

The National Nurturing Schools Programme

Assessment Report



Establishment	Whittlefield Primary School
Head teacher	Helen Kershaw
NNSP trained staff	Talha Nanawatty, Lindsey Clark, Karen Gladstone, Helen Kershaw
Assessment date	31 st October 2019
Assessor	Claire Wilson
Trainers	Carrie Thorne
Review date	October 2022

1. Stakeholders	
1a.	The social and emotional needs of pupils are assessed and tracked. Tracking and monitoring procedures are in place. Boxall Profiles are used for targeted children within the nurture group and any other pupils with a cause for concern. Currently, approximately 56 pupils are assessed this way. The nurture group, at present, supports up to eight children and works closely with class teachers to provide an environment that supports both emotional and academic needs for a period of up to four terms.
1a.1	Pupils can confidently talk about the Six Principles of Nurture. Pupils are extremely responsible and in our pupil meeting they were able to discuss some of the six principles and their meanings. After an initial whole-school assembly, pupils created their own versions of the principles which are regularly referenced in class and in whole-school events and seen in displays throughout the school.
1a.2	Pupils are encouraged to develop responsibility for themselves and learn self-efficacy. Emotional self-regulation is fundamental to the school's nurturing ethos. Pupils are encouraged to be active, independent learners. The school also incorporates a " <i>personal best</i> " policy which allows children to measure their success against themselves; this challenges children to keep pushing themselves and not to be disheartened when looking at the results of others. During weekly spelling tests and mental maths assessments, children have shown an increased enthusiasm during these activities, as they are motivated to beat their score from the previous week. Children are given their own section in reports to reflect on their progress. There are play leaders on every playground who are responsible for ensuring the welfare of the children every day.
1a.3	
1b.	Parents and Carers
1b.1	Parents and carers feel valued and welcomed in the establishment. Interviews with parents indicated that they feel welcomed, valued and listened to by the staff and the common theme was that parents feel Whittlefield is a school which celebrates and respects every pupil whatever their ability. As one parent put it, " <i>they listen, they try to find solutions, they are a massive support.</i> "
1b.2	Nurture principles are defined and explained to parents and carers. Nurturing principles are promoted and modelled throughout school practice. There are six principles displays and posters throughout the school (as previously mentioned). Nurture principles have been defined and explained to parents through letters and assemblies, but remain a work in progress.
1b.3	Reports to parents and carers reflect pupils' strengths and areas of need. All children receive reports which focus on academic and personal and social development. This ensures that parents are aware of the importance the school sets for the whole child, not just academic performance.
1c.	Staff
1c.1	There are systems and procedures to welcome, support and induct new staff and visitors. There is an induction system at school so that new staff and visitors feel welcome which includes being provided with a pack containing the staff handbook and all other school policies. Evidence showed, these policies were very nurture-driven. In discussion with class teachers, Adam, who is the most recent teacher appointed, mentioned the warm welcome he has received and how quickly he has become one of the " <i>Whittlefield family</i> " because of this.
1c.2	
1c.3	
1c.4	Nurture principles are defined and explained to all staff. Following initial training by Carrie Thorne, there is on-going training/meetings reminding staff of the principles. Staff carried out an initial training session and contributed to discussions on how to develop further. The principles of nurture have been explained to staff and they confidently use them in their day to day practice. Staff have been supportive in collecting evidence towards the NNSP application and have enjoyed discussing and developing ideas for it. My tour of the school and observations of lessons indicated a clear nurturing approach to teaching and learning.
1c.5	Staff are given opportunities to discuss, develop and review shared values. There were many opportunities to meet with the staff on the assessment day, who are clearly passionate about the school and the children in it. They are a kind and committed team who are also genuinely nurturing towards each other. Debriefs happen daily so that staff are able to communicate any concerns as well as having the opportunity to share important information.

	<p>There are clear expectations of how all adults in school relate to children when in or out of class. Whilst observing adults throughout the assessment visit, it was clear that staff showed mutual respect towards each other and the children in their care. This included lunchtime and office staff, who are as much part of the nurturing approach as any other member of the team.</p> <p>Staff are actively involved in The National Nurturing Schools Programme. Led by Talha and Helen, the NNSP programme remains a commitment and focus for development. As Helen put it, “<i>We aren’t about ticking boxes for awards, we wouldn’t have done this if we were not certain it would impact on the children and our community - the NNSP has really supported us to do that.</i>”</p>
1d.	The Community
1d.1	<p>The establishment works with stakeholders within the community.</p> <p>Case Study One: Nurture room. The school contacted the Gannow Big Local (Local voluntary sector organisation) who encouraged the school to apply for funding that was available for local organisations based within the area. The school was successful in achieving this and were able to build a state of the art nurture room, with a fitted kitchen, washing machine and a fridge and freezer that our children could use. The money also helped fund a community room which is widely utilised.</p>
1d.2	<p>Case study Two: Holiday hunger. Recognising that many of their children go hungry during holiday periods, the school opened the sports hall and kitchen to a local community organisation “<i>Participation Works</i>”, who offered children within the area a chance to come to the school over the holidays to take part in activities and have an opportunity to eat a wholesome meal.</p> <p>Nurture principles are defined and explained to stakeholders. Nurture principles are discussed regularly at meetings and staff share the principles with other professionals when discussing individual needs of children and in making plans on how best to support them.</p> <p>The establishment is used as a resource within the community. The community room is widely used for local organisations such as Aspire Northwest and ASD Northwest, to name a few.</p>
1d.3	<p>The community is included in development plans.</p> <p>The Nurturing Schools programme and further development of the six principles is included in the school development plan and this will include a focus on continuing the above community links. There are good links with Ashmeade care home and the school have become “<i>dementia friends</i>” with them with plans to develop this in the future.</p>
1d.4	

2	Delivery
2a	Meeting Pupils Needs
2a.1	<p>Nurture principles are incorporated in curriculum planning and delivery. Nurture principles are incorporated into policies and curriculum planning. The curriculum is broad and balanced, in line with the curriculum for excellence. During the assessment visit, I observed children actively engaging in their learning at the appropriate level of academic ability. There is a consistent approach from all staff with planning based on interests of the children, differentiated to suit individual needs. Headteacher Helen is particularly focussed on pupil wellbeing which she puts before pressure for attainment. The six principles have priority over academic results.</p>
2a.2	<p>The social and emotional needs of pupils are addressed. Provision during the school day includes a wide range of interventions aimed at supporting and addressing the needs of the children, with a clear focus on the six principles. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are highly involved in developing and evaluating their own learning. There is a clear understanding of what it means to feel safe in the classroom and within the school grounds. Every room is decorated with displays using soft tones and classroom walls are tidy and uncluttered.</p>
2a.3	

	<p>Behaviour is dealt with consistently by all staff. There is a clear emphasis on enhancing a feeling of self-worth through encouragement and motivation. A variety of positive reinforcement strategies are employed. Staff get to know children very well and observe any changes in behaviour/wellbeing of individuals and respond appropriately to support their needs. The behaviour strategy is good and has been developed collectively by staff with the six principles at its core. There is a strict ‘no shouting’ ethos.</p>
2a.4	<p>Pupils are involved in developing and evaluating their learning. During the assessment visit, I observed children who were given opportunities to speak and be heard without fear of answering questions incorrectly.</p>
2b	<p>Wellbeing: Pupils</p>
2b.1	<p>Provision and strategies promote pupil welfare and wellbeing. The wellbeing of the pupils is paramount and informs the daily provisions and interactions. The school provides appropriate support for children to develop their self-esteem, confidence, social collaboration and expression. Staff training takes place regularly and results of a most recent well-being survey showed that children feel happy and safe at school. One pupil commented, “We are happy here and we know our teachers will help us if we are sad.”</p>
2b.2	
2b.3	<p>Pupils feel safe and secure. During the visit, it was evident that the children felt safe and secure in their setting. The teachers and support staff foster good relationships with their children and the children have reported that they feel safe and happy in school through pupil questionnaires. Children know that if any incidents occur, they are going to be listened to through a restorative approach.</p> <p>Pupils feel valued, respected, included and listened to. The cornerstone of the school’s work is based on the theory that children learn better when they are loved and supported. There is a Pupil Forum – one child per class, a School Council and a Pupil Parliament. Interestingly, an ex-pupil was in school during the visit, he had an inset day at his secondary school and chose to come in as a volunteer helper that day, which told me a lot about what Whittlefield has meant to him, even after leaving.</p>
2b.4	<p>Pupils are prepared for transitions in life. The school believes that transition within the school is extremely important. There are seven sessions for transition for children to “meet the teacher” as they move up in the academic year and class folders are created to highlight what each child’s strengths are or areas of interest etc (this stays with them until they leave in Year 6). There are also transition booklets created for SEND children from Reception to Year 1 pupils. There are excellent links with Shuttleworth High School for Year 6 transitions and they are also applying for the NNSP, influenced by Helen’s nurturing approach - another way to ensure pupils leave Whittlefield in a supported way.</p>
	<p>Wellbeing: Staff</p>
2b.5	<p>Provision and strategies promote staff welfare and wellbeing. The wellbeing of staff is taken very seriously, and the genuine care of staff was witnessed throughout the visit. The SLT have an open-door policy and provide comprehensive pastoral support to all staff members. During teacher interviews, staff members unanimously agreed that there was a real sense of belonging and family throughout the whole staff. This was echoed in interviews with lunchtime support staff too. I felt that same warmth from all of the adults in school too, there is a genuine culture of caring here.</p>
2b.6	
2b.7	<p>Staff feel valued, respected, included and listened to. During discussions with stakeholders, it became clear that staff are proud of their school, the children they care for and the relationships they have fostered within the school community. The feeling of belonging and goodwill from teaching staff was very obvious.</p>
2b.8	<p>Staff access relevant professional development. This is a key element of the school life and evidence within the file identifies many training courses or in-house training giving staff the skills they need in order for them to be able to work with their pupils. For example, one of the teachers started at Whittlefield as a teaching assistant 5 years ago and is now teaching Year 5 as part of her teacher training - encouraged and supported by the SLT and teachers alike.</p>

	<p>There are opportunities for reflective collaborative problem solving for staff. There are systems in place to ensure that staff can reflect and communicate with each other within their departments and with the SLT. There was a clear feeling of support and cohesion that staff related to me during interviews. My visit to the school and the evidence file indicated that the staff are reflective and have developed an ethos whereby staff can say if things are not going well in the knowledge that SLT will be supportive and solution focussed.</p>
2c.	The Environment
2c.1	<p>Nurture principles are reflected in the development of the environment. Safeguarding for the children and staff is a priority. There are a variety of systems in place at entrances and exits and at transition times. The school is well resourced and each classroom has reflections of a nurture room, for example cosy corners or role play areas. The outside space is good and well utilised. The school feels safe and I observed most of the children coming in to school in a confident manner, during lessons and during other transitions.</p>
2c.2	<p>The setting has a welcoming and safe environment for all stakeholders. The school feels safe and I observed the children moving around school in a confident manner, during lessons and during other transitions. All staff know all the children's and parents names and refer to them by their first name.</p>

3.	Leadership and Management
3a.	Policy
3a.1	<p>Organisational and curriculum policies reflect and support nurture principles. The school prides itself on the nurturing and inspiring ethos which promotes mutual respect and celebration of the differences and similarities within its community. Nurture culture is embedded throughout the school, enhancing teaching and learning and promoting healthy outcomes for the children, which is reflected in the school's policies. The school's curriculum has recently changed to include the pupils' voices, resulting in a bespoke curriculum driven by the children's interests and curiosity.</p>
3a.2	<p>Stakeholders are involved in the development and review of policies. Staff and children are a vital part of the policy writing process. All new policies are checked to ensure they have a nurturing rationale. School Vision, Values and Aims reflect the Principles of Nurture.</p>
3b.	Partnership

3b.1	<p>Partnership working reflects a nurturing rationale. The school has capitalised upon opportunities to work in partnership, as follows:</p> <p>Case Study One: Professional cluster. The creation of the professionals cluster was born out of the frustration that schools were experiencing with the health sector in particular. The Headteacher and Pupil Support Manager made key links with the commissioners of Public Health within Lancashire, as well as heads of other key organisations that their children access, such as the SEND team. Creating a forum in which all these key personnel sit around the same table and discuss their services and what they can offer, has been instrumental in addressing the gaps in provision, creating new services and revising existing pathways enabling the children and their families to receive the best care and support they can.</p> <p>Case Study Two: Action for ASD: Action for ASD provides support, advice and guidance to families who have children with a pre-diagnoses or diagnosis of ASD. It is the <i>only</i> organisation in Burnley that currently does this. However, many of the school's parents were unable to attend the sessions, or access the ASD friendly play groups etc. As a result, the school has partnered with the organisation to provide monthly parents support group within school. The charity sends a key worker to the school to facilitate this and also hosts sessions for siblings of children with ASD, as they are often a neglected cohort. The sessions are held in the community room, another example of the community cohesion present at Whittlefield.</p>
3c.	Resources
3c.1	<p>Clear development priorities regarding nurturing principles and practice. There was an understanding of the processes and commitment by the staff who attended the NNSP training and structures and systems have been followed and adhered to during the two-year period. Although driven by Talha and Helen, it was clear from the folder and interviews that other members of staff were included in the process.</p>
3c.2	<p>Resources are deployed to develop nurturing principles and practice across the setting. Evidence throughout the visit and within the file of evidence include interventions and strategies delivered to improve the understanding of the six principles for the children, staff and community.</p>
3d.	Monitoring and Evaluation
3d. 1	<p>Monitoring and evaluation protocols include evidence of planning, reviewing and evaluating processes for The National Nurturing Schools Programme. The evidence within the file and the understanding of the importance of monitoring the impact that the programme is having on the whole school is ongoing. There are communication systems in place as to how the programme is progressing. SLT indicated next steps for the programme considering both the views of the staff, pupils and their parents/carers.</p>

Recommendations

I recommend Whittlefield Primary School for the National Nurturing Schools Award

This report cannot reflect the work that goes on at the school every day. A comprehensive evidence file and related documents have been provided as part of the assessment process. Examples of excellent practice include:

- **Inclusivity:** Everyone works diligently and effectively to ensure that high expectations enable children to be the best they can be, regardless of any special needs or difficulties at home or school. The whole school team have a clear remit that no child shall be overlooked if they need social, emotional, behavioural or academic support.
- **Senior Leadership:** Helen is passionate about the nurturing approach for staff as well as pupils. The systems put in place for staff wellbeing are excellent and interviews with teachers indicated high levels of motivation, cohesion and a tangible sense of belonging within the staff team. There was much laughter (and some happy tears) in the staff interviews. Talha is well liked and respected within staff circles and is credited for his kind, caring and thoughtful nature and approach. He is a modest and understated individual and yet is a powerful voice for inclusion for staff and children alike in Whittlefield. From a personal point of view, I found the school to be one of the best I have assessed, nationally.
- **Working with Parents:** Staff understand that working with parents and the local community is a key element to children's success and they work in partnership with the parents to make that happen both socially and within the children's learning. Parents' interviews clearly indicated that they felt nurtured and supported.
- **Children's voice:** Children exhibited happiness throughout the day and evidence showed many ways children are encouraged to be independent, resilient and engaged with learning.

The school's ethos and values are described on their website:

'We see ourselves as a community in which we are all valued as individuals. We value friendship, compassion and honesty. We strive constantly for our children to enjoy school, have fun and be enthusiastic lifelong learners.'

I have carried out many assessments such as this, but I can honestly say never has the ethos of a school been so tangible. Congratulations Whittlefield. Truly inspiring.

Areas for Development	Timescale
Re-engage reflectively with the self-assessment process expanding on the standards to reflect where the school is at currently	Ongoing and completed by October 2022
Complete the National Nurturing Schools self-assessment on an annual basis including annual staff and pupil questionnaires to reflect the ongoing impact of the nurturing focus	By October 2020 By October 2021
To continue to promote and embed nurture principles throughout the whole school including increasing pupil and parental awareness of them, for example adding the principles to newsletters, reading diaries or school reports or focusing on a principle every half term and showing it on social media platforms	Ongoing
To continue to expand on community links within the area	Ongoing
Continue to build upon use of the Boxall Profile with a view to working towards whole class assessments possibly starting with Y2 and Y5	Ongoing
Add a “kindness” or “good friend” award to the already nurture-friendly awards assemblies, possibly linked in to the six principles to increase profile of the impact of nurturing behaviours for everyone	Ongoing to be embedded by October 2022
Engage with the re-accreditation process for the National Nurturing Schools Programme	Ongoing to be completed by October 2022.