

The National Nurturing Schools Programme

Assessment Report



Establishment	Rowan Gate Findeon Road Wellingborough NN8 4NS / Hayway Rushden NN10 6AG
Head teacher/Principal	Laura Clarke
NNSP trained staff	Rachel Allen Sue Morris
Assessment date	30.03.22
Assessor	Carrie Thorne
Trainer	B. Selway
Review date	March 2025

1	Stakeholders
1a.	Children and young people
<p>1a.1 The social and emotional needs of children and young people are assessed and tracked. Rowan Gate Primary School is a mixed special school for pupils between the ages of 3 and 11. The school provides for pupils with significant, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. The school has an increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and pupils with profound and multiple learning disabilities. There were 204 on the roll on the date of assessment and 177 staff. It is worth noting that the school has a high proportion of its pupils who enter the school at times other than those usually expected. All pupils who attend the school have a statement of special educational needs. The school completes the Boxall profile online. It is completed on all children 3 times per year and this information was used to support the transition between year groups, access interventions, track behaviours and links with the Norfolk Steps. The school is developing the use of the Boxall profile, they have invested in the Whole Class Boxall Strategies Book and plan to monitor this across the whole school to inform policy and whole-class interventions.</p> <p>1a.2 Nurture principles are defined and explained to children and young people. The Nurture principles were already an established language at the school before NNSP training, originating in the well-established nurture classrooms. Following on from initial nurture staff meetings led by Rachel and Susie, staff introduced the principles to all the children. Children are aware of the principles and work is ongoing to ensure they know what they mean. The six principles are discussed within classes and plans are underway for this to be shared further across the school especially – post-Covid. Staff discuss the six principles with their children using the common language of nurture. The nurture principles posters are displayed in classrooms. On assessment day the children were able to demonstrate their knowledge of the six principles. I was very honoured to be able to speak with 2 boys who explained how the ‘grown-ups keep me safe’.</p> <p>1a.3 Children and young people are encouraged to develop responsibility for themselves and learn self-efficacy. Rowan Gate staff have a very good understanding of how to develop this standard. All children are encouraged to develop responsibility for themselves and reflect on learning and behaviours, building resilience and self-efficacy. Examples of how the school put this into practice every day is through the ‘code of conduct’, the 5 keys and the use of visual/symbol support. This remains a constant aim in every lesson and every activity. Rachel explained, <i>“We use the warmth of nurture to help the children express what they want to tell us.”</i> Sue went on to explain, <i>“Teaching and nurturing is about helping children to repoint the wall.”</i></p>	

1b.	Parents and caregivers
<p>1b. 1 Parents and caregivers feel valued and welcomed by the service. Prior to the pandemic, the school had regular communications with parents and throughout the pandemic, the school maintained strong links with parents and carers. There is a family Liaison Team led by Assistant Head Jane Rhodes and supported by 2 level 4 Teaching Assistants, delivering bespoke support when and where needed. This high level of support demonstrates the lengths the school goes to in ensuring parents are supported.</p> <p>The assessment day provided evidence that there is a consistent and regular communication system in place with the parents/carers in the form of daily communication in home-school books and the parents expressed</p>	

their deep appreciation of the teachers and classroom staff for taking the time to do this. They felt staff often went above and beyond to ensure the children had what they needed to remain calm.

1b.2 Nurture principles are defined and explained to parents and caregivers.

The school's nurture principles are displayed on the school's website and in some policies. The school has plans to share the principles more widely with parents once Covid restrictions are lifted and it is safe to do so.

1b.3 Reports to parents and caregivers reflect children and young people's strengths and areas of need.

The school provides 3 reports to parents per academic year. During the lockdown, these were supported by the school offering virtual meetings. Children's achievements are regularly communicated through the home-school book. The reports to parents and caregivers reflect children and young people's strengths and areas of need as well as advising on academic progress.

1c. Staff

1c.1 There are systems and procedures to welcome, support and induct new staff and visitors.

The school has a robust, well-established induction programme. Information is shared with all new staff and this includes information on all procedures. Time is given to new staff to digest the information. Feedback from members of staff on assessment day supported how they feel very welcome. Nurture is embedded in quality first teaching and the support staff receive to help them 'settle in'.

1c.2 Nurture principles are defined and explained to all staff.

Training for all staff was held at the start of the school year by Rachel and Susie following the initial NNSP training. All teaching staff know the six principles. The whole staff received a session on nurture and this has been followed up by email communications.

1c.3 Staff are given opportunities to discuss, develop and review shared values.

Staff meetings, team meetings

The staff are given the opportunity to review, develop and share their values through Head Teacher open question staff meetings, termly informal inter-team meetings, termly 'tea and cake' staff meetings and teacher meetings. There are open-door policies for staff and SLT. Head Teacher - Laura expressed the importance that SLT show how the staff are valued and how she often shared positive communications with all staff from the many visitors to the school.

Rachel and Sue both expressed the support they are given to develop their ideas and that all values are respected by SLT and they felt the school was a "safe base" to share ideas and thoughts. All staff met on the assessment day expressed that they felt supported by the school and SLT.

1c.4 There are clear expectations of how staff relate to children and young people in all settings and events.

The school have developed the behaviour policy into a RESPECT policy, which has been shared with all staff and all staff, parents, children and governors were consulted in its development. The school is working hard to develop a nurturing approach in what has been a difficult time with changes to SLT. The staff have nurture cards in their lanyards to remind them of the principles and the common language of nurture.

"It is a safe space because we have such wonderful relationships."

1c.5 Staff are actively involved in The National Nurturing Schools Programme.

Rachel and Sue introduced the nurture journey to the whole staff following initial NNSP training in January 2020. All staff actively supported and engaged with the NNSP programme of nurture – nurture is part of the school’s development plan. On assessment day staff shared positive examples of nurture. It was very clear to see that it forms part of the daily language of the school

1d. The community

1d.1 The school works with all stakeholders.

The school work with numerous groups across the community including local swimming pools, churches Imperial Court Care Home, Rotary Club, Asda, Rush2theDen, Poddington Garden Centre/Cherry Lane, Rushden Academy, Wellingborough School, Denfield Park Primary School, Oakway Primary School and Oundle School. A satellite class has been set up at Tennyson Road Primary school as a solution to the excess demand for places. This has led to increased liaison between local schools and their staff. They are developing projects such as a free period product scheme and food bank collections.

Case Study One: Local area, charities and businesses support

The rotary club of Rushden and Wellingborough have previously funded “kids day out” , a day in the summer term in which children have the opportunity to visit the local theme park with the school and other special educational needs schools across the local county.

The school has also had donations from a local garden centre as well as volunteers to support a gardening project and planting pots and tubs for the schools.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many community projects have been unable to happen, however, the local community and businesses have continued to work to develop a sense of community for the school in a range of ways and as the restrictions continue to ease the school will continue to develop the community links again. As the school has continued to expand a “satellite” class has been set up in a local infant school. In September 2021 a second class was set up on the site. The “satellite” class has provided staff and children at the infant school with further understanding of working with children with additional needs and ideas to interact and provide activities at developmentally appropriate levels.

Local businesses and fire service have contacted the school and provided Christmas happiness hampers to children on pupil premium, and Easter eggs for every child on roll, providing a sense of community and feeling of happiness, care and appreciation.

On walks to local parks, to support daily exercise and physical and mental well- being many classes have witnessed the progress of a mural in the park and the painter has spoken to children and staff about the history of the park and the painting he was completing, classes were able to see the progress throughout the spring and summer terms. Local dog walkers have also become a frequent community encounter on walks and many children have become more confident in being able to walk past or be near dogs. Due to seeing regular dog walkers, exercising and people walking in the parks children have developed their interaction, communication skills and questioning as well as showing their sense of stranger awareness and road safety. Many people met on local walks will say hello and a local builder who has been working on a house build has developed his understanding of the children’s needs and anxieties, for example switching off loud equipment as classes walk past.

Local walks will continue at the school in order to support physical and mental well-being and exercise as well as the skills of personal and road safety, communication and interaction with others. The school explained it has been delightful to see the enthusiasm of many children who possibly don’t experience a local walk with families due to circumstances.

As the risk assessments for Covid-19 begin to allow more community activities, as we have done in the past, classes will have opportunities for swimming in the local pools, visits to shops, care homes, other schools, visits etc.

As local businesses have offered a range of donations and gifts to children during the pandemic it may be possible to contact them for future donations to support school fundraising.

As a school site they have begun to raise money for 3 national charities, Children in Need, Young Minds and National Autistic society by holding mufti days at the end of each half term. They have also provided donations to food banks in December 2021 and these will continue in the new year.

1d.2 Nurture principles are defined and explained to stakeholders.

The school shares the principles with stakeholders including governors. The school's ethos is shared with stakeholders and new partnerships as they develop. They are made aware of the vision and policies of the school which firmly include the principles of nurture.

1d.3 The school is used as an established resource for stakeholders

The school makes many efforts to engage and raise the profile of the school and shares what the school does to support children and families in the wider community. Examples include: Liaison regarding safe parking outside school, gardening Club including school raised beds & flower pots outside the school entrance, weekly walks to local parks during which interaction with members of the local community is strongly encouraged. The Rowan Gate Satellite classes and outreach work are wonderful examples of this standard.

1d.4 The school is responsive and inclusive to their stakeholders.

The school community and outside organisations are involved in understanding and following the principles of nurture. Examples of the school being responsive and inclusive include a hydrotherapy pool, Life Support Training, Inclusion work for pupils in neighbouring Primary Schools, Outreach work, Manual Handling Training and Boxall Profile support-completion & interpretation.

2	Delivery
2a.	Meeting the needs of children and young people
<p>2a.1 Nurture principles are incorporated in curriculum planning and delivery.</p> <p>As a special needs school Rowan Gate consistently embeds the principles in its curriculum learning is mapped against EYFS steps and set in different stages – Pre formal, semi-formal and formal topic approach. As the pupils travel through the school, staff endeavour to equip them with the skills they need for life, providing them with an engaging, creative and flexible curriculum that accommodates their ever-changing needs. The school believes that a thematic approach provides a variety of contexts for pupils to develop and consolidate their skills, whilst ensuring there are opportunities for enquiry and independent investigation and learning. The nurture principles are incorporated throughout the children's learning.</p> <p>2a.2 The social and emotional needs of children and young people are addressed.</p> <p>The school places a priority on the social and emotional needs of all the children. Dedicated staff ensure any issues are addressed. All classes have a weekly Well-being session linked to the 10 keys of happiness from the action for and follow attachment aware training in class. These provide support in nurturing the children to explore feelings, boundaries, routines and interactions. Children are provided with resources to identify their emotions and feelings relevant to their developmental level, these may be a communication board, feelings display or objects used to communicate needs. Staff use Norfolk steps training to recognise the need to treat each child individually and support their well-being thus ensuring the social and emotional needs of children and young people are addressed.</p> <p>The school recognises that the Boxall Profile ensures social and mental health is formally assessed and tracked in a consistent manner and plans to expand the analysis of the data further. The school liaises with referrals to external support.</p>	

2a.3 Consistent advice is given on supporting improvements in behaviour and emotional wellbeing.

Rowan Gate Primary School promote the development of meaningful, trusting relationships for all children both with peers and adults. They promote a climate that enables all staff and pupils to feel secure and valued and their approach to behaviour management focuses primarily on de-escalation strategies and techniques. Staff at Rowan Gate believe that behaviour is communication. All approaches toward behaviour management must maintain the dignity and well-being of the pupil. As a staff they strive to support pupils to manage their behaviour appropriately, using a range of strategies which include: embedding an understanding of the Five Keys, staff knowledge of the schools' Code of Conduct, and a holistic approach to behavioural support and management, specifically Team Teach. Developing staff understanding of the importance of attachment, and encouraging positive behaviour through the use of praise and rewards. It is understood that positive behaviours are promoted and challenging behaviours can be avoided by ensuring the following there is an appropriate match between activity and ability, that all staff interact with pupils in a consistent manner and communicate clearly and calmly and that pupils are supervised at all times. Information sharing is viewed as an important aspect of managing behaviour throughout the school. The children explained they are happy at school because they feel safe.

2a.4 Children and young people are encouraged to be involved in developing and evolving their educational achievements.

At Rowan Gate, the children are encouraged to be involved in developing their own learning from the outset and share their feelings. This remains the same as the children progress up through the school within topic work where they can suggest areas of learning. Children carry out regular self-assessments and reflections.

2b. Wellbeing: Children and young people

2b.1 Provision and strategies promote the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.

The school places a high priority on this area. All staff are focussed on pupil wellbeing. There is provision in every classroom e.g. sensory boxes, quiet areas, visual timetables. Children who need additional support have access to a variety of resources/strategies.

On the assessment day, this was evidenced by Rachel and Sue who described children's well-being as the most important thing to get right. The headteacher described how the staff *"have built unconditional positive regard for all our children,"* and this has had the most impact on the children's wellbeing.

2b.2 Children and young people feel safe and secure.

Pupils now share more openly when they are upset or have a worry. On the assessment visit, the children described how they feel 'safe and looked after.' They explained that the staff help them feel safe by taking their problems away. Examples of this standard in action are: Lanyards colour coded so that children know who is a familiar adult, all class staff trained in safeguarding & the importance of providing a structured, safe & secure base for children, communication with families is well established at either end of the school day and is achieved through Home-school books telephone calls or face to face interactions. During covid staff added photos of themselves to lanyards to show their faces without a mask, to offer reassurance to children.

2b.3 Children and young people feel valued, respected, included and listened to.

Pupils were able to describe how they felt listened to and valued. The staff explained pupils are positively greeted by familiar staff at the beginning of the day. There is an active School Council and The use of symbols/AAC gives each child a voice.

2b.4 Children and young people are prepared for transitions in life.

This is an area the school does very well. At Rowan Gate macro and micro transitions are planned for. New children transitioning into school are prepared for via home visits – a FLT and class teacher and a member of

SLT, a social story about the school and class and class staff, stay and play sessions prior to starting school and preschool sessions for children already identified as having SEN

Internal transitions between classes e.g. old and new teachers meet to discuss individual children's needs, transition documents completed, stating methods of communication, medical, education needs, Boxall profile, SEMH needs, family circumstances and every class has a common structure, the use of symbols, visual timetables, furniture, role play and access. The school supports transition for children on the Autistic spectrum through the use of now and next boards, objects of reference and allowing transitional objects to support and manage anxieties, for example, a small toy can be taken to the hall or a bag of items.

2b.

Wellbeing: Staff

2b.5 Provision and strategies promote staff welfare and wellbeing.

Staff wellbeing is a priority, the all-staff email system provides opportunities to share well-being, charities, ideas etc. prior to covid the school also used staff snack boxes and toiletries set up in staff rooms/bathrooms with the idea of give what you can, take what you need, these included jokes, recipes and idea-sharing boards, as risk assessment allows plans are that these will be reintroduced. Staff also have access to employee assist – a 24-hour phone service.

2b.6 Staff feel valued, respected, included and listened to.

The staff at Rowan Gate feel listened to. On the assessment day staff interviewed explained they feel ideas and suggestions are welcomed and valued. During discussions with staff, it became clear that staff are proud of their school and many have been at the school for a long time which demonstrates the way they feel valued and respected. The children they care for and the relationships they have fostered within the school community were cited as staff highlights. The feeling of belonging and goodwill from the staff was obvious.

2b.7 Staff access relevant professional development.

The school supports training and offers many opportunities which are encouraged. There is online training via "smartlog". Annual CPD programmes for support staff and robust performance management systems for teaching staff support this. Staff explained they felt they could ask for any training opportunities they wished to pursue.

2b.8 There are opportunities for reflective collaborative problem solving for staff

There are opportunities for reflective collaborative problem solving for staff. Regular staff meetings, TA meetings, year group meetings and middle leader meetings give staff the opportunity to work collaboratively to solve concerns raised and reach common goals.

2c.

The environment

2c.1 Nurture principles are reflected in the development of the workplace environments.

The principles are on display in classrooms. Each classroom is welcoming and safe. There is a class information book available for each class. There are quiet areas and sensory/ calm boxes in each class.

2c.2 The environment is safe and welcoming for all stakeholders.

The video tour of the school provided a wonderful insight into the school environment and the Displays. CPoms – (online safeguarding and accident report system) has been successfully introduced into the school to improve communications. On assessment day staff explained they felt secure and cared for.

3	Leadership and management
3a.	Policy
<p>3a.1 Organisational processes and service development policies reflect and support nurture principles. The nurture principles are now a clear part of the school vision and policies and curriculum documents include the principles. A working party has been set up to update the code of conduct.</p> <p>3a.2 Stakeholders are involved in the development and review of policies. Curriculum leaders are responsible for the relevant policies. All policies when reviewed are sent to staff and governors. Some policies are sent to parents/carers who are encouraged to comment examples of certain policies sent are RSHE and online safety.</p>	

3b.	Partnership
<p>3b.1 Partnership working reflects a nurturing rationale. This was demonstrated in the partnership case studies. At St Christopher's nurture underpins all work with partners e.g. social care, CIZ. They work hard across the school in all areas to nurture the children and families from individual support plans to running a food bank.</p> <p>Case study: Thrive Thrive is an independent occupational therapy service aimed at facilitating positive health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families. They help children to participate, perform and engage to their full potential in everyday activities such as learning, self-care, social interaction and play. Thrive has been working with Rowan Gate and providing support and guidance to staff, families and children with occupational therapy needs. When a member of staff has concerns regarding a child's sensory needs a referral can be made to the deputy head and then if appropriate will be sent to Thrive and a member of the Thrive team will arrange an observation in school, discussion with parents/carers and then plan therapeutic intervention activities to support the child. Training has also been provided to staff in order to develop their understanding of sensory circuits, sensory processing, the need for certain resources/movements Staff have developed a greater understanding of sensory needs and provision for children across the school. Sensory boxes have been provided for every class which include items such as TheraBand, exercise, sensory mats, brushes, weighted toys and blankets, peanut balls, ear defenders, mats, stepping stones and rope. These can then be used as and when needed for children rather than needing a central supply of resources. As well as sensory and physical needs and activities a number of children are beginning to be provided with a program to support their interoceptive sense, this may be beneficial to provide training to all staff to equip them with further knowledge and ideas.</p>	

3c. Partnership

3c.1 There are clear development priorities regarding nurture principles and practice.

The school has a strong CPD programme. Attachment aware work was undertaken during the lockdown.

3c.2 Resources are deployed to develop nurturing principles and practice.

Two staff members have been trained on the Nurturing Schools programme and then have been given time to disseminate training to other staff at the school. It is recommended that nurture forms part of regular staff meetings. Self-regulating sensory items have been purchased for every class which now has a sensory circuit box; there has been heavy investment in attachment training and team pupils across sites. Re-subscription to Boxall online and investment in the Boxall Whole class books.

3d. Monitoring and evaluation

3d.1 Monitoring and evaluation protocols include evidence of planning, reviewing and evaluating processes for the National Nurturing Schools Programme.

There are planned discussions at SLT meetings regarding the NNSP and coordinating attachment aware and how this interlinks. A satellite class was set up at Tennyson Road Primary school as a solution to excess demand for places at RGPS. This has led to increased liaison between local schools and their staff

The National Nurturing Schools Programme is continually reviewed by the senior leadership team. The school realises this is a continuous journey and is constantly seeking ways to improve their practice to ensure the children's wellbeing is at the forefront of what they do. The school evidently embraces every opportunity of ways to engage nurture at the school.

Assessors Summary

This report does not reflect the hard 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 by the nurture team. Examples of sound practice include:

- It is clear that the nurturing ethos is being driven by Rachel and Sue whose commitment and vision for the school are clear. Senior Leader's encourage, believe, support, nurture and empower their staff within this approach.
- Staff show a drive and commitment to supporting colleagues and pupils alike –staff have been motivated to adapt to this ethos with positive outcomes.
- Parent work is a strength and interviews showed the impact for the pupils and their families of two-way communication.
- Community links are a real strength; the school is a hub of the community.
- Provision is being provided for neurodiverse children and this was an absolute privilege and pleasure to witness.

Recommendation

Rowan Gate Primary School is recommended for the National Nurturing Schools Award

Areas for development	Timescale
The Boxall Profile; As the Boxall is already used so well with individuals and groups develop the use of Boxall at the whole class level consistently across the school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Whole Class Strategy Book to see the power of Boxall to support class teachers and ultimately compare each class data to identify school strengths and areas for development. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the website to include more of a holistic nurture approach and elements to reflect the amount of nurture that takes place at the school 	2025
Nurture Principles; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote and embed nurture principles across the school. So that all staff and parents fully understand them. Share with all stakeholders to ensure they fully understand the principles and have the opportunity to embed them into their projects. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the re-accreditation process for the National Nurturing Schools Programme. 	2025