NURTURE GROUP POLICY
Reviewed September 2015

The Six Principles of Nurture Groups

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

Introduction

- Our nurture groups provide a modified curriculum in an environment based on the principles advocated by Marion Bennathan and Marjorie Boxall.
- Nurture support is open to all children at Watton Westfield Infant and Nursery School across Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Our Nurture support is tailored to meet individual children's needs. This can be in the form of daily, weekly, small group work or 1:1 sessions.

Our aims for the Reception Star Group

- This group is an intervention for those children who are unable to access learning successfully in their mainstream classroom.
- Our Reception Star group meets every morning each week from 9.15 am - 11.30 am with the children spending the afternoons in their own classes.
- The group caters for up to 8 children.
- Two experienced members of staff run our group. In the absence of one of these team members, the children will be with their class all day.
- To provide a small-scale setting in which children can experience nurturing care from two caring adults, who actively work towards enabling their successful reintegration.
- To have a predictable, calm and purposeful environment and timetable, to support the children in following their classes' curriculum in a less pressurised environment.
- To develop self-esteem and social skills and emotional literacy.
- To develop relationships between adults and children, building trust, confidence and reliability.
• To develop responsibility for self and others.
• To help children learn appropriate behaviour.
• To help children learn to make decisions and wise choices through understanding the consequences of certain ways of behaving.
• To work in partnership with parents and teachers to achieve consistency of approach at home and school.
• To provide on-going assessment through observations, the Goodmans Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and the Boxall Profile.
• To prevent possible exclusion.

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;

Setting
We have a designated Nurture room which will be expanded from January 2016, to include, a kitchen, dining area, activity areas and an outside sensory area.

The role of the adult workers
• The nurture group is overseen by the Headteacher Mr Aviss and School Senco Miss Bird with the Nurture Group Co-ordinator Mrs Bone having day-to-day responsibility for the running of our Star, Rainbow, Westfield Little Troops and 1:1 sessions.
• The role of the adults is to sustain nurturing relationships with the children who attend.
• They will be good role models, demonstrating appropriate and positive behaviour that is consistent and continuous.
• They recognise that it is through a positive and affirming relationship that a child understands they are valued.
• The adults will enable the children who attend the group to develop positive relationships with each other.
The Curriculum

- The nurture group provides a thematic modified curriculum that is suited to the children's needs.
- The group sessions are divided into small chunks of time with each activity serving a clear purpose.
- Each session offers the security of a consistent and familiar structure as follows:
  
  - greeting ritual;
  - circle-time activities;
  - designated activity of the day;
  - freeplay;
  - laying table and tidying up equipment;
  - refreshments;
  - washing-up and story time;
  - clapping rhyme or songs;
  - ending ritual;

- The circle-time activities focus on the following valuable activities:
  
  - turn-taking;
  - watching and listening;
  - using expressive language;
  - learning from others;
  - trying something new;
  - developing a positive attitude to participation;
  - forming positive relationships;
  - using agreed codes of behaviour;
  - initiating activities with other children;
  - learning to respond to sanctions;
  - considering the rights and needs of themselves and others;

- Activities are weighted towards the individual child's PSHE development.
- Activities will be planned to meet the needs of the individual child with the aim of enhancing the children's self-esteem and sense of identity.
- The National Curriculum will be modified to meet the developmental needs of the children in the group.
- Children are able to take part in 'The Children's Traffic Club' which is an interactive 16 week Road Safety Programme. Children who access close adult support in their classes can also attend these sessions.
Assessment

- Children involved in the group are initially assessed using the *Goodmans Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* and observations within the setting.
- After an assessment findings are discussed with the school’s SENCo and linked to a child’s targets, both within the group and their classroom.
- A written assessment is provided at a child’s annual review, if appropriate.
- In addition, on-going records of each child’s social and emotional development are kept.
- Ongoing progress is tracked through termly observations and *Boxall Profiles*.

Referral

Any child can experience a time in their lives where they can benefit from some extra emotional support to express their emotions and feelings in a healthy way and enable them to be happy, healthy and achieve their individual potential. This may be for a variety of reasons that could include:

- experiencing a bereavement of a family member or pet
- coming to terms with Parental separation and the changes that may bring including living in two homes, new parental figures and brothers and sisters
- moving house
- experiencing friendship difficulties
- overcoming shyness

Children’s behaviours that would indicate a need for Nurture support could include:

- those who appear to be emotionally insecure, which could present itself as 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 uncooperative;
- 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 to have difficulty integrating in their main class;  
• children who have been, or are going through, periods of stress sufficient enough to limit the nurturing process.

**Referral procedure**

• *Class teachers can approach the SENCo at any time to put forward any children that might benefit from the group.*

• *These children are assessed using the admission criteria checklist, the *Boxall Profile* and observations to determine their eligibility.*

• *If a decision is made to invite a child to join the group, the Class teacher will have an informal discussion with the parent, to complete a Goodman's 'strengths and difficulties' questionnaire, in consultation with parents. They are invited to a meeting with the Headteacher/SENCo and then the Nurture Group staff.*

• *Following agreement in this meeting, the child is invited to join the group.*

**Partnership with Parents and Carers**

• *We recognise the importance of involving the parents/carers of a child in their education.*

• *Each parent receives a copy of our leaflet explaining the group and detailing who we are and what we do.*

• *We will keep parents/carers informed of their child's progress and provide them with support and advice.*

• *Parents/carers are invited to tea and refreshments to see what their children have been doing and to join in some activities.*

• *Appointments with the Nurture Group staff can be made via the office.*

**Reintegration**

• *The period of reintegration is generally carried out over a period of a half term during which a child's responses are carefully monitored.*

• *The point at which a child is reintegrated into their classroom full-time is based on the results of the Boxall Profile, usually for a minimum of 2 terms and a maximum of 4, the nurture group workers' assessments and the classteacher's observations.*

• *When a child is thought ready to return to the classroom, a programme of gradual reintegration is initiated, usually beginning with one or two sessions a week.*

**Impact**
• It is intended that the Nurture Group will have a positive impact on the whole school and wider community. This will be enhanced by building relationships with parents through regular liaison and visits.

Compiled: July, 2014
Next Review: July, 2015