

The National Nurturing Schools Programme

Assessment Report



Establishment name and address	Stoughton Infant and Nursery School Stoughton Road Guildford Surrey GU2 9ZT
Headteacher/Principal	Sarah Carrington
NNSP trained staff	Rebecca Arnell and Sarah Rogan
Assessment date	15 th July 2026
Assessor	Adele Wilkinson
Trainer	Penny Hermes
Review date	July 2029

STANDARDS

1. Stakeholders		1a. Pupils		
Standard		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
3b. 1	Partnership working reflects a nurturing rationale.			✓

3. Leadership and Management		3c. Resources		
Standard		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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		Developin g	Establishin g	Enhancin g
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, 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.

It was a pleasure to conduct the virtual assessment of Stoughton Infants School. The visit provided the opportunity to explore how the evidence is translated into everyday practice through discussions with senior leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, pupils and members of the National Nurturing Schools Programme team. Throughout the assessment, there was a reassuring consistency in what stakeholders described and, more importantly, in the evidence they shared. The language used across all groups reflected a shared understanding of nurture, relationships and inclusion, demonstrating that the school's nurturing ethos is understood, valued and lived throughout the community.

The National Nurturing Schools Programme has not been viewed as an initiative to complete but as a framework through which the school has continued to strengthen its culture, practice and provision. Staff spoke openly about how the programme has deepened their understanding of child development and strengthened relationships across the school. Parents described feeling listened to and supported, pupils spoke confidently about feeling safe and happy, and leaders demonstrated a clear commitment to ensuring that nurture remains central to school life.

It was evident throughout the assessment that nurture is not confined to particular staff, interventions or spaces. Instead, it is embedded within the school's values, decision-making and daily interactions, creating an environment where children and adults alike feel welcomed, respected and able to flourish.

Examples of excellent practice include:

Leadership and Whole School Culture

Leadership has been instrumental in establishing and sustaining a nurturing culture where relationships, emotional wellbeing and inclusion are recognised as the foundations upon which successful learning is built. Senior leaders have developed a clear vision that places children at the heart of every decision, ensuring that academic achievement and emotional development are viewed as equally important.

Rather than implementing nurture as a discrete programme, leaders have embedded it within policy, practice and provision. This strategic approach has ensured that the Six Principles of Nurture are understood across the school community, creating a culture in which staff understand both the philosophy and practical application of nurturing

practice. This shared vision extends beyond the Infant School itself through the close partnership with Northmead Junior School. Together, leaders have developed a consistent nurturing culture, common values and relational approaches across both settings, providing continuity for children and families throughout their primary education.

Throughout the virtual assessment, stakeholders consistently described warm, respectful relationships. Discussions and documentation demonstrated a community where children and adults are known, valued and supported to flourish. Leaders spoke passionately about creating an environment where everyone is recognised as an individual, whilst also recognising that nurturing children begins with nurturing staff. The National Nurturing Schools Programme has provided a valuable framework for reflection and continuous improvement.

One of the strongest themes emerging from the assessment was the consistency of language used by all stakeholders. Staff described behaviour through a developmental and relational lens, focusing on understanding children's needs rather than simply managing behaviour. As one member of staff explained: *"Nurturing approaches really impact on a child's development."* Another reflected: *"It opened my mind and really challenged me."*

Trauma-informed practice and attachment training have strengthened staff understanding of children's experiences, with one colleague summarising this shared philosophy by stating: *"We understand that all behaviour is communication."* Staff also described how the programme encouraged them to think more carefully about the learning environment: *It really helped us to consider our environment."*

Professional learning has increased staff confidence in responding to children with curiosity, empathy and understanding. Rather than asking *"What is wrong with this child?"*, staff now consider *"What has happened to this child?"* and *"What does this child need from us?"*

Leadership has also fostered a culture of trust and collaboration. Staff described an open-door approach where everyone feels supported both professionally and personally. Staff wellbeing is viewed as an integral part of the school's nurturing ethos. *"We're good at cheering each other up."* *"We're good at saying thank you."* Regular staff huddles provide opportunities for colleagues to reflect together and support one another. *"We do the huddle. It's an opportunity for us to say how we're feeling."* Several staff also described the school as: *"A safe place to be."* and *"A safe environment to express yourself."*

This nurturing culture extends across the whole school community. One member of staff described the school as: *"A happy place, full of smiles."* Another reflected: *"Staff, children and parents are kind. We have people who care deeply."* The consistency with which

parents, pupils, staff and leaders described the school provides compelling evidence that nurture is not viewed as a programme, but as the foundation for every relationship, decision and interaction.

Teaching, Learning and Relationships

The school's nurturing ethos is clearly reflected in the quality of relationships between adults and children. Stakeholders consistently described positive relationships as the foundation upon which learning, wellbeing and achievement are built. Staff take time to understand each child's individual experiences, recognising that children learn best when they feel emotionally safe, accepted and valued.

Relationships are characterised by warmth, consistency and genuine care. Staff spoke confidently about noticing children, greeting them positively and understanding what may be influencing their presentation on any given day. This relational approach enables adults to respond with empathy whilst maintaining high expectations, creating an environment where children feel secure enough to take risks in their learning and develop confidence.

I really enjoyed meeting with the children during the virtual assessment. They were keen to share their thoughts about their school and spoke with enthusiasm about the people, places and experiences that make it special to them. When asked what they liked about their school, one child simply said: "Everyone is nice in this school." This simple statement captured the nurturing ethos consistently reflected throughout the assessment.

The children spoke positively about the adults who help and care for them and explained that if they were worried, they would speak to "a teacher or trusted adult" because they "keep you safe." Their responses demonstrated that they know trusted adults will always listen, help and support them. Children also spoke enthusiastically about playing on the playground and field, enjoying hopscotch, school trips and spending time with Stanley, the school's much-loved fluffy dog. "Stanley is really fluffy." Another child proudly explained that they had taken Rocky, the school tortoise, home to look after. These seemingly small moments say a great deal about the school's nurturing ethos and the strong sense of belonging children experience.

It was equally lovely to hear the children's aspirations for the future, which included becoming mathematicians, vets, teachers and scientists. Their responses reflected exactly what adults had described throughout the assessment- a school where kindness, belonging and positive relationships are experienced every day.

Children's Learning is Understood Developmentally

A significant strength of the school is its secure understanding of child development and the way this informs everyday practice. Staff demonstrated a sophisticated appreciation that children's emotional development does not always correspond with their

chronological age and that behaviour should always be considered within the context of developmental need. Throughout discussions, staff consistently referred to understanding the reasons behind behaviour rather than focusing solely on the behaviour itself. Training through the National Nurturing Schools Programme has encouraged staff to reflect more deeply on children's early experiences, attachment relationships and individual circumstances, enabling them to respond with greater curiosity, empathy and understanding.

Support staff described how they work alongside teachers to identify emerging needs at an early stage, ensuring that interventions are timely and proportionate. There is a strong emphasis on preventing difficulties from escalating through consistent relationships, effective communication and close collaboration.

Children are recognised as individuals with unique strengths, interests and needs. Staff spoke warmly about taking time to understand each child's personality, family context and preferred ways of learning, enabling support to be carefully tailored whilst ensuring inclusion.

Parents provided particularly powerful evidence of this principle. They consistently described staff taking time to understand both their child and the wider family context. One parent reflected: "They treat you as an individual." This sentiment was echoed repeatedly throughout the assessment and highlights the school's commitment to recognising every family as unique.

Language is a Vital Means of Communication

Communication underpins the strong relationships between children, families and staff. Stakeholders consistently described an environment where children are listened to, their views are valued, and parents feel able to approach staff openly. Parents spoke warmly about communication between home and school. One parent described there being "genuine warmth across the board", whilst others explained that they always felt listened to and involved in decisions affecting their children. Staff also reflected on how the National Nurturing Schools Programme has influenced the language they use, encouraging a more reflective approach that focuses on understanding children's needs and recognising that behaviour communicates something important. This consistent approach strengthens relationships across the school community and contributes significantly to the calm, nurturing culture experienced by children and families.

The Classroom Offers a Safe Base

One of the strongest messages emerging from the assessment was the importance placed on creating emotionally safe environments in which children feel secure enough to learn. Staff described how careful consideration has been given to both the physical environment and the emotional climate within classrooms and shared spaces. Calm routines, familiar adults and consistent expectations help children to feel secure and

ready to learn, whilst flexible responses recognise that some children occasionally need additional time, space or reassurance before returning successfully to learning.

The school's commitment to emotionally safe environments extends beyond pupils. Stakeholder discussions provided compelling evidence that adults also experience the school as a psychologically safe workplace where they are encouraged to seek support, share ideas and continue developing professionally. This modelling of nurturing relationships amongst adults contributes significantly to the positive culture evident throughout the school community.

The Importance of Nurture for the Development of Wellbeing

The importance of nurture in promoting wellbeing is evident throughout every aspect of school life. Relationships are prioritised, children are known as individuals and staff consistently described taking time to understand children's emotional needs before expecting them to engage successfully in learning. This nurturing approach enables children to develop confidence, resilience and a strong sense of belonging.

The school's commitment to wellbeing extends beyond pupils. Staff spoke warmly about the supportive culture leaders have created, describing opportunities to reflect together, celebrate successes and care for one another. As one senior leader explained: "We nurture our staff too." This whole-school commitment creates an environment in which children, families and staff all feel valued, respected and able to flourish.

The Importance of Transitions

The school recognises that transitions, both planned and unexpected, can present significant challenges for children and families. Consequently, considerable thought has been given to ensuring that transitions are carefully planned, individually tailored where appropriate and supported through strong relationships.

Evidence submitted prior to the assessment, together with examples shared during stakeholder discussions, demonstrated that transition is viewed as an ongoing process rather than a single event. Information is shared effectively between staff, children are prepared gradually for change, and families are actively involved throughout.

A particular strength is the close partnership between the Infant School and Northmead Junior School. Under the shared leadership of Executive Headteacher Sarah Carrington, both schools benefit from genuine continuity of vision, values and nurturing practice, significantly enhancing children's transition into Key Stage Two. Leaders described close collaboration, effective information sharing and opportunities for children to become familiar with their new environment well before transition takes place. This partnership extends beyond transition arrangements. The Infant and Junior schools work closely together to develop and sustain a shared nurturing culture, ensuring that the language, values and relational approaches experienced by children remain consistent throughout

their primary education. Leaders described regular collaboration, shared professional learning and a collective commitment to embedding the Six Principles of Nurture across both settings. This continuity provides children and families with a strong sense of belonging and security as they progress through their school journey.

Parents spoke particularly positively about this support, describing staff as responsive, reassuring and willing to adapt arrangements according to individual need. Several explained how personalised support enabled their children to move confidently through periods of significant change. This carefully planned approach reflects the school's commitment to ensuring every child experiences continuity, security and belonging throughout their educational journey.

Staff Wellbeing

One of the most impressive aspects of the assessment was the school's genuine commitment to staff wellbeing. It was evident from discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff that nurturing adults is recognised as fundamental to nurturing children. Staff consistently described feeling valued, listened to and supported, and this positive culture was reflected in the warmth and openness of conversations throughout the assessment.

Senior leaders have intentionally created an environment in which wellbeing is embedded within the culture of the school rather than delivered through isolated initiatives. Staff described an open-door approach and a culture of trust that encourages colleagues to seek support, celebrate successes and work collaboratively. Staff spoke warmly about opportunities to spend time together socially, celebrate birthdays and achievements, and the thoughtful gestures that demonstrate appreciation.

Perhaps most significantly, staff consistently described feeling emotionally safe within the school community. "It's a safe place to be." "It's a safe environment to express yourself." These comments demonstrate that the nurturing principles promoted for children are equally evident within the adult community.

All Behaviour is Communication

The school's commitment to inclusion is evident in every aspect of its work. Children are viewed first and foremost as individuals, with staff taking time to understand their strengths, interests, developmental needs and family circumstances before determining the most appropriate support. Rather than expecting children to fit predetermined systems, the school demonstrates flexibility and responsiveness, adapting provision according to individual need whilst maintaining high aspirations for every pupil. Support staff spoke passionately about ensuring that every child feels welcomed, understood and able to participate fully in school life. Strong communication, collaborative working and carefully planned interventions help remove barriers to learning before they escalate.

The school's understanding that behaviour communicates unmet need underpins this inclusive approach. Staff seek to understand what children may be communicating through their actions, strengthening relationships and enabling children to experience success within a supportive environment.

Families described feeling genuinely included within this process. Parents explained that staff listened carefully, worked collaboratively and adapted support according to individual need. One parent explained: "They treat you as an individual." Whilst another reflected: "They put everything we need into place." Together these comments demonstrate the school's commitment to genuine partnership with families.

The Boxall Profile®

The Boxall Profile is a valued part of the school's nurturing approach and is used thoughtfully to identify children's social, emotional and behavioural needs, inform planning and evaluate the impact of interventions. Staff described how it helps them to look beyond presenting behaviours and gain a deeper understanding of children's developmental needs, enabling support to be tailored more effectively.

The school is continuing to develop its use of the Boxall Profile beyond individual pupils, recognising its value in informing whole-class practice as well as targeted interventions. One member of staff described it as: "Hugely beneficial... it benefits the whole class."

Although staff acknowledged that finding time to complete assessments can sometimes be challenging, this was viewed as a practical consideration rather than a barrier. The school's case study and discussions during the assessment demonstrated the positive impact the Boxall Profile is having on children's emotional wellbeing, engagement and readiness to learn. Leaders should be commended for embedding the Profile within wider assessment, planning and reflective practice.

Leaders recognise the potential to build further on this strong foundation by extending the use of the Boxall Profile as a universal tool to inform group and whole-class practice. This will further strengthen strategic development, support early identification of need and ensure that the Profile continues to inform both universal provision and targeted intervention.

Partnership and Community Working

The evidence submitted as part of the assessment highlights the school's commitment to working collaboratively with partners to strengthen outcomes for children and families. Close links with St Emmanuel Church enrich the life of the school and provide opportunities for children and families to feel part of the wider community, reflecting the school's values and nurturing ethos.

Partnership with the local special school, Pond Meadow, has also strengthened staff knowledge and confidence, particularly in supporting children with autism. Leaders

actively seek opportunities to develop inclusive practice through collaboration with specialist colleagues, demonstrating a commitment to continual learning and improvement.

Conclusion

The evidence presented through the school's documentation, supporting portfolio and virtual assessment demonstrates that nurture is firmly embedded within the culture of the school and is evident in strategic leadership, daily practice and the quality of relationships experienced by children, families and staff. The National Nurturing Schools Programme has acted as a catalyst for reflection and development. Rather than viewing accreditation as an end point, the school has embraced the programme as an opportunity to deepen professional understanding, strengthen existing practice and ensure that nurture continues to evolve in response to the needs of its community.

An important feature of the assessment was the consistency with which stakeholders described their experiences. Senior leaders, teachers, support staff, parents, pupils and members of the National Nurturing Schools Programme team all spoke of a school where relationships come first, children are understood as individuals, staff are genuinely valued, and families experience authentic partnership. The Six Principles of Nurture are not simply understood in theory but are evident in everyday interactions, decision-making and provision. Leadership has established a culture in which emotional wellbeing, inclusion and achievement are viewed as complementary priorities, whilst staff wellbeing is recognised as fundamental to children's wellbeing.

A particular strength of the school's provision is its close nurturing partnership with Northmead Junior School. The shared leadership, common values and collaborative approach provide exceptional continuity for children and families, ensuring that nurturing practice extends beyond one school and supports children throughout their primary years.

Relationships with parents and the wider community are another significant strength. Families consistently described feeling listened to, supported and treated as individuals. Children spoke warmly about the adults who care for them and demonstrated a strong sense of belonging and pride in their school.

The emerging and thoughtful use of the Boxall Profile, alongside a commitment to professional development and reflective practice, further strengthens the school's provision and demonstrates its determination to continually improve outcomes for children.

Throughout the assessment, there was a genuine sense of optimism, compassion and shared responsibility. Staff recognised that nurturing practice is an ongoing journey

rather than a finished destination, providing a strong foundation for sustaining the school's nurturing culture into the future.

The school should be extremely proud of what has been achieved. The National Nurturing Schools Programme has become woven into the fabric of the school, strengthening an already compassionate and inclusive ethos and ensuring that children, families and staff experience a community in which they feel safe, respected, valued and able to flourish. The evidence presented demonstrates a well-established whole-school nurturing approach that is authentic, sustainable and making a significant positive difference to the lives of children, families and staff.

Quotes from the assessment day:

Pupil Voice

"Everyone is nice in this school."

"A teacher or trusted adult... they keep you safe."

"Stanley is really fluffy!"

"I got to take Rocky the tortoise home."

"We have kind teachers."

Parent Voice

"They treat you as an individual."

"There is genuine warmth across the board."

"They put everything we need into place."

"The school's backing was amazing."

"I can't express in words how grateful I am to them."

"They care about every individual; you're not made to feel less or more."

"We felt held by them."

Staff Voice

"Nurturing approaches really impact on a child's development."

"It opened my mind and really challenged me."

"We understand that all behaviour is communication."

"Really helped us to consider our environment."

"We're good at cheering each other up."

"We're good at saying thank you."

"We do the huddle. It's an opportunity for us to say how we're feeling."

"It's a happy place, full of smiles."

"It's a safe place to be."

"We recognise different children's needs; it's stage not age."

"It's a safe environment to express yourself."

"The Boxall Profile is hugely beneficial... it benefits the whole class."

Senior Leadership Team

"We nurture our staff too."

"We are a calm, nurturing, purposeful school."

"Everything is underpinned by kindness and compassion."

"We recognise children as individuals, enabling them to thrive."

"We're ever evolving, better never stops."

Recommendation

We recommend Stoughton Infants School for the National Nurturing Schools Award

Areas for development	Timescale
The Boxall Profile. - Continue to embed the use of the Boxall Profile across the school, extending its application beyond individual pupils to targeted groups and, where appropriate, whole-class profiling. - Use Boxall Profile outcomes to further inform universal classroom practice, curriculum planning and the evaluation of whole-school nurturing provision, ensuring that the Profile	Ongoing

continues to support early identification and responsive intervention.	
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 Northmead Junior 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 during transition and beyond.	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