

The National Nurturing Schools Programme  
Assessment Report



|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Establishment name and address | Smarden Primary and Nursery School<br>Pluckley Road,<br>Smarden,<br>Ashford,<br>Kent,<br>TN27 8ND |
| Headteacher/Principal          | Claudia Millar  |
| NNSP trained staff             | Claudia Millar and Laura Avery  |
| Assessment date                | 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2024  |
| Assessor                       | Nicola McAllister   |
| Trainer                        | Penny Holmes  |
| Review date                    | November 2027   |

## 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.

Smarden Primary and Nursery School is situated in a popular rural village, whilst being situated just outside the main town of Ashford. The school is very much the focal aspect of village life. Whilst the majority of pupils reside in the village of Smarden, others travel from a wider catchment area. The site has a purpose-built outdoor classroom, a wooded area and a pond. The school has the benefit of a generous playing field which is used for recreational sessions, games and after school activities.

**Examples of excellent practice include:**

#### **Implementation of the National Nurturing Schools Programme.**

Smarden Primary School has completely embraced the National Nurturing Schools Programme. Head Teacher Claudia Miller came from an SEN background prior to joining the school, which explains her passion and drive for “supporting children of all abilities”.

She actively sought a programme that would enable her to embed her vision, which is why she chose the National Nurturing Schools Programme.

Initially Claudia set up a working party involving a range of stakeholders and used the self-assessment to ascertain strengths and weaknesses. Staff were all trained in The Six Principles of Nurture and how these translate into practice. The principles were simplified into child friendly language. Each class was given a principle to create a piece of art or to write about. These were collated and displayed in the hall. Every classroom contains a poster outlining The Six Principles of Nurture to ensure that they underpin the ethos throughout the school.

Letters were sent home to parents explaining that the school was embarking on the National Nurturing Schools Programme and a meeting was held with parent representatives to inform them of the action plan. In order to continue to communicate the meaning of The Six Principles of Nurture information is regularly reported through the school newsletter. The school website has a full page dedicated to nurture, it outlines the school's participation in the programme and how The Six Principles of Nurture are embedded into school life.

Claudia stated, "We have embedded the approach into everyday life, it's not an add on, it's what we do." This was certainly apparent in the evidence provided and through conversations on assessment day. From wellbeing, to meeting needs, to developing safe spaces and relationships, nurture is the golden thread that runs through the school

### **Use of the Boxall Profile**

The Boxall Profile is used as an assessment and planning tool throughout the school. Laura Avery, TA and nurture lead, stated, "We wanted to do something more whole school based, not just for identified children." Every member of staff is trained to use Boxall Profile. Claudia reflected that this has enabled them to "move onto class plans and look at the bigger picture".

Laura, with her experience and passion for data handling, stated that the information produced from assessing all children identifies that "about 50% of our school has some level of need with around a quarter of the school with a high level of need." New resources are currently on order to support class learning plans in order to equip staff with the tools they require to implement interventions. To track the impact of the use of Boxall Profile, whole classes are closely monitored to ensure that the targets set are being met

For those children who are identified as having a higher level of need, individualised plans and interventions are devised through ongoing assessments using the Boxall Profile. Information is shared with key staff and developmental progress is closely monitored.

### **Wellbeing is a key priority**

Through the evidence provided and conversations on assessment day, wellbeing for all is at the core of Smarden Primary and Nursery School. The open-door policy of senior management was commented on by all staff and parents. Staff commented that they feel “valued, supported and trusted”. There is a sense of community within the school, staff see themselves as “a family”. As it is a small school, everyone knows each other well and they “are always there for each other and always checking in”. An adaptation of zones of regulation, using pebbles, is situated in the staffroom allowing staff the opportunity to access support from each other.

Thomas Dixon, class teacher, said, “everyone is approachable, there is a culture of honesty and openness.” As a new member of staff, he feels well supported by his mentor and his ECT time is protected. Workload is regularly on the agenda and is always a consideration when reviewing policy and practice.

As a result of the self-assessment, the school’s environmental checklist was updated. Staff have predictable scripts to use with pupils, these are attached to their lanyards. Worry boxes are also accessible to allow pupils to communicate directly with their teacher. All classes are using zones of regulation for emotional check ins and there are safe spaces within each classroom as well as outside in the playground. The nurture shed is available for children to use when they are feeling overwhelmed within the classroom, it is decked out with beanbags, fidget toys and soft lighting.

The outdoor environment comprises different zones which cater for different needs. There are opportunities for active play as well as quiet, reflective areas. The school has a designated woodland area which is used for forest schools. Throughout the year, every class gets the opportunity to access the forest school, allowing pupils to participate in outdoor activities which support self-development and enhance wellbeing.

In general, there is a sense of flexibility and adaptability to ensure that needs are met, and wellbeing is promoted. Shelly Thomas, TA, stated, “we feel confident that we can adapt, we are encouraged to step up and do whatever is needed in any given moment.”

### **Support for parents and carers**

Ensuring that parents and carers feel valued, included and supported is a priority at Smarden Primary and Nursery School. As well as an active PTA, each class has a designated parent representative who meets with the Head Teacher once a term. This allows for the parent voice to be heard and acted upon. One of the outcomes of this was the development of a new meeting room for parents.

Staff also work with parents through the ACE programme which supports pupils eligible for Pupil Premium. Staff are allocated time to work one to one with each pupil while also “creating positive relationships between school and families.” The school also runs a

parent support group who meet on a regular basis, they are also in the process of developing parent workshops focusing on different curriculum areas.

The parents interviewed on assessment day feel well informed and confident that they can approach staff if they have any concerns. They spoke of staff going “above and beyond” for their children and that there are “lots of interventions to support emotionally as well as academically”. Katie, a parent, commented, “I feel really held and nurtured as a parent, just like a family”. This sentiment was reiterated by another parent, Melissa, who reflected that staff are “incredibly supportive and honest, there’s an open-door policy”.

### **The school places itself at the heart of the community**

Located in a small village, Swarden Primary and Nursery School truly is the beating heart of the community. The community houses generations of families who would have attended the school and the strong historical links are prevalent today. Andrea, nurture TA, commented, “We are such a small school, we know all the children, lots of staff stay in the village, it’s a really hands-on school.”

This “incredibly social village” hosts many events that children and families can participate in such as the school parade, torch processions and summer and Christmas fetes. The school has strong links with local churches, where they attend services and festivals while also inviting the priests into school to participate in assemblies. The local community shop supports fundraising activities for the school while supporting learning opportunities about sustainability.

Links with the village Gardening Society have been reestablished with members of the society attending the school’s own gardening club, sharing their knowledge and expertise. These strong community links generate a reciprocal process, everyone supporting each other while embedding a strong sense of belonging. Claudia sums this up by reflecting, “We support our families and the community, and they support us.”

### **Pupils**

The pupils interviewed on assessment day presented as confident and articulate. Discussions, which were led by Year 6 facilitators, demonstrated that children have a robust knowledge of safeguarding within the school. They know who the safeguarding leads are and what their role is within school. Feeling safe was high on the agenda.

Pupils were able to discuss what The Six Principles of Nurture mean to them in school and spoke confidently about the support and interventions in place in every class that “helps with their learning”. They also discussed the safe places both inside school and outdoors that they could access, if needed.



An extensive range of clubs were listed by the pupils ranging from drama to chess, to gardening embodying an appreciation that “different people like different things”. The children spoke of emotional check ins and a range of adults they could approach if they wanted to talk about their feelings.

**Quotes from the assessment day:**

- “We are a small school, very much a family.” (Head Teacher voice)
- “An important point of leadership is enabling others.” (Head Teacher voice)
- “We support our families and community, and they support us.” (Head Teacher voice)
- “Nurture is paramount, we try to cater for all of our children.” (staff voice)
- “It feels like a real community, a family, everyone cares for the children like they are their own.” (staff voice)
- “We have high standards in a nurturing, supportive way.” (staff voice)
- “Kindness is oozing out, children are particularly nurturing towards each other, they look after each other.” (staff voice)
- “We all make time for each other.” (staff voice)
- “I feel supported and welcomed every morning.” (staff voice)
- “We genuinely are a very caring school who know our children well.” (staff voice)
- “It’s slightly infuriating, highly addictive, like a big warm hug.” (staff voice)
- “It’s like sitting down by a fire, a nice cup of tea, welcoming, included, part of the family.” (parent voice)
- “The school is trusting, caring, it’s pretty perfect, I feel safe.” (parent voice)
- “It’s been lifechanging for both my children and my family.” (parent voice)
- “It’s a good school, you learn a lot and it’s fun.” (pupil voice)
- “It’s kind and respectful.” (pupil voice)
- “It’s a safe school.” (pupil voice)

When asked how they feel when they are in school pupils replied:

- Happy
- Safe
- Good
- Excited
- Respected

**Recommendation**

**We recommend Smarden Primary and Nursery School for the National Nurturing Schools Award**

| Areas for development   | Timescale |
|---|-----------|
| <p>The Boxall Profile. Continue to use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As an assessment tool throughout the whole school, providing training to new members of staff.</li> <li>● Creating class plans which support universal interventions.</li> <li>● On a case-by-case basis, considering the pupil's individual profile.</li> </ul>   | Ongoing   |
| <p>Nurture Principles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to promote and embed The Six Principles of Nurture throughout the school for pupils and staff. Revisit the principles on a regular basis.</li> <li>● Ensure that The Six Principles of Nurture are independent of school values.</li> <li>● 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.</li> </ul> | Ongoing   |
| <p>Continue to monitor and evaluate the provision within your setting completing the National Nurturing Schools self-assessment on an annual basis.</p>   | Ongoing   |
| <p>Engage with the re-accreditation process for the National Nurturing Schools Programme.</p>   | 2027      |