

The National Nurturing Schools Programme
Assessment Report



Establishment name and address	Northmead Junior School, Guildford. GU2 9ZT
Headteacher/Principal	Mrs. Sarah Carrington
NNSP trained staff	Joanne Heicks and Lynn Gill
Assessment date	16 th July 2026
Assessor	Adele Wilkinson
Trainer	Penny Hermes
Review date	July 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	
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. Introduction Northmead Junior School is a happy, inclusive and welcoming school where nurture is firmly embedded within everyday school life. Since embarking on the National Nurturing Schools Programme, leaders and staff have worked collaboratively to strengthen a whole-school culture in which positive relationships, emotional wellbeing and high aspirations enable children to thrive both personally and academically. The school's nurturing journey has been strengthened through the close partnership it shares with Stoughton Infant School. Under the leadership of Executive Headteacher Sarah Carrington, both schools have developed a shared vision, common values and consistent relational approaches that provide continuity for children and families from Nursery through to the end of Key Stage Two. Joint professional development, shared practice and collaborative leadership have ensured that nurturing principles extend	

beyond individual schools, creating a coherent and consistent experience for pupils throughout their primary education.

Northmead serves a diverse community, including a number of pupils with additional needs. Leaders have responded thoughtfully by developing an increasingly developmentally informed and inclusive approach in which children are understood as individuals and supported according to their stage of social, emotional and cognitive development. Evidence gathered during the assessment demonstrated that nurture is becoming increasingly woven into classroom practice, enabling staff to remove barriers to learning through adaptive teaching, purposeful learning environments and strong, trusting relationships.

The assessment demonstrated a school community that is reflective, ambitious and united in its commitment to ensuring every child is known, understood and supported to achieve their full potential.

Examples of excellent practice include:

Leadership and Whole School Culture

Leadership has been instrumental in shaping and sustaining Northmead's nurturing culture. Leaders have established a clear vision in which emotional wellbeing, inclusion and positive relationships are recognised as essential foundations for learning and achievement. This vision is reflected throughout strategic planning and is increasingly evident within everyday practice.

The collaborative work undertaken alongside Stoughton Infant School has been particularly significant. This partnership has enabled a unified approach to develop across both schools, underpinned by common values, relational practice and clear expectations, thus providing continuity for children and families throughout their primary education. The implementation of Paul Dix's relational approach, alongside the jointly developed values of Ambition, Bravery and Compassion, has further strengthened consistency for pupils, staff and families across both schools.

One of the strongest themes emerging from the assessment was the school's commitment to continual reflection and improvement. Leaders spoke openly about the journey they have taken, describing how nurture has evolved from pockets of excellent practice towards a consistently shared approach across the school. Increasingly, nurturing principles are influencing classroom practice, relationships and decision-making, ensuring that all staff work from a common understanding of children's developmental and emotional needs.

Leaders also demonstrated a clear commitment to professional learning, actively seeking opportunities to strengthen inclusive practice through collaboration with external partners. Partnerships with organisations including Pond Meadow School, STIPS and a

range of therapeutic services have enhanced staff understanding of neurodiversity, adaptive teaching and developmentally informed practice. This commitment to continual learning has encouraged staff to reflect critically on their own practice, with one teacher commenting that the programme had provided a real opportunity to "reflect", whilst another described the value of having "clarity of language underpinning" their work with children.

Discussions with leaders and staff confirmed that nurture is viewed not as a discrete intervention but as the foundation upon which teaching, learning and relationships are built. As one senior leader explained, the school is "getting everyone on the same page," ensuring that the shared vision is experienced consistently by children, families and staff alike.

Children's Learning is Understood Developmentally

Northmead demonstrates a secure understanding that children's learning and development do not always correspond with their chronological age. Staff recognise that children develop socially, emotionally and academically at different rates and respond by adapting teaching, expectations and support to meet individual developmental needs. Discussions with staff and parents consistently demonstrated that children are understood as individuals, with one member of staff reflecting that the school strives to "accept children where they are," whilst a parent described how staff "work with every individual."

Developmentally informed practice is evident throughout classrooms. Teachers use responsive teaching strategies, carefully planned scaffolding, visual supports, adapted questioning and structured routines to enable pupils to access learning successfully. Executive functioning is supported through visual timetables, task breakdowns, worked examples, sentence stems and explicit modelling, helping pupils to develop confidence and independence whilst reducing unnecessary barriers to learning. Classroom environments have also been thoughtfully designed to reduce cognitive overload and enable pupils to focus more successfully on learning, reflecting the school's commitment to continually refining provision in response to children's needs.

Staff consistently described the value of reflecting on practice and developing a shared understanding of children's learning. One teacher commented that the programme had encouraged them to "reflect on language around the needs of children," whilst discussions across the school demonstrated an increasingly consistent understanding of children's developmental needs. This shared approach enables adults to respond thoughtfully and consistently, ensuring that support is carefully matched to each individual child.

The Boxall Profile has become an increasingly valuable element of the school's graduated approach to understanding children's social, emotional and developmental needs. Staff described how it is helping them to look beyond presenting behaviours and

gain a deeper understanding of children's strengths and areas for development. Leaders are continuing to extend its use beyond individual pupils, recognising the value of whole-class profiling in identifying developmental trends, informing classroom practice and strengthening universal provision alongside targeted intervention.

The school's commitment to understanding children developmentally is reflected not only in teaching approaches but also in the aspirations it nurtures. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their learning, describing lessons that challenge and inspire them. During our conversations, children talked confidently about their ambitions for the future, including becoming doctors, archaeologists, artists and sports professionals, reflecting a school where they are encouraged to develop confidence, resilience and a genuine belief in their own potential.

The Classroom Offers a Safe Base

Observations during the assessment, together with the excellent environment video, highlighted how Northmead has created calm, predictable and emotionally secure learning environments where children feel safe, respected and valued. Staff have given careful consideration to both the physical environment and the emotional climate of the school, ensuring that pupils are able to learn within spaces that promote security, belonging and independence.

Consistent routines, clear expectations and thoughtfully organised classrooms provide pupils with stability and confidence. Calm spaces, sensory resources, visual supports and structured learning environments enable children to regulate their emotions whilst remaining engaged in learning. This work, supported by external partnerships including Pond Meadow School, reflects the school's commitment to continually refining environments to meet both academic and emotional needs.

Relationships are central to this sense of safety. Children are welcomed each day warmly by familiar adults and benefit from consistent relational approaches across the school. Dedicated nurture spaces, ELSA provision, sensory circuits, lunch clubs and therapeutic interventions provide additional secure bases for pupils requiring more personalised support. One pupil simply explained, *"When you're stuck, the teachers always help you,"* whilst another described how teachers *"help me calm down and process difficult feelings."* These conversations reflected the trusting relationships that underpin learning throughout the school.

Parents also spoke warmly about the welcoming atmosphere they experience, describing the school as *"calm, safe and welcoming"* and commenting that there is *"always someone to talk to, always someone to listen."* Staff reflected on the importance of creating environments where every child feels accepted. Together, these conversations provide compelling evidence that the classroom offers a genuine safe base from which children can develop confidence, resilience and a readiness to learn.

The Importance of Nurture for the Development of Wellbeing

Wellbeing is clearly recognised as a shared responsibility across the whole school community. Emotional wellbeing is promoted proactively through the curriculum, enrichment opportunities, targeted interventions and, most importantly, the quality of relationships that children experience every day. Stakeholder discussions consistently reflected that nurturing practice extends beyond individual interventions to create a culture in which children, families and staff feel valued, supported and able to flourish.

A wide range of provision supports pupils' social and emotional development, including ELSA, nurture groups, play therapy, Forest School, social communication groups, outdoor learning and opportunities to care for animals. These experiences provide children with meaningful opportunities to develop resilience, confidence and positive relationships whilst strengthening emotional regulation and wellbeing. As the Headteacher explained, *"The children get a really good offer, a breadth of after-school activities and enrichment opportunities... There's such a lot going on."* Staff consistently spoke about recognising and celebrating the strengths of every child, with one colleague explaining that *"we are all there to do our best for every child, every day."*

Parents also described a school where relationships extend beyond the classroom. One parent explained that *"the child is at the centre,"* whilst others spoke warmly about the inclusive ethos, describing Northmead as *"really inclusive... we welcome everybody... we work with every individual."* These conversations reflected the school's commitment to working in genuine partnership with families and ensuring that every child is known, understood and supported. This was echoed by a member of staff, who explained, *"It's a very caring school. We care about the children and families."*

The school's commitment to wellbeing extends equally to staff. Leaders recognise that nurturing adults is fundamental to nurturing children and have created a culture in which professional collaboration, mutual support and wellbeing are actively encouraged. Staff spoke warmly about the support they receive from colleagues, with one member of staff explaining, *"We support each other – we're there for each other."* Another reflected on the strong sense of belonging within the school community, commenting, *"I genuinely love being part of this community."* This caring culture enables adults to model the positive relationships and emotional security that children experience throughout the school.

Language is a Vital Means of Communication

Northmead recognises that language is central to children's emotional wellbeing, relationships and learning. The assessment highlighted that communication is valued not simply as a means of sharing information, but as the foundation for building trusting relationships, understanding children's needs and ensuring that every child feels heard and respected. Staff create environments in which children are encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas with confidence. A consistent relational approach, supported by restorative conversations, visual supports and carefully adapted

communication strategies, enables pupils to communicate successfully regardless of their individual needs. Teachers spoke positively about the development of a shared professional language, with one member of staff describing the importance of the "clarity of language underpinning" their work with children. This shared understanding enables adults to respond consistently and sensitively, strengthening relationships and ensuring children feel listened to and understood.

Pupil voice is firmly embedded within school life through leadership opportunities including the School Council, House Captains and Playground Leaders, alongside regular opportunities for consultation within classrooms. Children are encouraged to contribute to decision-making, express their opinions and take increasing responsibility as they progress through the school. During discussions, pupils spoke confidently about their learning and school experiences, demonstrating that they feel listened to, respected and valued within the school community.

Language also underpins the school's relational approach to behaviour and wellbeing. Staff consistently seek to understand the messages behind children's words and actions, with one colleague reflecting that "everyone has a story." Parents echoed this culture of openness, commenting that there is "always someone to talk to, always someone to listen." Together, these conversations reflect a school where communication is characterised by empathy, respect and a genuine commitment to understanding every individual.

All Behaviour is Communication

Relationships underpin Northmead's approach to behaviour. It was clear from discussions with staff and pupils that adults seek to understand the reasons behind behaviour, recognising it as a form of communication rather than something to be simply managed. Children are responded to with empathy, consistency and high expectations, enabling them to develop the emotional understanding and self-regulation needed to engage successfully in school life.

The implementation of Paul Dix's relational approach has strengthened consistency across the school, ensuring that adults respond calmly whilst maintaining clear boundaries and positive relationships. Positive noticing, restorative conversations and therapeutic interventions help children understand their emotions, repair relationships and develop increasingly positive ways of expressing themselves. During discussions, one pupil thoughtfully explained that "If you feel sad, it shows in your emotions," reflecting the school's commitment to developing emotional literacy alongside academic learning.

Staff consistently described a culture in which every child is understood as an individual. One colleague reflected that "we are open to understanding each child." Throughout discussions, it was evident that behaviour is viewed within the context of children's

experiences, developmental needs and individual circumstances, enabling staff to respond with empathy whilst maintaining high expectations.

This approach is further strengthened through specialist support, targeted interventions and effective multi-agency working, ensuring that children experiencing additional challenges receive personalised support whilst remaining fully included in school life. Staff spoke confidently about their commitment to helping every child succeed, demonstrating a shared understanding that positive relationships remain at the heart of effective behaviour support.

The Importance of Transitions in Children's Lives

Northmead recognises that successful transitions rely upon careful planning, strong relationships and consistent communication. The assessment demonstrated that transitions are viewed not as isolated events, but as carefully managed processes that support children's emotional wellbeing, confidence and readiness to learn.

Daily transitions are supported through predictable routines, visual supports and consistent relational practice that help children feel secure throughout the school day. Staff understand that seemingly small transitions between lessons, activities and routines can have a significant impact on children's emotional wellbeing and have established approaches that reduce anxiety whilst promoting independence and confidence. As one member of staff explained, *"Every child is greeted with a smile."*

As already discussed, a particular strength of the school's provision is its close partnership with Stoughton Infant School. The shared nurturing ethos, consistent expectations and close communication between both schools provide children and families with continuity as they move into Key Stage Two. Bespoke transition arrangements for more vulnerable pupils ensure that support begins well before children arrive at Northmead, enabling them to settle quickly and confidently into their new environment.

Preparation for secondary education is equally thoughtful and comprehensive. Transition programmes, collaborative working with receiving schools and personalised planning for vulnerable pupils ensure that children leave Northmead feeling confident, prepared and well supported for the next stage of their educational journey. Pupils themselves demonstrated a mature understanding of transition, with one child thoughtfully explaining, *"If you transfer to a new school and you're scared... the teachers say 'it's okay then you're going to have more friends.'" This simple reflection captures the school's success in acknowledging children's anxieties whilst equipping them with the confidence and resilience to embrace change positively.*

Staff Wellbeing

Northmead recognises that nurturing adults is fundamental to nurturing children. Discussions with staff reflected a culture of mutual support, professional collaboration

and shared responsibility, where colleagues feel valued, respected and able to seek support when needed. Leaders have created an environment in which reflection, teamwork and staff wellbeing are prioritised, enabling adults to model the positive relationships they seek to foster with children. This strong culture of care and collaboration makes an important contribution to the calm, nurturing ethos experienced across the school.

Conclusion

Northmead Junior School has successfully established a nurturing culture in which the Six Principles increasingly underpin teaching, relationships and decision-making across the whole school. The assessment confirmed that positive relationships, inclusive practice and emotional wellbeing are recognised as essential foundations for successful learning, enabling children to develop the confidence, resilience and independence needed to thrive.

Throughout the assessment, it was evident that leaders, staff, pupils and families share a common commitment to ensuring that every child is known, understood and supported. Conversations with stakeholders consistently reflected a school community that values strong relationships, celebrates individuality and works collaboratively to remove barriers to learning through a developmentally informed approach. The close partnership with Stoughton Infant School further strengthens the school's nurturing approach, providing children and families with continuity, consistency and a shared ethos throughout their primary education. Alongside the school's commitment to professional learning and reflective practice, this partnership continues to strengthen inclusive practice and enrich children's experiences.

Children benefit from skilled and caring staff, thoughtfully designed learning environments and a culture in which nurture is becoming increasingly embedded within everyday practice. Northmead Junior School is to be commended for the significant progress it has made in embedding a nurturing ethos that is clearly making a positive difference to the lives of its children, families and staff.

It was a genuine pleasure to undertake this assessment and to spend time with the school community. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the leaders, staff, pupils and parents who gave their time so generously to share their experiences and reflections. Their openness, warmth and enthusiasm for the school's nurturing journey made the assessment both insightful and enjoyable, and I wish Northmead Junior School every success as it continues to build on this strong foundation.

Quotes from the assessment day:

Pupils

"It's the best school ever."

"I like the lessons because we learn a little bit every day."

"The teachers are nice and kind."

"Teachers help me calm down and process my feelings."

"The classroom feels safe."

"Fantastic Fridays are my favourite because we get to choose fun activities."

"When you're stuck, the teachers always help you."

Parents

"The child is always at the centre."

"It's calm, safe and welcoming."

"There's always someone to talk to and always someone to listen."

"You can tell the staff genuinely know the children."

"The school has been so helpful; they put so many things in place."

"They are so accommodating."

"Communication is fantastic."

"They've surpassed anything I could imagine."

"They went above and beyond to include my child."

"The support they give, it's amazing."

"It's a nurturing school."

Teaching and Support Staff

"All children benefit from the approach."

"It's given us clarity of language."

"It has really made us reflect on our practice."

"Why would we stop doing something that's working?"

"We're getting everyone on the same page."

"We care about the whole family."

"We're really inclusive... we welcome everybody... we work with every individual."

"We accept children where they are."

"I genuinely love being part of this community."

"As the adults, we need to be role models."

"We are all there to do our best for every child, every day."

"We make it our mission to know all of the children; we can step into each other's roles because we know the children."

"Connecting before correcting."

"Everybody is welcomed."

"Every child matters, every voice matters. We find the time."

Senior Leaders

"We're reducing cognitive overload so children can focus on learning."

"There's a real community feel."

"The child is at the centre."

"There's such a lot going on."

"Nurture is no longer just for interventions—it belongs in every classroom."

"There's always something exciting to celebrate."

Recommendation

We recommend Northmead Junior School for the National Nurturing Schools Award

Areas for development	Timescale
The Boxall Profile. Continue to use: - Continue to extend the use of the Boxall Profile across the school, building on its application beyond individual pupils to targeted groups and, where appropriate, whole-class profiling. - Continue to use Boxall Profile outcomes to inform adaptive teaching, universal classroom practice and the evaluation of whole-school nurturing provision, ensuring that the Profile continues to support early identification, responsive intervention and strategic development.	Ongoing
Nurture Principles. - Continue to promote and embed the Six Principles of Nurture across all aspects of school life for pupils, staff, families and the wider community. - Continue to make the Six Principles visible through reports, newsletters, the school website and wider communications so that all stakeholders understand and recognise the school's nurturing philosophy.	Ongoing
Nurturing Partnership. - Continue to strengthen and celebrate the highly effective nurturing partnership with Stoughton Infant School, building on the shared leadership, common nurturing vision and collaborative practice that provide children with continuity throughout their primary education. - Continue to share expertise, professional development and effective nurturing practice across both schools, ensuring that children and families continue to experience a seamless relational approach as they transition through their primary education.	Ongoing
	Ongoing

Continue to monitor and evaluate the provision within your setting, completing the National Nurturing Schools self-assessment on an annual basis.	
Engage with the re-accreditation process for the National Nurturing Schools Programme.	2029