



Nurture Groups Policy



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Governing body signature:	

Our Philosophy

At William Reynolds Primary and Nursery School we believe that each child is a valued individual who needs a secure, caring, and stimulating atmosphere in which to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially. We believe that it is the collective responsibility of our school to ensure that there is a consistency of approach to meeting the needs of all children.

Why Nurture Groups?

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 cases 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.

Quality Mark Award -



Through the work that we do in school in conjunction with "The Nurture Group Network" we have achieved: The Majorie Boxall Quality Mark Award on 3 occasions for our Sparklers Nurture group and have continued to meet standards with our re-accreditations. This award recognises the work of nurture groups and is an accreditation scheme for excellence in nurturing.

The QMA re-accreditation is a real honour for the school and is reflected not only of the hard work of the pupils but the dedication of the staff, and provided a hard evidential base for the often quoted statement that **nurture works**.

"Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress and are well supported. Nurture clubs support pupils to improve both their academic and personal skills."
Ofsted report July 17.

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 format to the day which is predictable, and 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 Aims

- ✓ Develop children's self-esteem
- ✓ Develop children's social skills
- ✓ Provide a calm environment
- ✓ Build relationships between adults and children
- ✓ Help children grow in confidence, trust and reliability
- ✓ Provide a secure environment in which children learn

- ✓ Provide children with nurturing care from two caring adults, whose aim is to work towards their successful re-integration.
- ✓ Help children learn the consequences of certain behaviours
- ✓ Work in partnership with parents and school staff to ensure a consistent approach
- ✓ Provide continuous assessment through the "Boxall Profile"
- ✓ Prevent possible exclusion.

The role of the Nurture Group Leader

To run the nurture group with the support and guidance of the SENDCo 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 including visits from local Community Support Officers.
- Activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil craft sessions.
- Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities.
- Manage the Nurture Group budget.
- Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures.

The Nurture environment

The sparklers and Rockets room has five areas which provide a secure, safe base for learning. These are:

- Kitchen area
- Dining area
- Play area
- Comfy area
- Work area

Identification

The nurture groups currently support a range of children across the school from Y2 to Y6. The identification process usually takes place during the summer term before the child begins their new academic year. However, the school is very adaptable to meeting individual pupil's needs and it may be necessary to place a child within one of these groups at any time throughout the academic year.

Children are identified for our Nurture groups through discussions with staff, SLT, parents and observations which may also include outside agencies such as Behaviour Support, LSAT or Educational Psychologist, BEAM or BEEU (0-25 mental health and well-being service) or Early Help. assessed prior to joining the group - using the Boxall profile and observations from class teachers and Nurture group staff. Boxall Profiles are 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, 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.

Our Nurture Groups

In response to our pupil's needs from September 2009, we have added a further 3 nurture groups. Currently William Reynolds Primary School operates 3 Nurture groups (1 in the morning and 2 in the afternoon) supporting children from Y2 to Y6. There is a clear criteria agreed by the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) in identifying children to be supported in the appropriate nurture group.

Morning Nurture (both groups run daily from 9:00 – 12:30)

A **morning Sparklers** group which supports children to follow an age appropriate curriculum for literacy, numeracy and science following teachers planning and learning and activities. There are 3 adults in the room, teaching and learning is led by a Learning Mentor with a pastoral support assistant (who has completed the Nurture group training) and a support assistant.

A morning **Rockets** group which runs daily from 9:00 – 12:30 and supports children to follow a personalised based curriculum for literacy and numeracy which has been adapted to meet individual needs. There are 3 members of staff to support this group. A behavioural and inclusion manager, a pastoral assistant (who has completed the Nurture group training) and a support assistant.

Afternoon Nurture

We have 2 afternoon nurture groups running daily from 1:30 – 3:15pm. The Rockets group was introduced in September 2019 in response to meeting individual children's complex emotional needs.

Our original afternoon nurture group which was first developed in 2005 is called **Sparklers** (this name was chosen by the children who first attended this group). Children attend

afternoon Sparklers for 5 afternoons per week. The group has a maximum of 12 children and its composition is carefully structure to create a balance and functional group.

"During the inspection, teaching staff were caring at all times and encouraged expectations of exemplary behaviour through humour, tact and clarity. This was particular evident in intervention groups such as Sparklers."

Ofsted report July 17

Teaching and Learning – Afternoon Nurture groups

The Sparklers children follow a PSHE, Social and emotional learning curriculum. Activities are planned to provide a stimulating and fun environment for children. Weekly planning is undertaken by the SENDCo and Nurture Group Leader, with planning then forwarded to the class teachers.

Each afternoon nurture group (Sparklers and Rockets) 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 themes.

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.

"Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy through their choices of food and the importance of exercise. The use of the 'cooking bus from the School Food Trust offered a valuable and enjoyable educational service for the 'Sparklers' nurture group. The lesson reinforced healthy eating in a fun and different way."

Ofsted report July 2017

Online Safety

To support children's learning, pupils may use specific online content or models and images on the computer. These will be carefully selected by the teacher to ensure that they add value or

consolidate the learning and that they are age appropriate and safe. Pupils are also encouraged to use the recommended list of safe websites in their homework books to support learning at home. As part of our commitment to Safeguarding, online access during lessons is carefully planned for and monitored.

Staffing

There is a total of 6 members of highly skilled staff who run and support our Nurture groups. 2 have completed Nurture Group training and all staff are fully trained in Emotion Coaching.

The provision is overseen by [Mrs Liza-Jane Rawlings - Assistant Head & SENDCo](#) (who has also completed the appropriate Nurture group training).

"Leaders ensured that pupils were well supported through the careful deployment of support staff and the effective use of learning mentors and the 'nurture' room."

Ofsted report July 2017

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.

"The school is highly inclusive and welcomes families who move into the immediate locality."

Ofsted July 2017.

Assessment

The online 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. Weekly targets are set for individual children using their Boxall Profile.

Alongside the formal assessment process is the informal, daily assessment through the daily record sheets kept up to date by nurture group staff. These electronic records are forwarded the appropriate class along with further information on whether each individual child has managed to reach their weekly target.

Children are assessed termly in order to establish the impact the Nurture group is having on their academic progress (attainment and progress). This is undertaken by the SENDCo using target tracker and this is then shared with the Nurture group leaders.

Re-integration

The most effective length of time to be a member of a nurture group is 2-4 terms. However, due to the more complex needs that pupils are displaying and the difficulties with accessing BEEU (0-25 mental health and well-being service) there may be instances when this might be longer. 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.

Timescales for re-integration will vary depending on each individual's needs.

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 any of our nurture groups - if possible a nurture trained member of staff or the SENDCo may provide short term cover. However, if this is not possible the children who access this intervention will remain with their mainstream class.

Visitors to Sparklers

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 our Nurture groups where possible is always be pre-arranged in order to prepare the children for what will happen.

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, SEND, Equal Opportunities etc)

The Nurture Groups will be evaluated by the SLT (Senior Leadership Team), through the school's Ofsted inspection as well as The Majorie Boxall Award.