

St Mark's CE Primary School



'opening doors to the journey of life'
Love Trust Respect Inspire



St Mark's CE Primary School NURTURE GROUP POLICY

2017/2018
Governors
XXXXXX2017

Purpose/aim of the Nurture Group

- To provide a flexible and preventative resource, which is responsive to the particular needs of the children attending our school.
- To provide ongoing assessment and support for children showing signs of emotional, stress and behavioural difficulties with the aim of enabling the child to access the curriculum and participate fully in school life.
- To provide a secure and reliable environment where children can learn by; re-experiencing pre-school nurture from caring adults who actively work towards their successful integration into their mainstream class.
- To help children to learn to behave appropriately, use their curiosity constructively, improve their self-esteem and develop confidence through close and trusting relationships with adults.
- To work in partnership with class teachers and parents to enable consistency of approach, both at home and at school.

2. Description

Nurture Groups are a unique, preventative resource based on well documented psychological theory and research. The Nurture Group is based in its own room and includes an out of class area set up as a home-like area and an area set aside for experiential play and more formal learning.

Children attend for a maximum period of four terms. There will be a maximum of 8 children in the Nurture Group at any one time. The children will be on the register of their mainstream class. Children will spend up to 4 afternoons a week in the nurture group.

The Nurture Group will be staffed by two experienced Nurture Group leaders. These adults will work together as a team. The Nurture Group adults will not be asked to cover for absent staff within the school.

3. Planning, Preparation and Liaison

The Nurture Group Team will be given time to:

- Plan and prepare together
- Meet and work with parents
- Attend case discussions
- Keep records and carry out observations
- Meet with school staff and other professionals
- Where appropriate, attend INSET

4. As the provision develops, outreach work

The Nurture Group will continue to build on existing multi-agency outreach work. Training, advice and support for colleagues in the local area and/or in other schools will be offered. Nurture Group staff will develop links with other professionals as appropriate and work with them to enable the child and the family to be offered the most effective package of support.

5. Referral procedures

All referrals will be made, in consultation with parents, and discussed with the Head of School, Class Teacher and Nurture Group staff.

A variety of assessment procedures will be used to inform referrals. These will include the Boxall Profile and appropriate academic assessments. Formal assessment by an Educational Psychologist is not a pre-requisite for admission, but consultation and discussion of relevant factors may be necessary.

Parents will be kept fully informed about the outcomes of these meetings and the reasons for referral.

6. Entry/admission criteria

Parents will always be consulted prior to a child being placed in the Nurture Group. Placement will be considered for children who are underachieving for social, emotional or behavioural reasons. This could include:

- ☐ Children who are very restless, cannot listen, behave impulsively or aggressively
- ☐ Children who are withdrawn and unresponsive and who have difficulty relating to others

The Boxall Profile will be used to objectively assess children's needs and their suitability for placement in the Nurture Group.

7. Arrangements for review of pupils

Each child is monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Consultations with the Educational Psychologist and other professionals will be arranged if appropriate.

8. Exit criteria

Reintegration will be planned with the Head of School, parents, Class Teacher, Nurture Group team and other Key Adults including the interventions manager.

Where reintegration is not considered appropriate an alternative action plan will be agreed. This may involve assessment at the next stage of the Code of Practice.

9. Parental links

The school will work in partnership with parents. All children attending the Nurture Group require resources beyond those usually provided by the school.

The Head of School is responsible for dealing with any complaints from parents. Complaints which remain unresolved will be referred through the school's normal procedures.

10. Role of the Head of School and Teaching Staff in the Nurture group (SENCO)

To support the Nurture Group Lead and liaise with the Nurture Group team. This includes the development and implementation of IEPs, and or IBPs involvement in formal reviews as required, supporting curriculum development and involvement with the selection and reintegration of pupils.

- To maintain the Nurture Group principle – this is to provide a carefully routined session where there is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- To organise and plan the activities and curriculum of the classroom, bearing in mind the needs of the children.
- To keep records of individual children's progress. (journals)
- To coordinate the work of the Nurture Group assistants
- To liaise with other professionals when appropriate
- To actively work in partnership with parents in the development of their children.
- To participate in INSET where appropriate within school and with the Nurture Group Network
- To carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

The Nurture Group will be evaluated through the school's internal monitoring systems, and through and external inspections including OFSTED.

Why Nurture Groups? How do we do it here, at St Mark's CE Primary School.

Most children start school with assumptions based on early experiences at home, about their capacity to enjoy learning; they are willing to try something new and can learn from their mistakes. They have developed expectations about how adults will behave: whether they will be helpful and interested or disapproving and easily angry. Most children therefore enjoy the challenge of school and will be supported at home if difficulties arise.

However, in some classes there are children who arrive in school without having the necessary positive early experiences. This could be for very many different reasons depending on their personal situation. For them, the complex activities and bustle of a large class can be overwhelming: they could be unable to listen or take in what the teacher says; they could be easily distracted and quickly feel defeated. Some withdraw; others express their frustration by aggressive or impulsive behaviour more typical of a toddler.

The Principles of Nurture

Six important principles underpin the organisation and ethos of a nurture group.

- 1. Children's learning is understood developmentally** – the foundations of learning begin at birth and develop via a close relationship with an adult. Independence develops through dependence. Social empathy as well as learning develops from being thought about, valued and encouraged. Staff in the nurture group respond to each child at whatever emotional or social age s/he appears to be with the appropriate degree of control and nurture. The quality of this response enables the child to move on. Children's developmental progress is assessed through the Boxall

Profile handbook.

2. The nurture room offers a safe base – there is a structured to the day which is predictable, adults who are reliable and firm and can set boundaries without being punitive. Children see two adults working together and supporting each other. This provides security and reassurance. The nurture group room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of children's relationship with each other and with the staff.

3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing - nurture is listening, being responsive, remembering and engaging in reciprocal, shared activities such as play, having meals, reading, talking about events and feelings. Children respond to being valued and being thought of as individuals. This involves calling the children by their name, noticing and praising every small achievement; nothing is hurried in nurture groups.

4. Language is understood as a vital means of communication – Language is more than a skill to be learnt, it is the way of putting feelings into words. Nurture group children often 'act out' their feelings as they lack the vocabulary to 'name' how they feel. In nurture groups the informal opportunities for talking and sharing, e.g welcoming the children into the group or having breakfast together are as important as the more formal lessons teaching language skills. Words are used instead of actions to express feelings and opportunities are created for extended conversations or encouraging imaginative play to understand the feelings of others.

5. All behaviour is communication –Understanding what a child

is communicating through behaviour helps staff to respond in a firm but not-punitive way by not being provoked or discouraged. If the child can sense their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. The adult makes the link between the external/internal worlds of the child. This principle underlines the adult response to the children's often challenging or difficult behaviour. 'Given what I know about this child and their development what is this child trying to tell me?'

6. Transitions are significant in the lives of children – the nurture group helps the child make the difficult transition from home to school. However, on a daily basis there are numerous transitions the child makes, e.g between sessions and classes and between different adults. Changes in routine are invariably difficult for vulnerable children and need to be carefully managed with preparation and support.

Our nurture group is called, Nurture. This name was chosen by the children when the nurture group was first developed in school in 2016. Children attend nurture group for up to 4 afternoons per week. The group has a maximum of 8 children and its composition is carefully structure to create a balance and functional group.

What does the Nurture Group Leader do?

To run the nurture group with the support and guidance of the Head of School and to

- Be involved in formal reviews as required; to support curriculum development;
- Be involved with the selection and re-integration of pupils

- Maintain the Nurture Group principles- this is to provide a carefully structured session where this is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like atmosphere.
- Organise and plan the activities and curriculum of the classroom, bearing in mind the needs of the children.
- Keep records of individual children's progress
- Co-ordinate the work of the Nurture Group assistant.
- Liaise with other professionals when appropriate.
- Activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children.
- Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities.
- Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

Teaching and Learning The Nurture children have their own themed curriculum which has a large emphasis on PSHE, Social and emotional learning. There are clear links to other core and foundation subjects. Activities are planned around a termly theme to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. Weekly planning which where possible incorporate the progression of key skills is undertaken by the Nurture Group Leader, with an oversight by the Head of School; with planning then forwarded to the class teachers.

Each afternoon follows a similar pattern divided into 6 parts.

Welcome and circle time – a calming time where children are given the opportunity to share news and develop listening

and speaking skills. It includes a structured circle time focusing on a key-theme.

First Task- Adult led activity – this session is a curriculum based activity (with clear learning objectives and planned activities) where children work independently in their curriculum activity books without interruption from peers.

Second Task – Self chosen child activity – this session is about collaboration and successful interaction between the peer group. It gives the child an opportunity to develop social skills and build relationships through play based activities.

Snack time – this part of the afternoon aims to provide opportunities to socialise with peers in an adult setting. Children take responsibility for tasks relating to serving drinks and snacks.

Celebration time – this is time for reflection, praise and celebration. Children have an opportunity to identify and praise other children in the group. Throughout the afternoon children's achievements are acknowledged and celebrated and, where necessary, adult intervention takes place to develop and support skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Identification and Referral

The nurture group currently supports a range of children across school both in Key Stage 1 and 2. The identification process initially takes place during the Summer term before the child begins their

new academic year.

Boxall Profiles – this is a series of questions covering various aspects of a child's social and emotional development. It provides a clear and personalised picture of a child's areas of need.

From the Boxall profiles, a group of up to 8 children are identified to form the group. This grouping can be flexible to include other children in some of the sessions. Children will leave and join the group as progress is made.

Parents are informed and invited to an informal session with the group leaders.

Involving Parents

- Parental support is vital to the child's progress
- Parents are fully involved and consulted about selection processes.
- Communication between nurture group staff and parents is critical
- Parents should be made to feel a part of the nurture group experience
- Parents are invited to nurture group events regularly
- Parents are welcome to meet with nurture group staff any time after the school day.

Assessment The Boxall Profile (which allows for an individual picture of the child's social and emotional needs) is used as the assessment tool. This is carried out termly in order for staff to be aware of any progress or change in the areas of need to be developed. Alongside the formal assessment process is the informal, daily assessment through the daily record sheets

kept up to date by nurture group staff. These are recorded electronically and copies are forwarded to the appropriate class teachers at the end of each week. Children are assessed termly in order to establish the impact the Nurture group is having on their academic progress. This is undertaken at half termly progress meetings with teachers, the Head of School, the intervention manager and the Nurture lead.

Re-integration

The most effective length of time to be a member of a nurture group is 2-4 terms. At any time throughout this, depending on the progress of the child, a re-integration programme may begin.

This programme is developed on an individual basis for each child to slowly build them back into their mainstream class on a full-time basis. The re-integration process is fully supported by nurture group staff, the pupil, class teacher and parents.

Staffing

Our Nurture group has 2 regular members of highly skilled staff who have all participated in elements of the Nurture Group training.

Staff Absence

In order to maintain consistency and security the nurture group is never covered by supply teachers. In the event of staff absence the members of the group will work with if possible nurture trained member of staff or the Head of School may provide short term cover. However, if this is not possible the children whom access this intervention will remain with their mainstream class.

Visitors to the Nurture Group

Visitors can cause disruption and change to an otherwise ordered and structured day. Any change from routine can be difficult for some children therefore visitors to the group should always be pre-arranged in order to prepare the children for what will happen. It is best to involve the children in the preparation for the visit – making invitations, planning the menu, setting the table etc.

It is important for the children's class teachers to feel a part of what is happening in the nurture group and to carry the principles back to their classroom to provide consistency.

Arrangements to Monitor and Review

This policy was written in consultation with staff and Governors. It should be read alongside other policies in school (Behaviour, SEN, Equal Opportunities etc)