

Greenvale Primary School



NURTURE GROUP POLICY

Policy Date	January 2025
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs A Allnutt
Review Date	January 2027

Introduction

Our Nurture Group provides a modified curriculum in an environment based on the six principles advocated by Marion Bennathon and Marjorie Boxall.

These principles are:

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

The groups are an intervention for those children who are unable to access the learning successfully in their mainstream classroom, due to any issue relating to their social, emotional or mental health (SEMH)

The following types of children are considered for the inclusion in the group.

- Those who appear emotionally insecure, which could present itself as a lack of self-acceptance, low self-worth or a lack of trust.
- Children who are withdrawn and unresponsive.
- Children with poor social skills who cannot share or are demanding or un-cooperative.
- Those with a poor attention span.
- Children who demonstrate immature behaviour.
- Children who behave aggressively, impulsively or inappropriately in other ways.
- Children who find change upsetting.
- Children who appear unable to integrate into a mainstream classroom.
- Bereavement
- Family illness or break-up

The nurture group provision will always adapt to the current needs of our pupils. Therefore, the offer to our pupils could be one of the following models:

- 1 group that attends a morning and afternoon session
- 2 separate groups, one morning and one in the afternoon
- 3 separate groups, each with a different focus

There are 3 trained members of staff at Greenvale Primary School who have undertaken the three day accredited training from Nurture.uk:

Faye Dunn: Inclusions Manager
Joanne Williams: nurture teacher
Caroline Brooker: nurture HLTA

We also run lunchtime Dog Mentoring sessions to support pupils with their social emotional and mental health needs that may not require a place in the nurture group.

Our Aims

We aim to provide a small-scale setting in which children can experience nurturing care from two consistent adults, who actively work towards enabling their successful re-integration back to class, full time.

We maintain a predictable, calm, purposeful environment and timetable. Where appropriate, curriculum pressures are broken down into manageable activities, and at all times there is a focus on meaningful, practical activities that promote managing feelings, making relationships and effective

communication skills.

We develop well-being and social skills through praise, positive communication (verbal and non-verbal) and promoting a sense of team work.

We aim to develop relationships between adults and children, building trust, confidence and reliability.

We develop children's responsibility for themselves and towards others

We help children learn appropriate behaviour through modelling and praising positive interactions between all members of the group, adults and children

We help children learn to make decisions and wise choices through understanding the consequences of certain ways of behaving

We work in partnership with parents, carers and teaching to achieve consistency of approach at home and at school

We provide on-going assessment using the Boxall Profile

Greenvale Primary School has a long standing affiliation to The Dog Mentor Programme and our therapy dogs are a full time presence in all nurture provision.

For some pupils this will prevent incidents that require ABC behaviour logs and ultimately, exclusions.

Inclusive Practice

In the Nurture Group, we recognise that every child matters and aim to respond to each child's needs, taking into consideration their:

- Cultural background
- Life experiences
- Strengths
- Communication needs
- Emotional and social needs
- Developmental needs
- Physical needs.
- SEND

Setting

The Nurture Group comprises of a classroom, outdoor learning space and a woodland area. Our nurture provision is known as Robins class. The Nurture Group also has 2 full time therapy dogs who are supported by Jenny Duckworth and her team at The Dog Mentor.

The classroom has a homely feel and is a smaller version of their own classroom base. It has the added benefit of a kitchen area. We aim to retain all the key features of their classroom base to keep the teaching and learning consistent, with added creative features, which give the room a "nurturing" atmosphere.

The outdoor learning space, again, provides key classroom features; places to read and write, use maths and have creative and messy opportunities, with the added benefit of being outside. It is covered and can be used in all weathers. It also provides a utility area for preparing for and returning from the woodland area.

The woodland area is central to our nurture provision. It is a large outdoor space that is different to the outdoor area as it is kept as natural as possible. There is a log cabin, pond, digging area, mud kitchen, bug hotel and ample space to explore and move around. The main purpose is for children to

engage in child initiated play in a natural, outdoor space, to experience fun and joy, develop creativity, imagination and problem solving skills. The woodland area is used daily, throughout the year. The only reason it is not used is temporarily, in the deep winter when the mud may become problematic. The experiences that the children have in the woodland are a rich stimulus for their learning, both in terms of their nurture targets and across the curriculum. The opportunities in the woodland evolve with each cohort of children and their individual interests. This makes the woodland a very special aspect of our nurture provision. (see attached Appendix 6 for Rationale for the Woodland Area)

The Role of the Adults

The role of our nurture staff is to sustain nurturing relationships with the children who attend. They are good role models, demonstrating appropriate and positive behaviour that is consistent and continuous. Our nurture staff recognise, that it is through a positive and affirming relationship, that a child can perceive themselves as worthwhile.

The Curriculum

The curriculum in the nurture group is always designed to meet the changing needs of its current cohort. Therefore, planning is revised with the provision maps, or on a bi - termly basis.

To ensure the teaching adheres to the 6 Principles of Nurture:

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

The learning is a blend of individual Boxall targets and priority areas, academic targets as set by class teachers and child initiated free play. It is important to note that pupils enter and leave the nurture group throughout the academic year, it is an individual journey. Therefore, our curriculum must remain fluid and adaptable for the most part, in terms of its content and activity style but there are aspects of our curriculum which must remain constant. These are detailed below.

Understanding feelings, emotions and using the language that communicates this.

Each session begins with a welcome time to gauge emotional presentations within each group and, use resources such as the 'Zones of Regulation,' or whichever resources are best suited to the needs of the group. Pupils are encouraged to share how they are feeling and discuss ways to share more positive feelings and how we can support pupils with less happy emotions. We discuss our targets and what we need to do to achieve them. This places the Boxall targets as the primary learning in the curriculum.

Positive social communication.

We sit as a group at the table, for snack time, or use the sharing of food and drink as a pleasurable addition to the learning. Pupils help to prepare food and drinks for their peers and having polite conversation around the table together, or whilst enjoying a snack together, is the priority in this activity. This gives our time together a family feel and is very bonding for pupil friendships and for pupils to build trust in the adults.

Maintaining academic skills

Our morning group always has a literacy focus where a book for the week that explores emotions and values, is used for shared reading, initiating play, verbalising writing ideas and working on writing the

perfect sentence. This allows nurture pupils to maintain the skills they need to continue their learning back in their class bases.

Any maths activities focus on number and place value. This ensures that pupils maintain their maths skills for working back in their class base. We ensure that our continuous provision reflects any weekly activities so that pupils can rehearse their learning as their confidence to use and apply their understanding of number.

It is important to note it is not possible to cover all academic subjects within the nurture group. We operate a best fit approach, where the social, emotional and mental health needs of the current cohort of pupils are the priority and the Boxall Profile priority areas are the primary focus of the learning. We then add in academic elements for teaching and learning that best fit the needs of the pupils and their timetabled learning in their class base. Therefore, some groups that run may require play and social communication as their focus for learning, other groups may incorporate maths or writing as the vehicle for social and emotional learning. Other groups have an art or creative focus. As ever, the woodland area is a constant feature of our provision and can be used in many ways to support progress towards Boxall targets and priority areas.

Assessment

Children involved in the Nurture Group are assessed using the Boxall Profile every two terms. These assessments form the basis of their targets. Boxall data, targets with steps to success and progress is all recorded using the Edukey Provision Maps which class teachers and parents have access to.

Progress is recorded using an evidence based approach, using photographs and observational notes. These notes are then used to feed back into the planning. This ensures that the activities respond to the changing needs of the children to ensure progress towards their nurture and academic targets.

Referral Procedure

If a child is demonstrating any need relating to their social, emotional and mental health, or, when a vacancy arises in the Nurture Group, class teachers are invited to put forward children who they feel would benefit from the group. The nurture teacher will always attend termly pupil progress meetings providing class teachers with the opportunity to discuss any pupils who are presenting with concerns. Also, our family and parenting practitioner will put pupils forward based on her knowledge of family situations or outside agency involvement. These children are then assessed using the Boxall Profile by both the nurture staff and the class teachers to ensure an in depth discussion of the child's needs.

If the nurture provision is right for an individual child then a place is offered and a letter will go home to the parents/carers, following a discussion with the class teacher. Consent is obtained in writing from the parents/carers at this stage.

Please see Appendix 3 for the referral pack.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We aim to keep our parents/carers informed of their child's progress and provide them with support and advice.

As part of our provision there is a rolling programme of parent/carer consultations, where they can meet with the nurture staff, see their children's work and discuss any concerns or issues they might have. These are carried out during whole school Parent Consultation Evenings and as the group does not run on Friday's, the nurture teacher is available to parents on a regular basis or needs led, depending on the family situation and the individual child's needs.

Reintegration

The point at which a child is reintegrated into their classroom full-time is based on the results of the Boxall Profile, the nurture staff assessments and the class teacher's observations.

When a child is thought to be ready to return to the classroom, a programme of gradual reintegration is initiated.

The process of reintegration starts with the needs of the child. This could take the form of attending lessons of interest back in their classroom base, and gradually building back up to full time, or attending a separate social skills group which leads to spending time back in class before or after the group, and again building in more time back in class around this.

The child's return to class is celebrated as a major achievement to have met all their nurture targets.

Nurture staff discuss their progress regularly with the class teacher and are always available to the children once they are back in class. Any future support or strategies that might be required are discussed and implemented.

Success Criteria

We shall be a successful Nurture Group if:

- We provide affirming, positive and manageable sessions.
- The incentives used are seen as desirable by the children.
- What is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is made clear.
- Any inappropriate behaviour is quickly dealt with, with the individual needs of the child considered.
- The group routines provide security.
- The activities are tailored for individuals to work towards success in achieving their targets.
- The children are given unconditional warmth and acceptance.
- There is a focus on group building activities.
- The children have greater attention and motivation back in class.
- The children gain a more positive identity than the one they have established elsewhere.
- The children gain confidence and are more willing to take on new challenges.
- The sense of success enables the children to put more effort into their work.

Appendix 6

Rationale for the Woodland Area

Appendix 6

Greenvale Primary School

Robins Nurture Group Rationale for the Woodland Area

“Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you... the storms their energy while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.”

John Muir, naturalist, muddyfaces.co.uk

Our Woodland Area

This is a fenced area, comprising a pond, log cabin, raised beds, shelter, log seating areas, trees and open spaces. It is grassed with some stepping stone pathways. It is an outdoor space for any adults to use for group work. It is large enough to accommodate a whole class, if needed. There are no barriers to use, for example any specific training requirements, just knowledge of the risk assessment to ensure safety during its use.

Risk Assessments

The Woodland Area is part of the daily safety check, carried out by the school caretaker. There is also a separate risk assessment carried out, daily, prior to use. These are kept in a file in the Robins Classroom, as the nurture groups are the main users of the area. Pupils also take part in their own risk assessment, on entry to the woodland as part of the structure of the session and is an important part of learning how to become responsible and mindful of risk, when using an outdoor space.

Purpose

The Woodland is an outdoor space that can be utilised in any way an adult wishes, to suit the learning needs of the groups / class that wish to use it. It is primarily used by the Robins nurture groups and Dog Mentoring sessions.

Year Round Learning

We intend to use the woodland area throughout the year so that pupils experience the impact of the seasons and the weathers they bring. The small joys of coming in from the cold, feeling the warmth of the spring sun and enjoying extended sessions outdoors in the summer are a part of everyday life that engage the whole brain and lay down neural pathways from experiencing memory making activities. There are, of course, days when the weather is really set against a positive learning experience. We make a judgment that is appropriate for the pupils as to whether we opt to not use the woodland. From experience, this usually means that use in Term 3 can be light, however this is not set in stone.

Resources

Waterproof clothing, gloves, wellies and a range of equipment and tools are available for use and can be accessed from the Robins outdoor area.

Why a Woodland Area?

This natural, outside space is a valuable resource that enables our school to enhance the 6 Principles of Nurture, as set out by nurtureuk, into an outside space, thus providing an extension to our nurture teaching. The following chart shows how using an outdoor space as we do, provides us to nurture their minds, increase a sense of wonder and help them reach potential in all aspects of their life.

Children's learning is understood developmentally	The classroom offers a safe base
<p>Physical development: Aerobic exercise, gross motor skills from movement, fine motor skills from handling tools and equipment</p> <p>Cognitive development: Exploring and communicating, inventing games, organisational skills, attention and listening, connecting with and learning about natural environment, applying class based skills to another purpose, perseverance, engaging in adult / peer led activities</p> <p>Sensory development: Improving distance vision, sound placement, natural changes in daylight strengthen eye muscles, sensory exploration, listening to distance sounds, observation skills, exercising heavy and light touch, recognising environmental smells</p>	<p>Developing confidence: Perseverance to become acquainted with a new environment and feel a sense of belonging, stretching confidence in class into a different environment, strengthening character and personality by engaging with others in a different space, feel a sense of ownership and protection of a natural environment, laying down of positive experiences to produce long lasting happy memories, a sense of freedom in a safe space, class based sources and triggers for anxiety are not present, being able to achieve in new ways</p>
Nurture is important for the development of wellbeing	Language is a vital means of communication
<p>5 Ways to Wellbeing:</p> <p>Give – contributing to a game, sharing resources with friends, taking part in maintenance of the natural environment, helping others in an activity</p> <p>Connect – spending time in nature, the outdoors as a therapeutic environment, discovering others from a new perspective</p> <p>Take notice – look, listen, smell, feel natural elements and weathers, engage with people and living things</p> <p>Be Active – getting ready to go, the walk to the woodland, practical tasks and play, motivation to move and explore</p>	<p>Process of Speaking and Listening</p> <p>Listening: A place to develop distance listening, different sound textures and resonance, sound placement, motivation to give purposeful attention</p> <p>Processing: Identifying sounds and voices, paying purposeful attention to what is heard, developing vocabulary through modelling in practical tasks, developing comprehension through visual learning</p> <p>Understanding: All activity in the woodland is practical and active therefore dual coding and will</p>

<p>Learn – about nature, learning with each other, taking class based learning outside, learning about yourself</p>	<p>support the understanding of phrases, vocabulary and concepts Processing responses: Using existing knowledge and experiences, stretching this into new understanding and applying new and existing vocabulary and phrases Confidence: Feeling able to speak and communicate in an environment free of class based anxieties Responding: Developing voice range and volume in an outdoor environment, practical tasks value you and whatever you can contribute not your perceived value or academic knowledge</p>
<p>All behaviour is communication</p>	<p>Transitions are significant in the lives of children</p>
<p>Emotional development: Fresh air reduces stress, learning about yourself and your capabilities, learning about others in a different environment, engaging with others without class based triggers for anxiety, sense of achievement without academic pressures, making and maintaining friendships, communicating with others, sharing, turn taking, developing perseverance, developing self-efficacy, enabling calm, learning to appreciate nature and the environment</p>	<p>Developing resilience: Small steps of challenge to transfer skills and attributes from one safe space to another, accepting differences in experiences do not automatically result in a negative, positive experiences come from transition too, building confidence to use skills in a range of places, building bonds with familiar peers through experiencing transitions during the school day.</p>

Therefore, the use of the Six Principles of Nurture as a clear framework for the Rationale for the woodland area ensures that our work links with the whole school visions and aims; 'Nurture, Inspire, Succeed,' enabling our most vulnerable pupils to succeed, learn and become the best they can be.