

MEETING:	SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE:	7TH DECEMBER 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	ESTABLISHING NURTURE GROUPS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS & DEVELOPING AN APPROPRIATE SUPPORT NETWORK
SECONDARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MANAGER	PAUL MURRAY

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide – All Schools

Purpose

- To fund the implementation of five trial Nurture Groups to be established in five Herefordshire Primary Schools
- To support the implementation of these five Nurture Groups and to facilitate development, networking and ongoing support for the five groups as well as the recently-established trial group.
- To monitor and assess the applicability of Nurture Groups as a means of meeting Additional Educational Needs in Herefordshire

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation(s)

THAT School Forum is asked to: approve the funding request of £100,000 from DSG to facilitate the implementation of Nurture Groups for 2010-11 only. Schools will require an exit strategy to mainstream their provision and ensure its sustainability.

Key Points Summary

- This intervention will enable five primary schools to trial a **Nurture Group** intervention for one year by providing resources (to be matched by the school) and provide guidance and support to schools. Nurture Groups provide a secure and reliable small class setting where children can

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Paul Murray, Secondary School Improvement Manager on (01432) 260823

learn by re-experiencing pre-school nurture from two caring adults who actively work towards enabling their successful resettlement into their mainstream class

- Nurture Groups are proven interventions which are successfully operating in at least 83 Local Authorities. In Herefordshire the first supported Nurture Group became operational in October 2009. The proposal is to build on this by establishing 5 further groups all of which will run according to the 'Classic Nurture Group Model' which has proven effectiveness. Early intervention for children with emotional/behavioural needs has been proven to markedly reduce the need for subsequent interventions.
- Research suggests the establishment of effective nurture groups requires good support. The intention is to grow a network of support so that schools implementing nurture groups may aid each other, and to offer external monitoring and support from the Educational Psychology Service. This would include support in the area of monitoring individual children's development and progress in order better to meet their developmental needs.

Alternative Options

- 1 The alternative to promoting group interventions for meeting Additional Educational Need (AEN) is to continue to make a series of reactive individual interventions for children which can be very resource-heavy and piecemeal. A group intervention such as a Nurture Group offers a proactive and structured way of meeting children's needs. It also promotes early intervention.

Reasons for Recommendations

Why Nurture Groups?

- 2 By implementing a move to delegated SEN Banded Funding at levels 1 & 2, Schools Forum was responding to the need to help schools make a more flexible response to children with Additional Educational Needs. It enabled the emphasis to shift (where appropriate) from *individual* interventions to interventions for *groups* of children.
- 3 In many authorities, Nurture Groups are a proven group intervention. Their aim is to recreate normal development patterns, by identifying gaps and following a reliable predictable structure so that the children feel safe and begin to trust, explore & learn. The underlying principle is that the child will be responded to at whatever developmental stage they are at presently. Support develops positive emotional and social growth and cognitive development. Measured effects include increased social and communication skills, enhanced self esteem and increased preparedness to learn. Children attending the Nurture Group will have been identified as having additional needs and are likely to be at School Action + or Early Years Action + of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.

Introduction and Background

What is a Classic Nurture Group?

- 4 There will usually be between 8-12 children in the group at any one time. No children from other schools attend the nurture group. The group is staffed by two adults. Children spend time in the group and time in their mainstream class. Typically, mornings are spent in the nurture group and afternoons in the mainstream class. The group meets in a safe comfortable base in which they eat, play and work together. Ideally the room should be set aside for this purpose. In this secure and reliable small class setting, children can learn by re-experiencing

pre-school nurture from two caring adults who actively work towards enabling their successful resettlement into their mainstream class

How can schools be supported?

- 5 Herefordshire seeks to promote the establishment of nurture groups but recognises the support individual schools might require in setting these up. By promoting the establishment of five nurture groups at the same time it is hoped to establish a mutually supportive resource network. It is also possible to offer joint initial training and ongoing training.
- 6 The 'Classic Nurture Group' model requires that individual children are regularly monitored, or *profiled*, so that their development can best be supported. Over the last thirty years appropriate profiles have been developed and proven. Support from the Assistant Psychologist will be available to schools to enable children in the nurture group to be monitored in this way. Educational Psychology Support will also be provided to support Nurture Group leaders. Quality Assurance will be supported by participation in the National Nurture Groups Quality Mark scheme.

How will participating schools be identified? How will Nurture Groups be taken forwards?

- 7 Schools will be invited to put themselves forwards. Priority will be given to schools where there is an established range of Additional Educational Need in this area. Schools will also have to be able to access appropriate, discrete physical space for a Nurture Group. As the intention is to establish the benefits and appropriateness of Nurture Groups for Herefordshire schools, selection will take into account the need to include a range of schools with differing characteristics.
- 8 The use of DSG underspend funding is for one year only. Individual schools will have to identify a clear exit strategy from the onset. This may, hopefully, involve mainstreaming the classic Nurture Group model within the school from internal funding. Some schools may not be able to resource at this level and may choose to develop future interventions which are informed by nurture group principles and which utilise the staff skills developed.

Key Considerations

- 9 Centres identified to receive the development funding would need to consider planning for sustainability.

Community Impact

- 10 The communities identified to receive to develop the projects will benefit from additional resource and expertise. Should the model be successful there would be a need to consider sustainability options. These communities not identified for the projects would be invited to learn from the evidence gathered. This could then inform potential future project development.

Financial Implications

Funding to 5 Herefordshire Primary Schools to Implement Nurture Groups:

- 11 Purpose of Additional Funding:
- Support the costs to schools of Nurture Group Staffing
 - Support the set up costs to schools including limited room refurbishment and set up equipment
 - Establish a small, central Resource Bank to support schools
 - Provide
 - Training for colleagues Staffing Nurture Groups
 - Training for colleagues managing Nurture Groups
 - Briefing for the whole staff of schools implementing nurture groups
 - Structured networking opportunities for colleagues
 - Opportunities for dissemination of good practice to other schools

Resources required but not provided for by this Additional funding

- 12 In support of this additional funding schools will have to provide
- Additional Financial Resources in order to meet the costs of the Nurture Group
 - Management time

13 Costings:

Background:

Typical Nurture Group Costings

	£
TA Staffing including oncosts	20870
Room refurbishment & Set Up Equipment	1500
SENCo or other Management Time (variable)	-----
Training (staff time)	<u>470</u>
<u>Typical Total</u>	<u>22840</u>

NB This is a typical costing and will vary from school to school. It assumes management time can be provided from within the school's existing resource allocation. It assumes staff at SEN1. If schools employ staff on SEN2 then staffing will be 6% higher. Set up costs too will vary from school to school.

	£
Costings for this project	
Support at £19.600 per school x 5	97500
Educational Psychology Support	-----
Resource Bank & Online Subscriptions	570
Training (incl network meetings)	<u>1930</u>
Total	<u>100,000</u>

NB Educational Psychology time to be provided from within the service's current resources.

Legal Implications

14. There are no Legal Implications identified at this stage.

Risk Management

15. Exit strategies would need to be planned to ensure minimal impact upon settings once funding ends.

Consultees

16. There are no consultees to identify.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None