

The National Nurturing Schools Programme
Assessment Report



Establishment name and address	St John the Baptist Primary School Arran Way, Smith's Wood, B36 0QE
Headteacher/Principal	Mr Ian Gallagher
NNSP trained staff	Sinead Drust and Liz Blundell
Assessment date	22 nd April 2026
Assessor	Miranda Collins
Trainer	Carrie Thorne
Review date	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><i>Safe, loving and family</i> were the words that were used most frequently when stakeholders were asked to describe the school. The school does a tremendous amount to support children and families, with staff wellbeing a priority as well. One member of staff said, “We do what we do – we don’t realise it’s exceptional.” But it is exceptional, and the result is a school environment where kindness, generosity and adaptability are the norm.</p> <p>Examples of excellent practice include:</p> <p>Inclusion, wellbeing and nurture are genuinely embedded here. Reflecting on what the National Nurturing Schools Programme (NNSP) has added to the school, strategically, the Headteacher, Ian Gallagher, talked about using the Boxall Profile® to gain better insights into children’s needs. The standards in the programme also supported reflection on everyday practice and solidified the work of the inclusion team.</p>	

The Six Principles are readily applied to other work already in place. A focus on oracy supports the communication of feelings, developing emotional literacy as well as impacting confidence in broader communication, leading to greater aspiration for the future.

A great deal of work on supporting everyday transitions has been brought together under these principles. Ian described purchasing fruit using funding from a local supermarket. Every day, he is assisted in preparing the fruit by two children who enjoy the soft start to their morning. The fruit is offered alongside bagels as part of a soft start for all children, getting the day started positively.

Providing a warm welcome to all children arriving on site, whether through school leaders at the gate or classroom staff at the classroom door, has impacted on attendance and punctuality. Conveying a sense of being happy to see children and families secures relationships and secures the idea of school as a safe place.

Whilst learning is important, there is a recognition that safety and wellbeing are necessary before teaching can be effective. One member of staff said, “There’s more focus on wellbeing now – education is now a smaller piece of the jigsaw.” But, interestingly, as is seen nationally, Ian commented on the “definite improvement in learning behaviours” as a result of attuning to and addressing emotional needs.

Furthermore, the effective use of the Boxall Profile® to create focused nurture groups for children when they were in Year 5 last year has resulted in a Year 6 cohort which is more ready to learn and shows greater independence and resilience. The SENCO, Sinead Drust, who led the nurture group last year, said, “You no longer hear children saying that they are scared of SATS and transition.” She reported that one child had been adamant that they weren’t taking the tests, but now says they will do them and feels more confident about them.

Many of these children in Year 6 are in the Peer Listener team and were trained by the Mental Health Support Team. Although prepared to support other children, the team has gained a better sense of their own wellbeing, including the importance of a positive mindset and the need for good sleep.

At the other end of the school, the youngest children benefit from a highly inclusive practice which has been externally recognised. The rising number of children starting school with additional needs requires flexibility and adaptability. A little one in Reception did not initially thrive in the classroom, as it was set up, so the environment was changed to add a quiet area and a space for regulation with a mini trampoline. The Colour Monster is used to promote emotional literacy, and Makaton supports communication.

Assessment for communication needs is used effectively. All children in Nursery and Reception are screened using WellComm, a complete speech and language toolkit, which enables interventions to be delivered straight away.

There is a comprehensive offer to support both physical and emotional wellbeing for the whole school, including all stakeholders, which is built around the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework and mapped out clearly. Provision is built into the curriculum and supported by the environment.

Adaptability is the watchword alongside the breadth of provision. One of the parents I spoke to told me about what is provided in the moment for a child who is having a bad start. Ian commented on seeing colleagues coming together to discuss how to respond to challenges with a supportive mindset, “How can we deal with this? How can we adapt for this child?” He said that teachers have autonomy to adapt to their cohort.

The school has previously been part of the PINS (Partnerships for Inclusion of neurodiversity in Schools), a national programme that aims to help shape whole-school provision and support the strengthening of partnerships between schools and parent carers. It was also awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools last summer. Both of these programmes dovetail beautifully with NNSP, and they have all been skilfully woven together to provide an integrated approach. Furthermore, The Six Principles complement Catholic School Virtues and Catholic Social Teaching to give children a holistic experience of inclusion and wellbeing.

Here, it is nurture for all, by all. One member of staff said, “All staff work as a team with children’s wellbeing at the heart, so they feel safe to learn”, and numerous examples were given. The site manager, Joyce, spoke about the importance of her role in the school, highlighting the development of breakout spaces as one development in which she’d taken a key part. She, as do all staff, understands the need for some children to have a safe space when their behaviour reflects how they feel.

She spoke about the importance of having systems about site security and how families are accustomed to these routines. She commented that the implementation of Martyn’s Law (to improve protective security and organisational preparedness for incidents) this April had driven greater rigour in locking gates at the designated times, which had led to a decrease in children arriving late to school. She commented on her relationships with families, saying, “I can be nurturing and kind even when I’m asking them to move their car.”

The team in the office are invited to INSET training and can contribute to shared school values. As the first person in school that meets parents and visitors, they are warm and welcoming. Communication is friendly and personal, making families feel at ease. If a parent phones in to check on an unsettled child, parents say, “They are happy to ring down, it’s no problem.”

Authentic investment in children as partners in learning and school life. Here, the voice of the child matters; this is exemplified through the Children's SEF. Children are asked to contribute their views on a range of questions, which are then collated into this document, which feeds into aspects of school development.

Children are offered opportunities to lead, taking roles such as School Council representatives, the Social Action Team, Liturgy leaders, Reading Ambassadors, Attendance Ambassadors, eCadets and Art Ambassadors. Pupil leaders come together in the School Parliament to work towards achieving real change in and for the school. These opportunities involve children in reflecting on their emotional learning journeys and enable them to lead peer-support initiatives, thereby reinforcing their skills and confidence.

Year 6 peer listeners are very active in supporting our younger pupils in school. The older children I spoke to were clear in explaining how they would support each other, naming being their friend, making up a game to play together or sharing an experience of nurture as some of the key strategies they would use. They are observed to have a greater sense of their own wellbeing through supporting others.

Individual children are empowered to choose strategies that work for them. They can choose how they want to record their work, being given the option of writing or drawing, embracing creativity and imagination. IPADs can be used to support children to record work without fear of making mistakes, building resilience and tenacity.

Commitment to parents, families and wider stakeholders - one parent said: "They understand us as families". In addition to the strong and supportive relationships here, practical help is offered. In sharing The Six Principles, they were presented to families in a format that explained them and gave examples of how they could be applied at home. When specific resources to support wellbeing or behaviour are developed for use in school, a set is provided for home so that there is consistency. Teachers or TAs talk them through and model how to use them with parents.

Even in the moment with a prospective parent during the assessment morning, kindness and practicality came together as a member of staff hosting tours for families helped one parent access the childcare portal to register for free Early Years hours before they left the school site.

Transitions for families joining the school are thoughtful. After transition visits and meetings, Class Dojo is used to keep in contact. Videos of the Early Years team reading stories are posted to be enjoyed over the holidays by parents and children. Families can also use Dojo to send through any questions they may have before the start of the year.

The HAF programme is wide-ranging and highly regarded by families. Newspaper coverage was given in the portfolio of evidence and showed the impact that the activities have for families. Parents value the club for providing safe, stimulating activities and meals that alleviate financial pressure.

As in many Christian faith schools, Christmas is an especially significant time. Here, parents are supported in preparing for the holiday with assistance in gathering pantry essentials. A pop-up food bank is run, providing all the ingredients required to serve a delicious Christmas dinner (minus the turkey!). Grants from supermarkets and fundraising are used to provide fresh vegetables and store-cupboard items. Where necessary, the school funds the purchase of these foods from its own resources in order to minimise stress for families and increase delight over the holiday period.

Furthermore, a meeting room in school is converted to a magical Christmas Grotto, complete with trees, lights and a sleigh. This is used for the Christmas Fair and for class parties. When elderly neighbours from a nearby care home attend for Christmas dinner at the end of term, they make a beeline for the Grotto, embracing the magic of it too. One member of staff told me that when the Grotto is not in use, it can become another safe space for children or a place to relax and read.

The links with the local care home are strong, with children visiting to spend time with elderly neighbours, sharing stories and playing games. Recently, children had visited and taken daffodils, making a special effort to include those who were unable to be in the public spaces. One member of staff said that “children show such respect and they love going to the care home”.

The PTFA is dynamic and supportive, seeking to provide opportunities for children to supplement what is offered by the curriculum. Recently, they realised that in a landlocked borough, some children would never have been to the beach. After exploring the costs involved in taking children to the coast, it was decided to bring the beach to the school. The children explained that there were large areas with sand, water play, an ice cream van and beach games.

Parents are also involved in running peer-led coffee mornings. A new initiative, these have been engaging a wide range of parents who see sharing lived experience, tips, and support is helpful. Combining these with having some specialist input is intended for the future as a strong, blended offer for families.

Every stakeholder group is considered here, and staff wellbeing is well attended to in this strong team. Relationships are the bedrock of wellbeing. With a low staff turnover and many members of staff having been at the school for a number of years, there is consistency and cohesion. One member of staff said, “I walked in as a student, and I felt the ethos - I thought 'this is a good place' – some years later, this individual is a school leader. Another member of staff added, “No one wants to leave!” Relationships also

enable colleagues to seek help and support from one another, giving each other ideas and passing along information.

Treats and small touches give a little boost – one member of the team noted that there is always chocolate to hand, if needed! Good news and catch-ups are shared on the team WhatsApp, and those messages “perk you up”. When a colleague is off, the team is said to be “so caring”, sending flowers and good wishes – they are never made to feel they should rush back until they are ready.

Leadership of inclusion, wellbeing and nurture is from the heart here. Parents say they “can’t fault” school leaders for the way they know children and are loved by them. Love was a common theme during the assessment, and it is clear that it underpins everything here.

Quotes from the assessment day:

- It feels like a village school – everybody knows everybody. (parent)
- They understand us as families – everyone helps each other where they can. (parent)
- My children always go in and come out with a smile every day. (parent)
- I am confident that if I needed help, the staff at St John the Baptist would be there to support in the best way possible. (parent)
- I always tell them (children) that they are part of my family. (member of staff)
- Because we care and love the children, we want the best for them. (member of staff)
- There’s more focus on wellbeing now – education is now a smaller piece of the jigsaw. (member of staff)
- It’s a privilege to have a fantastic team to provide so much for children and families. (member of staff)
- We work as a team, all staff do, with children at the heart, where they feel safe to learn. (member of staff)
- I walked in as a student and felt the ethos – I thought “this is a good place”. (member of staff)
- We do what we do – we don’t realise it’s exceptional. (member of staff)

Recommendation

We recommend St. John the Baptist Catholic Primary School for the National Nurturing Schools Award

Areas for development	Timescale
<p>The Boxall Profile®</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use it in specific cases as a tool for those needing additional external social or emotional support, for groups of pupils where necessary. • Assess all children in high need year groups and refer to the Whole Class Resource book to give classroom staff insights, strategies and resources to address SEMH needs. (Your Year 4 class came up several times in the assessment, so I wonder if that would be a good place to start. • Explore how the Boxall Profile® will be shared with the MHST to strengthen practice and pupil support. • Consider whether using the Boxall Profile® would give any insights for the children who access the HAF programme to identify needs that could be addressed and show impact. • Use the data to identify trends, inform interventions, and share key findings with the wider staff team to support consistency in planning and support strategies. <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out staff training so that more members of staff are trained to use the Boxall Profile® effectively. <p>Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed reference to Boxall Profile® in the Pathway for Persistent Poor Behaviour as a way of unpicking how this behaviour reflects unmet need or unlearnt skills. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>The Six Principles of Nurture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote and embed nurture group principles throughout the provision for pupils and staff. • Continue to familiarise your families and community with the Six Principles, 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. 	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Work alongside your priest and parish to ensure that they can support the natural connection between your Catholic School</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Virtues and nurture, making connections between scripture, parables and the Six Principles.</p>	
<p>Continue to monitor and evaluate the provision within your setting, completing the National Nurturing Schools self-assessment on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Engage with the re-accreditation process for the National Nurturing Schools Programme.</p>	<p>2029</p>