



Carfield

Primary School

Nurture Group Policy: Evolve

Approved: March 2022

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Rationale

At Carfield Primary School, we believe that to enable our pupils to learn effectively, they need to feel safe in their environment and be both socially and emotionally ready to learn. We understand the importance of holistic development and where possible, offer nurturing and enriching experiences to enable the development of the whole child. We recognise that some of our pupils are not always emotionally ready to learn when they come to Carfield Primary School and require an increased level of support for them to access the wider curriculum. For this reason, we offer a Nurture Group (Evolve) for key pupils to support their social and emotional development.

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 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.

Aims

Evolve provides a modified curriculum in an environment based on the six principles of nurture which are as follows:

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

We aim to:

- Encourage the development of positive social relationships with both peers and adults.
- Provide opportunities to understand emotions and develop pupil's self-worth, confidence, motivation, trust, self-esteem and adaptability.
- Provide a safe, calm and nurturing environment, alongside a programme of activities structured to the emotional, social and intellectual needs of each pupils, while keeping them in close contact with their base class.
- Support pupils to understand their behaviour and that behaviours generally have a consequence and to develop strategies to self-regulate emotions and anxieties.
- Support the development of a whole-school nurturing ethos focused on inclusion

Understanding the 6 Principles of Nurture

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 structure to the day which is predictable, adults who are reliable and firm and can set boundaries without being punitive. Children see 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, learning, 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.

The Role of the Nurture Leaders

Evolve is led by two Nurture UK trained Leaders who have completed the 4 day Nurture Network certificate course. The Nurture Leaders - Mrs Shaunna Girling and Mrs Emma Williams are responsible for the following:

- Involvement with the selection, assessment and re-integration of pupils
- Providing a carefully structured session where this is a balance of learning and teaching, affection and structure within a home-like and secure atmosphere
- Plan and conduct activity work in partnership with parents in the development of their children including organising parent/pupil sessions and coffee mornings
- Contribute to report development to SLT as appropriate
- Carry out all Nurture work in line with school policies and procedures
- Support Nurture Group children on trips and whole school activities where appropriate through outreach work
- Attend and promote CPD's for all teachers within the school to raise the profile of the Nurture Provision and values

The staff are supported by the SENCo, Assistant Head teacher and the Head of School.

Referral and Entry Criteria

Initial concerns from a Class Teacher would be discussed informally with the SENCO. Pupils are then discussed at a weekly multi-disciplinary meeting. At this meeting, any concerns will be raised by the SENCO, and appropriate actions identified and put into place to address these concerns. It would generally be the case that a pupil who is identified for the nurture group would be discussed at this meeting and initial wave 2 interventions put into place to address any difficulties. Teachers can also complete our SEN referral form and pass to the SENCO for review.

The following pupils would be considered for a place in the nurture group:

- Pupils who appear emotionally insecure – this may present as a lack of self-acceptance, low self-worth or a lack of trust.
- Pupils who are withdrawn and unresponsive
- Pupils with poor social skills, who cannot share, are demanding or uncooperative.
- Pupils who demonstrate immature behaviour.
- Pupils who behave aggressively, impulsively or inappropriately in other ways.
- Pupils who find change upsetting.
- Pupils who appear unable to integrate into a mainstream classroom.

Should the concerns continue to exist, following wave 2 intervention, the Class Teacher will again liaise with the SENCO who will then consider whether the Nurture Group is the appropriate provision. If approved, observations will be completed by the Nurture Lead Practitioners and the Boxall Profile will be given to the teacher to complete. The Nurture Lead Practitioners will advise the SENCO whether nurture group is an appropriate provision and arrange a meeting with parents if appropriate.

Assessment, Planning and Preparation

Prior to joining the group, all pupils are assessed using the Boxall Profile. From this, targets are developed by the Nurture Lead Practitioners, drawing on the information in the Boxall

Profile as well as experience of the child's behaviour. Boxall Profile assessment will be completed prior to joining the provision and termly to monitor progress, identify areas for development and indicate reintegration. A **strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ)**, a short behavioural screening questionnaire will also be completed by parents/carers. For this reason, targets will be reviewed regularly and adapted as required, dependent on the changing needs of the pupil. The Nurture Lead Practitioners will plan targets to focus on and evaluate each week with the child. This target will be familiar to the child and progress towards this target will be discussed at the end of each session. To support assessment, observations will be completed by the Nurture Lead Practitioners. A log of the child's behaviour will be kept throughout their time in Evolve to facilitate comparisons. A range of nurture-based strategies will be used to support the pupils in developing their social and emotional learning.

Provision:

The provision may be as follows in Evolve:

- Through a puppet or soft toy, the pupils will be introduced to the rules to follow to show good listening. They will be encouraged to demonstrate these rules for themselves and look for good listening in others.
- During talking and listening times, particularly during snack, the pupils will be encouraged to speak relevantly and to wait for their turn, replying to and complimenting others.
- Games and role play will be used to demonstrate behaviours such as fidgeting, distracting and being distracted.
- Puppets, masks, posters and other prompts will be used to encourage the pupils to reflect on how they feel, and on how they can affect the feelings of others.
- The pupils will be encouraged to quickly respond to instructions from all adults but also to operate independently when appropriate and to use their own initiative.
- Positive praise will be used constantly and at every opportunity to encourage the pupils and 'smilies' will be awarded to enable them to feel a sense of success.
- Reflection on the week's achievements regarding their targets will enable the pupils to monitor their own progress.

Review and Reflection time

The Nurture Lead Practitioners will be given one full afternoon per week to plan for the provision, prepare resources and keep up to date with record keeping. Occasional additional sessions may be allocated in discussion with the Senior Leadership Team.

Day-to-Day operation

The nurture group is well structured with a strong sense of routine and familiarity. At present the Nurture Provision operates every morning from 8.45am to 12.00pm, catering for a small group of pupils. Pupils are collected from the yard and returned by the two Nurture Lead Practitioners to their classes.

To ensure that social behaviours are effectively modelled, the Nurture Group is always staffed by two members of staff, both of whom are qualified by the Nurture Group Network.' In the rare event of staff absence, the Head of School will make the decision, dependent on the needs of the pupils and the availability of other staff, as to whether to use another member of the Inclusion Team to support in the group for the day, or whether to

close the provision for the day. In the event of other staff being absent, the Nurture Lead Practitioners will not be called upon to cover absence. The Nurture Group timetable is non-negotiable and should be considered as sacrosanct.

The Nurture Class Lead Practitioners have opportunities for CPD, both internally and externally, for example from the Speech and Language Team and our in-house Educational Psychologist. The Nurture Lead Practitioners are allocated an afternoon of PPA time. During this time, they will jointly plan for the following week, taking account of the pupils' progress so far towards their targets. Plans are annotated to show progress across the course of the week, using effective assessment for learning.

The involvement of Parents, Carers, Other Pupils and Staff

Parents are a key element of nurture work. The involvement of parents is vital to the success of the Nurture Intervention and full involvement in the process is essential. The Nurture Class Lead Practitioners will be available on the playground every morning at 08.30am- 08:45am for parents and carers to contact them and discuss any informal questions or concerns. Parents will be invited into the setting regularly to discuss their child's progress and to understand how the setting works and is supporting the child's needs. Parents will also be invited to social events to interact with their child. All staff will be invited by the pupils to visit the group to join them at snack time or for social events, to enable them to see nurture practice in operation. Class Teachers of the pupils who attend Evolve should attend snack time at least once per term to ensure they see nurture practice in operation and develop an effective relationship with the pupil. Termly meetings between the Nurture Lead Practitioners and the Class Teachers should take place to inform assessment information, as Class Teachers retain the accountability for pupil outcome data. Parent surveys will be completed, on a formal basis, termly to ensure that the views of parents are recorded. Informal viewpoints will be gathered daily through conversations with parents. Should parents require additional support from the Nurture Lead Practitioners, they are able to liaise with them every morning on the playground and request further meetings. The Nurture Lead Practitioners can support parents by providing reward charts or additional resources to support the child's development outside of school.

We allow visitors by appointment only to minimise disruption, allowing Nurture Leaders to prepare children for any changes. Routine changes can be very difficult for some of the children in the provision so we need to ensure that these visits are handled well as to not disrupt progress we have made.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of children's progress and the effectiveness of the nurture group is of paramount importance to maintain high standards of nurture provision. The progress of the individual pupils will be measured through the termly review of the Boxall Profile. This will be reviewed in conjunction with their general assessment data. In addition, the Nurture Group Target Setting document will be used to measure the progress of pupils against individual targets (based on the Boxall Profile). The Nurture Provision will be subject to regular monitoring in line with the SLT monitoring schedule. Children's progress is continually monitored with a daily review of the session and weekly observations of the children. This is presented in a learning journey where progress is tracked carefully. Half

termly meetings are held with staff to review the progress of individual children attending nurture. Additionally, class teachers complete Boxall Profiles each term with the nurture leaders and regular meetings are held with nurture leaders, class teachers and the SENCo to review reintegration or other relevant issues.

Reintegration

At Carfield Primary School, we place an emphasis on ensuring that the pupils within our nurture class are ready to be successfully reintegrated back into their mainstream class. If a pupil is not ready to be reintegrated, their time within the nurture setting will not be limited but this reintegration process will be defined by the child's development. When the Nurture Practitioners feel that a child is ready to reintegrate back into the setting, using evidence from their Boxall Profile and consultation with their base class teacher, they will carry out an additional assessment of the child to further understand their strengths and development areas. From this point, a reintegration plan will be derived, focusing on a staggered reintegration to ensure success. When the Nurture Lead Practitioners consider a child ready for reintegration, they will meet with the class teacher to discuss the pupil's readiness for reintegration. A discussion with the child will determine the level of celebration when leaving the group and the pupil will be given the opportunity to invite other pupils or staff and parents to this event. The class teachers are supported by the transition back to class through our nurture leaders. Class teachers also have access to staff surgeries with the SENCo or in-house Educational Psychologist.

The Involvement of Other Staff

To ensure that all staff understand the principles of nurture and understand how the Nurture Provision contributes to the holistic development of the child, regular training will be delivered for all staff. This will be supported by the SENCo and our in-house Educational Psychologist.