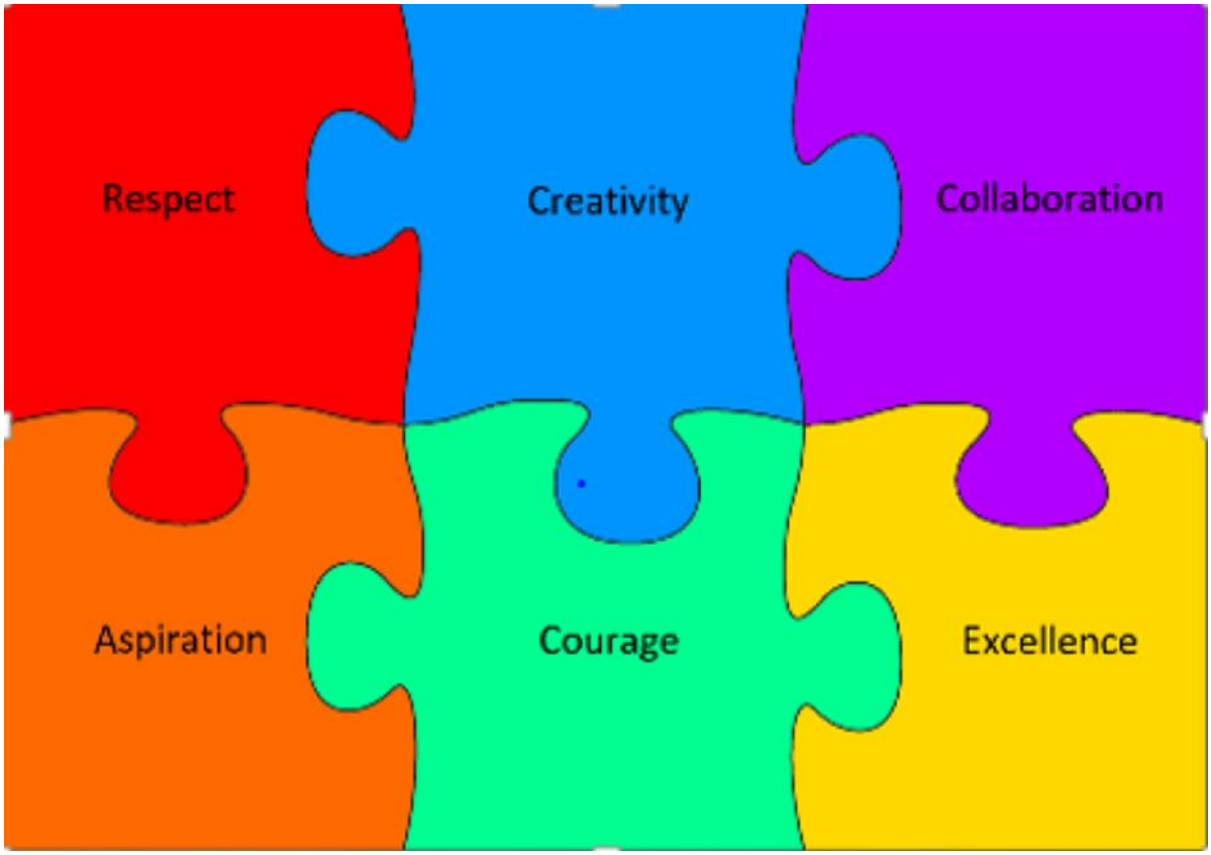
Randlay Primary School and Nursery

Nurture Policy



Ratified: November 2021
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Person responsible for overseeing the implementation: K. White

Introduction:

"Sometimes children need just a little extra support to help them on their way to learning, making
friends and growing into confident and successful young people. Nurture groups can help provide that support for children to give them the skills they need to do well at school, make friends and deal more confidently and calmly with the trials and tribulations of life, for life".

The Nurture Group Network, helping children and young people to succeed.

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 develops 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 assessment.

2. The nurture room offers a safe base – there is a structure to the morning/afternoon which is predictable, adults who are reliable and firm 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 the children's relationships 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 snack, 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 offering labelled praise for small achievements; nothing is hurried in nurture groups.

4. Language is 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 a shared snack 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 world of the child, this principle underlines the adult response to the children's challenging 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 managed carefully with preparation and support.

Our aims are to provide:

- A small-scale setting in which children can experience focused nurturing care from two adults, who actively work towards enabling their successful reintegration back into their base class full time.
- A flexible and holistic approach to education and care in response to the particular needs of the children attending our school.
- An environment that is safe, secure and with a home like atmosphere.
- An environment that aids the child's development emotionally and academically.
- The opportunity to help children learn to make decisions and appropriate choices through understanding the consequences of certain ways of behaving.
- Ongoing assessment and support for children exhibiting behaviours linked to emotional stress and attachment issues.
- An environment which will develop the child's self-esteem and confidence through planned activities.

The Nurture Group will:

- Strive to have a positive effect on children's attitude toward the school community, giving them strategies to cope with conflict and challenges.
- Help children to focus concentration levels, which will in turn impact on standards of attainment across the school.
- To support children who have emotional difficulties which prevent them from learning and making relationships.
- Help to improve the focus and quality of teaching and learning.
- Help children learn to regulate their emotions so they can make relationships and access learning opportunities.

The Sunshine Room

Our Nurture Group takes place in The Sunshine Room. The Sunshine Room is organised into the
following areas to replicate home life:

- Kitchen area
- Dining area
- Comfy area
- Play area
- Small outdoor area

The Nurture Group runs 5 sessions per week however, we ensure that pupils do not miss out on special assemblies, guests in school, outings or special events that the rest of their class are taking part in. Pupils remain in their class during the mornings and for afternoon register.

Teaching and Learning

The Nurture Group has a themed curriculum which has a large emphasis on Personal, Social, Emotional and Mental Health. Activities are planned around the year groups literacy, maths and theme to provide a stimulating environment for the children. Weekly planning incorporates developmental and age-appropriate skills informed by the pupils individual Boxall Profiles.

The Nurture Group runs every morning/afternoon and always begins with Circle Time, allowing the children to share news, talk about their feelings and develop speaking and listening skills. This is usually followed by a task or activity, individual target work and a shared snack time, providing the opportunity to socialise with peers and adults as well as take responsibility for preparing food and clearing away.

Identification and Referral

Pupils may enter the Nurture Group for a number of reasons. For example: low self-esteem; attachment difficulties; bereavement; family illness / separation. The Nurture Group currently supports a range of children across Key Stage 1 and 2.

The identification and review process takes place on an ongoing basis.

- Raising concerns – staff liaise with the SENDCo and / or Nurture Staff to raise awareness of current pupil's issues.

- Boxall Profiles – All children are screened using the Boxall Profile. 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.

- The SENDCo and Nurture Group staff discuss the results. From the Boxall profiles, a report will be created where children are selected for the group according to need. Children will leave and join the group as progress is made. Pupils usually remain in the Nurture Group for 1 term but this can be extended if it is felt necessary.

- During their time in Nurture Group the pupils will agree on Personal Targets (linked to the areas of need identified in the Boxall Profile). The SENDCo will meet half termly with the Nurture Staff to discuss the progress of each pupil. When it is felt that a pupil may be ready to exit Nurture Group a further Boxall Profile will be completed and analysed. The transition back into class will be discussed with the pupil and their parents and undertaken gradually.

Involving Parents/Carers

Parental support is vital to the child's progress and parents are fully involved and consulted about the selection process. Children's individual targets are shared with parents termly. Parents are invited to Nurture Group events.

Involving Randlay staff

Class teachers are responsible for the registration of Nurture Group pupils both in the morning and afternoon and dismissal at the end of the day.

Class teachers will be asked to contribute to discussions, review meetings, liaise with nurture staff to share information and complete assessment questionnaires in relation to pupils in their class.

Teachers will continue with strategies and use of resources as agreed in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Staff will be invited to attend nurture sessions/parent workshops as appropriate. Cover for sessions will be organised by the SENDCo.

Staffing

The Nurture Group is run by two members of staff one of whom has completed the two day 'Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups' training, the other is an ELSA trained TA. In the event of either member of staff being absent the Nurture Group pupils will remain with their class group. In order to maintain consistency and security the Nurture Group is never covered by supply teachers. The Nurture Group staff are responsible for undertaking the weekly planning and assessing the pupils' progress.

The SENDCo (who has also completed the Nurture Group training) oversees the strategic direction of the Nurture Group. The SENDCo is works closely with the Nurture Group staff to identify pupils in need of Nurture support, sets targets for them and assesses pupils' progress.