’s just been amazing!” She highlighted the importance of strong relationships being the vehicle through which children are driven to be at their best.

Children and parents shared their preference for the new system. On removing ladders on public display that can shame children when they aren’t able to meet expectations, one child said, “People don’t feel sad now”, and a parent had noticed that their children “come out of school happier”. A powerful change that has been led with determination.

Leaders have high aspirations for every member of the school and demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that every child has access to and can choose which resources will help them, rather than this decision being made by adults. For example, Sarah spoke about all children having access to assistive technology and deciding when and how it will help them. Similarly, manipulatives, models and images are available to all children, should they find them helpful during maths lessons.

Ensuring that children understand and appreciate the diversity of the world is a key aim for school leaders. In a less diverse community, the school is intentional about choosing texts, authors, visitors and artists to study. The art curriculum now features artists of all ethnicities, nationalities, genders and includes those with disabilities. Artists, both living and dead, are featured. Visitors are carefully chosen to receive invitations to the school so that children can meet people with a range of experiences and characteristics. Three corridors are themed with images and resources showing diversity and difference throughout the environment.

School leaders walk the walk here. Sarah sets up for lunchtime play, going outside to unlock the shed at 11.45 am every day, getting play equipment out for the children. It is not uncommon to see her wiping tables at lunchtime if needs be, and she has been seen sitting on the floor in the corridor supporting a child to regulate. The passion and determination of school leaders to lead ambitiously but with warmth are evident. Steph talked about wellbeing and nurture, chiming with her personal beliefs for the importance of nurture in education, while Sarah said: “You can’t have a culture of nurture and

wellbeing unless it's really felt. It has to be lived out, valued and prioritised as part of your school ethos”.

Curriculum and provision blend seamlessly to ensure that children become the best they can be. Children feel that teachers make subjects “as fun as possible”, finding creative ways to deliver learning. Curriculum planning reflects The Six Principles of Nurture by prioritising emotional wellbeing alongside academic progress. Teachers incorporate strategies such as co-regulation, emotion coaching, and restorative approaches into lesson delivery, ensuring that behaviour is understood as communication and transitions are managed sensitively.

A personal safety curriculum is taught across the whole school, aiming to empower children to feel safe, recognise unsafe situations, and seek help from trusted adults. Teaching personal safety builds confidence, resilience, and self-esteem, reducing anxiety and promoting emotional wellbeing and lessons encourage children to develop coping strategies and networks of trusted adults, which supports mental health and a sense of belonging.

An increasing number of incidents at lunchtime play and feedback from children led school leaders to examine the reasons why this was not a safe and happy time for children. It was felt that provision was not sufficient for supporting high-quality play across a range of interests, which led to incidents because children were bored. Liaison with other local schools and research into structured approaches to lunchtime play has led to a substantial development, which is enshrined in the Lunchtime Play Policy. Zoning the playground to provide different activities outside, plus opening The Retreat for children who may prefer a quieter choice of activities in an indoor setting, has led to a system that promotes positive play and emotional regulation.

Members of staff spoke about the impact of this development, saying, “It’s a much nicer way to be outside,” while children identified lunchtime play as one of their favourite aspects of school. They talked about the mud kitchen and dress-up zone where “everyone can have a go at something”.

Forest School aligns with the principles of nurture beautifully, and the development of this has added another dimension to the provision on offer. Nina Ind, the Forest School lead, talked about the privilege of delivering the onsite Forest School for younger children within the school’s Secret Garden, saying, “It’s such a treat and joy to witness holistic development.” She talked about seeing burgeoning curiosity about the natural world and the development of resilience as children gain confidence to climb higher or do more. Imagination thrives in Forest School play, with members of staff observing some older boys in the mud kitchen, making “sweets”.

The Boxall Profile® was already used in the school, but more members of staff have been trained so that this can be used more widely. The results from assessments have

given interventions more rigour. The school's ELSAs, Carissa Laird and Michelle Blackford, use targets as the starting point in their work with individual pupils and needs that are common to groups of children can be addressed through groups, as happened for some children in Year 5 who needed support with friendships.

Additionally, Boxall Profile® assessments for children with SEMH needs on the SEN register feed into provision maps, ensuring that members of staff working with the children are aware of their strengths and difficulties, and targets to be met. Boxall Profile® assessments are also used to support referrals to external partners and are discussed in meetings with parents and professionals. Strengths are recognised and appreciated for all children.

Pupils and parents are authentically partners here. Pupil leadership is strong and involves children from Year 1 upwards. Children are supported to apply for these roles, and then vote systems are in place. Children eagerly embrace roles such as House Captains and Vice House Captains, School Council, Wellbeing Ambassadors, Eco Team and Sports Ambassadors. One child said, “There are loads of things where you feel like you are important too.”

The development of enriching play at lunchtimes came about through surveying children and responding to their feedback, resulting in the play development described above. Children’s views consolidated the thinking about refreshing the approach to classroom behaviour management by taking away the traditional ladder of expectations.

Younger children in Reception all have a Year 6 reading buddy who comes to the classroom each week to spend time reading them stories. Older children demonstrate all of the attributes we are trying to nurture in our younger children and enjoy the responsibility of this. Classroom collaboration using the Austin’s Butterfly method supports resilience and a growth mindset through peer critique and descriptive feedback. One teacher noted that the children “are great supporters of each other”.

At times of transition, or when children are worried about school, their views are given weight. They can state what strategies will help them. The children I spoke to were very clear about how they would seek help if they needed it and were confident in the adults’ response.

Parents also feel the importance placed on relationships here. Even parents whose work keeps them away from the school day to day are still greeted warmly and “feel part of the family, even though I’m rarely there”. From the time their children join Reception class, families are welcomed and integrated into the “Leighfield family”. Starting with a teddy bear’s picnic, children and families meet all members of staff, which helps put faces to names and build connections. The work put into this significant transition sets the foundation for all that follows throughout their time at the school.

The school places great value on pupil and parent views, surveying both groups regularly. Actions arising from feedback are often apparent, such as the discontinuing of the school bell, which was dysregulating for members of the school community. At other times, actions are shared in a *you said - we did* format.

Parents feel that communication is strong with good explanations of the reasoning for changes, improvements and updates – one parent said, “They are very good at communicating the WHY.” Questions are addressed head-on so that parents have clarity and certainty about what’s happening at the school.

Creating an environment that promotes emotional safety, positive relationships and belonging. Here, everyone plays a part in nurture. Celebrating the uniqueness of the individual is integral here. One parent said, “This school doesn’t struggle with a personalised approach,” believing that one size does not fit all and understanding that reasonable adjustments lead to the best outcomes for children.

Alongside other strategies to promote inclusion and belonging, British Sign Language is taught to children across the school. All children know signs for basic needs, which aids timely communication and the sign to say sorry is used when a child may struggle with the words. The children I met confidently signed the school rules, which was very impressive!

Individuals are celebrated here with Steph’s initiative to give each child a birthday card and an invitation to produce a piece of artwork to showcase themselves, to hang in the school hall. Each individual feels acknowledged and celebrated, and these moments of recognition at special times create cohesion in the school community.

Carissa and Michelle (ELSAs) have developed a beautiful room which acts as a safe space for children to undertake activities to strengthen emotional literacy and build skills. This tailored emotional support is boosted by the presence of the school dog, Bella, who offers comfort and companionship. These initiatives help children regulate emotions, build confidence, and develop coping strategies in a safe and supportive environment. Children spoke about what helps them to feel safe, with one saying, “When everything is organised and comfortable”, while another highlighted the use of worry boxes and Zones of Regulation as strategies that work for them.

Staff wellbeing is built through creating a nurturing environment in the staffroom, which is made comfortable for rest and relaxation. There is a book share system, for pleasure and professional development, and a hamper filled with items such as soup, beans, crackers, etc., which people can use if they have forgotten their lunch/are in need of a snack.

A culture of warmth and openness extends to new colleagues who feel confident to ask for help when needed and express any worries with the expectation that support will be given. Established colleagues also spoke about feeling well supported and feeling that

they can “speak to everyone about everything”. Support is given easily to each other without judgment, reflecting a good level of trust. Student teachers report that their time here is different to what they experience in other placements, and visitors will comment on the friendly welcome they receive.

Members of staff are all invested in support for children with additional needs, operating a team around the child approach. This means that reflection and collaboration are the norm, with colleagues constantly looking for ways to engage and support the child, whilst also providing “each other as a safe space” to share successes and challenges.

There is a fairness about supporting each other in balancing work and family life. Sarah will always consider requests for staff to attend their own children’s events or to attend appointments with family members. One member of staff said, “If she can make it happen, she will, whilst another said “, We never worry about asking.” When members of staff have children at the school, they cover each other to enable them to be present for their children.

Here, a nurturing approach is widespread throughout the school. Other members of the team play a big part in contributing to it. As the first contact with the school, the office team are key and is included in staff training and refreshers. Helen O’Brien spoke about the warm welcome for children who may enter school through the office and being visible to connect with families. She is also involved in events throughout the school, which helps her become more known to children and is around on the playground at lunchtimes, too. Helen’s assistant, Beth, has made warm connections with children and will sometimes be called on to support in class if staff absence would leave a gap in provision.

The site manager, Tim Rumbelow, is present on the playground and develops good relationships with families. His elephant impression draws giggles from children and adults alike! The catering team is consistent with the cook being at the school for 30 years. She knows all the children by name and which children have particular food preferences. The team is also good at spotting patterns in children’s eating, and raising them with the classroom staff to be explored in case they indicate something amiss.

Parents value the commitment to wellbeing, highlighting the ELSA room and work to support children across a range of needs. Such is the appreciation of individuality that children don’t feel awkward about interventions, but rather understand that everyone needs help with different things. Great care is taken to work in a way that a parent called “restorative and gentle” so that children are not ashamed of their needs.

Systems are robust, supporting practice to be inspirational. Systems enable the school to run smoothly and allow space and time for the nurturing and caring practice to unfold. To streamline communication with the ELSA team, parents can email to a designated address, meaning that messages no longer have to go through the office and

be forwarded. Communication in general is seen as a strength by parents who enjoy the timely, interesting and visually pleasing updates.

Policies are clearly developed, linked with a nurturing and relational ethos and set out clear procedures and expectations. Multiple policies relevant to nurture include the new Behaviour Policy: A Nurture Based Approach, the Nurture Policy, which explicitly demonstrates how The Six Principles of Nurture are embedded into daily practice at Leighfield and the Forest School Policy, which supports wellbeing and resilience. The Lunchtime Play Policy promotes positive play and emotional regulation.

A collaborative approach is taken to policy building with consultation and review from a wide range of stakeholders, where this is appropriate. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) strategically links these policies, with termly reviews and resource audits conducted by senior leaders to monitor impact and guide next steps. This process ensures that policies are not static documents but living frameworks shaped by ongoing dialogue, evidence, and shared responsibility across the school community.

With the Boxall Profile® being used extensively to build a shared language and inform interventions, regular review of provision maps containing Boxall Profile® targets enables the impact of the work to be tracked and evaluated, ensuring that needs are met appropriately and with success.

This is an inspirational school, and every stakeholder brings their wonderful uniqueness to it. The last word must go to parents who said that members of staff here are “incredible humans” and that they “haven’t come across a school I love as much as I do here”. Thank you for all you do for your children, parents and each other. It was a privilege to have been a part of your school for a short time.

Quotes from the assessment day:

- I enjoy coming to work; I absolutely love it. It’s a privilege. (Headteacher)
- You can’t have a culture of nurture and wellbeing unless it’s really felt. It has to be lived out, valued and prioritised as part of your school ethos. (Headteacher)
- We are like a big family. (member of staff)
- From the minute you walk in, you can see we are a nurturing school with the thank you box and space for children and families. (member of staff)
- I feel safe when everything is organised and comfortable. (child)
- There are loads of things where you feel like you are important too. (child)
- It’s such a treat and a joy to witness a holistic development. (member of staff)
- I’m so proud of the exceptional care they give not just our children but us, too. (parent)
- Children are what is important here. (parent)
- I still feel part of the school family even though my work means I am rarely there. (parent)

- I haven't come across a school I love as much as I love here. (parent)
- It feels like a family. (parent)

Recommendation

We recommend Leighfield 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. • To gain an overview of the needs across the school so that you can be sure that provision is matched to the needs of your pupils. 	Ongoing
<p>The Six Principles of Nurture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to familiarise your pupils, colleagues, families and community with the Six Principles. Take every opportunity to link them where appropriate. 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. 	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.	2029