



Spalding Parish Church of England
Day School

Nurture Group Policy

November 2015

OVERVIEW OF NURTURE GROUPS

Nurture Groups were started in 1969 by Marjorie Boxall, an educational Psychologist employed by the Inner London Education Authority and based in Hackney. Large numbers of young children were entering primary school with severe emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, leading to unmanageable rates of referral for placement in special schools.

Marjorie Boxall understood the difficulties presented by most of these children as the outcome of impoverished early nurturing. Lacking an adequate experience of being cherished and attended to, they were not able to make trusting relationships with adults or to respond appropriately to other children. They were unready to meet the social and intellectual demands of school life, a failure which was further damaging their already fragile self-confidence and self-esteem.

The remedy was to place these children in 'nurture groups', classes of 10-12 children with a teacher and an assistant, whose brief was to meet the children at the developmental stage they had reached and to support them in meeting learning goals step by step. As the children felt accepted and valued, their confidence grew and they began to learn. 80% of them were able to return full-time to their base class and make good progress.

NURTURE GROUP PRINCIPLES

The Nurture Group Network's six principles, which encapsulate nurture group theory and practice:

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

Ref: Lucas, S., Insley, K. and Buckland, G (2006) Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve, The Nurture Group Network

THE NURTURE GROUP AT SPALDING PARISH CHURCH OF ENGLAND DAY SCHOOL

OBJECTIVES

- To respond to the individual needs of children attending our school so that they are better able to learn.
- To provide children with a positive experience of attachment which will support them to make new attachments more readily.
- To provide on-going assessment and support for children showing signs of emotional stress and behavioural difficulties which are preventing them from accessing the curriculum and developing social skills.
- To understand what is hindering learning and respond appropriately in order to progress learning.
- To work in partnership with class teachers, parents and outside agencies to ensure consistency of approach, both at school and at home.
- To provide a safe, secure and predictable environment where children can learn.
- To develop confidence and self-esteem.
- To prevent possible exclusion.

AIMS

- To have a predictable, calm and purposeful environment and timetable free from many curriculum pressures.
- To re-experiencing early years nurture from a caring adult who will actively work towards their successful reintegration into their mainstream class.
- To develop trusting relationships between adults and children, building confidence, reliability and strong attachments.
- To develop social skills and self-esteem.
- To help children to learn how to behave appropriately and make good choices through adult modelling and positive commentary.
- To support children to 'settle to learn' in the classroom environment.
- To develop basic skills in English and Mathematics.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NURTURE GROUP

Our Nurture Group is based in the school's nurture room, which has a homelike environment with areas set aside for experimental play, formal learning and for experiencing and developing the social skills required for preparing food and eating together. It provides a modified curriculum based on the principles advocated by Marjorie Boxall. At Spalding Parish Church of England Day School, we run a 'Classic Nurture Group', which is open for four and a half days each week.

The Nurture Group offers both full time and part time places:

Full time places

Full time places will be offered to Key Stage 1 pupils only, who have been identified with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which are impacting upon their ability to access the curriculum and preventing them from making progress.

Ideally these children will attend for up to four (long) terms, but this will be flexible based upon individual needs. There will be a maximum of 8 school based, full time places in the Nurture Group at any one time. These pupils will register in their main class and then be collected and taken to the nurture room. The Nurture Group will function for four and a half days a week. The children will spend Friday afternoon in their mainstream classes to maintain their relationships with their peers and class staff and position in their class.

The children will join their class and peers for collective worship, play times, lunchtimes and PE lessons.

Part time places

Part time places will be for pupils from across Key Stages 1 and 2, who have been identified with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, which are impacting upon their social and emotional development.

There will be a maximum of 4 school based, part time places in the Nurture Group at any one time, and these children will attend sessions in the nurture group in the afternoons only.

THE ROLE OF NURTURE GROUP STAFF

The Nurture Group will be staffed by two HLTAs for five mornings and for four afternoons each week. Their role will be as follows:

- All nurture staff will work closely with class teaching staff to ensure successful communications and transitions.
- The nurture staff will liaise with Key Stage 1 staff in order to plan English, Maths, Phonics and Handwriting lessons each morning.
- The nurture staff will plan social intervention activities to take place each afternoon.
- All nurture staff will use the Boxall Profile to provide both baseline and continuous assessments.
- All nurture staff will carry out observations and keep detailed records.

- The nurture staff will meet and work with parents and outside agencies on a regular basis.
- The nurture staff may attend case discussions, TAC meetings and review meetings.
- All nurture staff will have appropriate continuous training.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR NURTURE GROUP

The features of our Nurture Group are key to making a positive impact upon the pupils in the group. Our Nurture Group provides the following:

- Clear rules and routines
- Consistency of approach
- Clear and high expectations of behaviour
- Firm boundaries and sanctions
- Positive and nurturing relationships between the adults and pupils

The use of 'Positive Commentary' between the two adults is key to the success of the group. Both adults model positive relationships and praise the pupils' behaviour indirectly to one another and provide a running commentary on their behaviour. This provides a narrative which explains our thoughts on the pupils' behaviour.

CURRICULUM

Full time places (Key Stage 1 only)

A focus will continue to remain upon English, Maths and Phonics. The Nurture Group Practitioner will liaise closely with the class teachers and adapt the whole class planning to suit the individual needs of the pupils in the Nurture Group, whilst continuing to provide similar learning opportunities. Whilst in the Nurture Group, the pupils' progress and attainment will become the responsibility of the Nurture Group teacher. Alongside this, work will be planned to develop the pupils' social, emotional and behaviour skills using the Boxall Profile assessment tool.

Part time places (Key Stages 1 & 2)

For these places, the focus will be upon social, emotional and behaviour skills through the use of social intervention work, planned for by the HLTA to meet individual and group needs using the Boxall Profile assessment tool.

ENTRY CRITERIA

Children who would be considered appropriate for the Nurture Group may be children who are:

- emotionally insecure and/or showing lack of self-esteem or trust
- withdrawn and unresponsive, showing poor social skills, unable to share, uncooperative
- having a poor attention span
- demonstrating immature behaviour
- behaving aggressively, impulsively or inappropriately
- having difficulty integrating into their class and being flexible to change
- struggling to follow adult instructions and expectations

In most cases, children will only be considered if their difficulties are causing a barrier to their learning and ability to access the curriculum.

Children may also need support when they have been exposed to the following:

- Domestic Abuse
- Parental separation e.g. Divorce
- Bereavement

REFERRALS

Staff will be required to complete a 'Nurture Group Referral Form' identifying pupils causing concern who may benefit from a place in the Nurture Group. Forms will then be given to a member of the nurture staff. Alongside this a Boxall Profile assessment needs to be completed.

Referrals will be discussed at the termly 'Referral Meeting', which includes the Head Teacher and/or Deputy Head Teacher, SENCo, Nurture Group Practitioner, HLTA and where possible, 'Family Matters' Non-Statutory Social Worker. A decision will be made at this meeting to do one of the following:

- Decline the referral since the pupil's needs can be met in an alternative way
- Decline the referral following completion of the Boxall Profile, due to normal developmental levels and find alternative methods to meet the pupil's needs
- Accept the referral and offer a full time place in the nurture group
- Accept the referral and offer a part time place in the nurture group
- Accept the referral and offer individual support with the 'Family Matters' Social Worker
- Accept the referral and offer family support with the 'Family Matters' Social Worker

Referrals will then be discussed with parents before places are offered to children and families.

Parents will be fully involved throughout the process and regular meetings will be held, which will include nurture staff, class teacher and any outside agencies where necessary.

ASSESSMENT

-The Boxall Profile completed by the class teacher will be used as a baseline assessment upon entry into the Nurture Group.

-The Boxall Profile will be completed every long term in order to track progress. The Nurture Group staff will complete the Boxall Profile for those pupils attending the Nurture Group full time. Class teachers will be responsible for completing Boxall Profiles for those pupils attending the group part time, and those pupils who have previously attended the group, so that the impact of their transition back to class can be tracked.

-Alongside the Boxall Profile, Teacher Assessments will be used to track curriculum progress.

REINTEGRATION INTO CLASS

Reintegration will be planned with the Head Teacher, class teacher and Nurture Group staff with full involvement of parents. Children will gradually re-join their class with continuing input from Nurture Group staff until all those involved feel confident that a successful reintegration has been achieved.

A personalised transition plan will be put into place based upon individual needs to ensure that reintegration is successful.

Where reintegration is not appropriate an alternative action plan will be agreed. This may involve further assessments and the involvement of Outside Agencies to offer advice.

'FAMILY MATTERS'

'Family Matters' is a support package for both pupils and families led by a Non-Statutory Social Worker. 'Family Matters' will link closely to the Nurture Group, but support pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs individually by completing pieces of work. 'Family Matters' can also offer pieces of work for parents and/or families in need of support. Referrals to 'Family Matters' will be completed in the same way as referrals to the Nurture Group, however a specific referral form will also need to be completed by either the Nurture Group staff, Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Signed: _____ Head teacher

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

Date: _____

To be reviewed in: _____