Nurture Groups: Evaluating Implementation of a North Somerset Council Pilot
April 2023

"It changed my behaviour; I can get help; I focus more in lessons."
Nurture Group student

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Introduction

In September 2022, five schools (Appendix A) in North Somerset were granted funding to implement Nurture Projects where they set up Nurture Groups (Appendix B) and embedded a Nurture approach throughout the school as a pilot. North Somerset LA commissioned an independent body (Somerset Educational Psychology Service) to evaluate the impact of this initiative. This report summarises the findings and outlines lessons for future practice.

Findings reported are from school data (for methodology and examples, see Appendix C1-2), and feedback from school Nurture Leads who set up and ran Nurture Groups (Appendix C3), Nurture Group students (Appendix C4), and their parent / carers (Appendix C5).

Students selected for Nurture Groups were some of the most at risk of missing out on education due to social and emotional mental health (SEMH) needs.

Key impacts

- o *Staff can help by involving pupils, parents, and carers in planning and providing support. Use visual timetables and pre-warnings to help kids prepare for changes. Consider any inexplicable behaviour or disruption during transitions and make time to talk to children and young people about their feelings and coping strategies:*
    - ▪ *"I would like to say how grateful I am that [my child] has had this opportunity to attend [nurture provision]. This has helped him feel so confident and proud of himself, he comes home saying he has done independent learning and doing great with his phonics. Thank you again."*

- o *I was previously told that he could not learn in a school environment and certainly not work unsupported, this has been proven to be untrue as I have never known him to talk and share so much about what he's learned but also is working unsupported in many areas. Where school had previously felt unsafe the nurture provision has been an essential part of him settling in and being happy in a new school environment."*
    - ▪ *"If they had had something like this when I was at school, things could have turned out differently for me."*

Summary of recommendations[1]

1. Properly resource bespoke, separate Nurture rooms to support student impacts.
2. Promote a Nurture ethos and culture in schools to support Nurture projects.
3. Local authorities and schools to devote enough time to coordinated planning ahead of implementation.
4. Fully support Nurture Leads.
5. Coproduce Nurture projects with Nurture students and their parents / carers.

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[1] Recommendation 1 is derived from the findings (mainly from student views) described in Subsection 2a. Impacts of Nurture Groups. Recommendations 2 – 5 are derived from the findings (mainly from Nurture Lead views) described in Subsection 2b. Lessons from Implementing a Nurture Project.

Findings - Impact of Nurture Groups

Attendance and behaviour

Impacts
- Nurture Group membership correlated with an average **4.68% increase in attendance** across the schools. See Appendix C1 for explanation and breakdown of attendance and behaviour data.
- Two secondary students who had not attended school that academic year prior to joining the Nurture Group increased attendance to **47%** and **56%** respectively after two terms in the Nurture Group.
- Days missed due to suspensions in one secondary school reduced by **93.6%**, contributing to a **29.3%** increase in attendance.

SEMH

Impacts
- Students chose the feelings in the chart below to summarise their time in Nurture Groups:

Feelings

Feeling	Value
Happy	13
Excited	8
Safe	7
Tired	6
Proud	3
Confident	3
Sad	2
Energetic	2
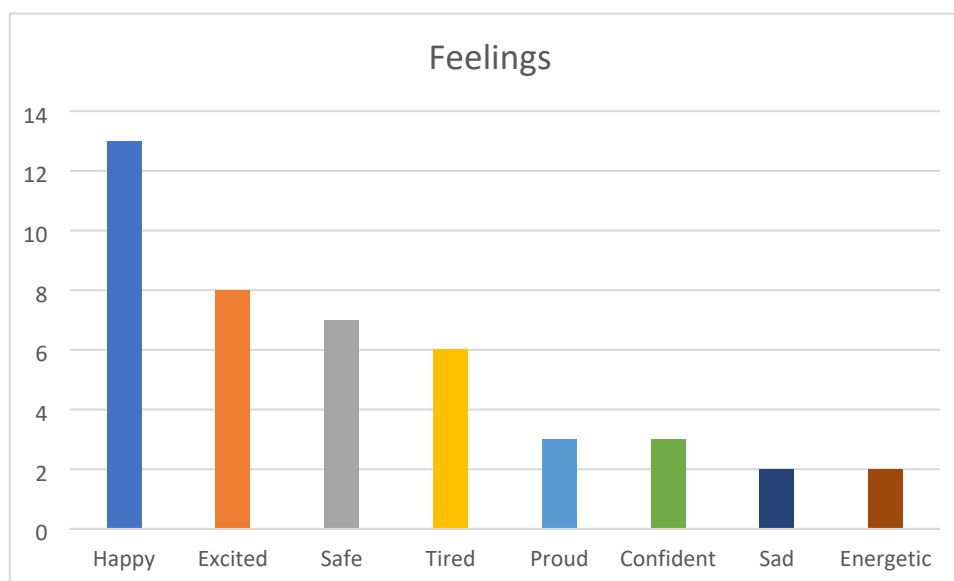
Boxall Profile assessment data (see Appendix C2 for explanation and breakdown of data) revealed significant improvements in SEMH for students in Nurture Groups.

- Including a **28.07%** increase in scores for Nurture student development in areas supporting them to access education.
- Also, a **15.2%** reduction in behaviours that hindered Nurture students access to education.
- Overall, Nurture Leads observed increased confidence in Nurture students.
- Some parents / carers observed student anxiety about attending school significantly decreased and they were calmer at home.
- Additional reports from parents / carers noticed their children became more positive about school and students reported feeling happy in their Nurture Groups.
- Some parents / carers also reported happier home lives, due to reduced conflict with their children related to attending school, and better regulated children:

"And a lot of parents are saying to us how much nicer their child is at home ... they enjoy coming to school, whereas it used to be a battle causing tension and hassle at home ... what we're getting is a happier child and a happier home environment and happier parents." Nurture Lead

What worked
- Students appreciated having a designated Nurture room because it was calmer with fewer people than in the mainstream areas. They valued the range of functional spaces in the room. E.g., their individual workstations, cosy social areas with sofas, dining and food prep areas. *See Nurture Student Picture 1 in Appendix C3*.
- Students appreciated more relational approaches to behaviour management by Nurture Leads. The approaches Nurture Leads found effective included supporting students not to feel shame related to consequences and implementing consequences (e.g., going 5 minutes late to break) in the Nurture room rather than in a mainstream area:

"I feel relaxed because adults don't shout at you if you get something wrong like they do in main school." Nurture Student

- Most effective strategies for building confidence included regular, structured social activities. E.g., breakfast / snack times where each student had a role. Students described attuning with each other, e.g., predicting what friends would like to order. Student and Nurture Lead feedback suggest mealtimes and opportunities for shared play (especially role play) helped students feel safe, connected, and belonging in their group. *See Nurture Student Picture 2 in Appendix C3*.
- Students report drawing on emotion regulation resources in their Nurture rooms to develop emotional literacy and effectively self-regulate. Effective resources include Zones of Regulation displays and charts, and calming areas (e.g., sensory tent). *See Nurture Student picture 3 in Appendix C3*.

Learning outcomes

Impacts
- Parent / carers and Nurture Leads observed students begin engaging more in learning and completing more schoolwork. This included students who were previously very disengaged and completing little to no schoolwork:

"I had his first parents evening last night and his mum was saying that ... Last year, she didn't think he did anything virtually and she was blown away in the five weeks he's been with us, the amount of learning he's done." Nurture Lead.

- Nurture Leads observed improved language skills in some students.
- Quantitative attainment data for this project was also collected but did not show an impact. Nurture Leads suspected that this data was requested too early after students had completed their time in Nurture Group to show gains.

What worked
- Nurture students appreciated being able to learn at their own pace. In a primary school, this included a choice of activities, academic and non-academic (e.g., free play, checking in with Nurture Lead), at the start of the day. This provided opportunities to experience success, indicated by student reports of pride in their work:

'I like working here because its chilled out. It's better than regular classrooms. I can do better work! I'm proud of my [work]' Nurture student (secondary)

- Nurture students appreciated having a sense of control over how they learn. One secondary school provided both a traditional learning space (a row of desks in front of the teacher), and individual learning stations. Students could choose where they worked according to what they felt ready for. *See Nurture Student Picture 4 in Appendix C3.* Where Nurture rooms had more limited options, some students said this could be improved, e.g., by every student having an individual workstation.
- Circle time within a small group was effective for developing language skills:

"Circle time can be a real struggle in a full class because children have to wait so long for their turn. But in a small group it's, it's so valuable. Their vocabulary has broadened." Nurture Lead

Communication and interaction

Impacts
- Nurture Leads and parents / carers noticed students develop their social skills for interacting with peers and adults:

"She really tries hard to communicate more with us." Parent / carer

What worked
- Nurture Leads found circle time within a small group was effective for developing confidence to interact with peers.

- Food times developed independence / life skills in a social context, supporting positive social interaction. Students spoke enthusiastically about sharing roles to facilitate mealtimes, e.g., taking it in turns to prepare the table and tidy up.
- "Planned landings" based on individual student needs when arriving for the day, e.g., a semi structured choice of accessible activities, supported students to have more positive interactions with adults. Nurture Leads found previously shy students began to interact with them more during morning check-ins.
- Relationships between adults and students in Nurture Groups were supported by consistency from the adults. Students reported liking their Nurture Leads and identified them as important people in their Nurture Groups, further evidencing the supportive relationships developed by consistent adult interactions:

"With the consistency of the two teachers in the nurture provision he has been able to establish attachments which has been essential to his feeling safe in school." Parent / carer

School ethos

Impacts
- Setting up and running Nurture Groups supported schools to develop their nurturing ethos.

What worked
- Implementing the Nurture project provided additional structure for developing ethos:

"The Nurture project has given us perhaps a little bit more structure around the platform of [being trauma informed] to be delivered" Nurture Lead

Lessons from implementing a Nurture Project

School ethos
What worked

- School ethos and buy in to nurture principles appears one of the most important factors for success.
- Schools with an existing culture of embedded Nurture values found this supported implementing Nurture projects:

"It fits beautifully with what we already do here. So, I feel that we're in that place now where we can sort of really promote this" Head Teacher

- Buy-in from mainstream staff to Nurture principles and practices was key to successful Nurture projects.
- Schools used a range of approaches to successfully promote buy-in from mainstream staff and increase support for the project.
- Using data to promote buy-in. One Nurture Lead delivered training to mainstream teachers on principles and applications of the Boxall profiles:

"I think it sort of helped them click that everything we do in here is purposeful and ... evidence based." Nurture Lead

This correlated with a significant increase in the number of Boxall profiles the Nurture Lead received from teachers, freeing time from chasing teachers, and building a data set to support identification of students needing support in Nurture.

- Sharing parent / carer feedback with mainstream staff promoted buy-in:

"[Staff mindsets] changed when we first gathered feedback from parents. ... it was very positive and ... I could actually show staff that it is making an impact ... [It rang] a few bells with some people". Nurture Lead.

- Inviting staff to visit Nurture Groups helped them understand the rationale for approaches being implemented in the group and address concerns about approaches.

Barriers

- Where there were differences of opinion on Nurture principles between Nurture Leads and school leadership, Nurture Leads found it harder to implement Nurture Projects with fidelity.
- Nurture Leads experienced that mainstream staff concerns about Nurture approaches hindered buy-in and support of the project:

"We're still I think in our setting really struggling with the idea of this coming above academic lessons." Nurture Lead

- Nurture Leads report mainstream staff concerns about the rationale for some Nurture approaches. E.g., the value of food and mealtimes can be hard to see at first, without understanding the real needs such approaches address:

"For these kids tea and toast is their breakfast ... if you got hungry kids, you've got angry kids and, it's trying to get them to understand what it actually is all about." Nurture Lead

Planning and setting up Nurture Groups
What worked
- Nurture Leads found it beneficial when they could carefully select appropriate participant students who would benefit most from the intervention.
- Data driven, clearly defined selection criteria for students to join Nurture Groups helped target the intervention effectively:

"We basically had to develop ... a really rigid criteria ... took the choice out of the teachers' hands." Nurture Lead

- Nurture Groups which were staffed with professionals with appropriate experience and attitude were viewed as more effective by Nurture Leads:

"We could have employed other people, but we thought is that person fit for this role? Because it's a very specific role, requiring certain traits and characteristics." Nurture Lead

- A clear plan for the project before starting.
- Tailored recruitment processes helped staff Nurture Groups with appropriate professionals. Schools sometimes allocated additional funds to conduct a number of recruitment rounds to find the right person, focussing on qualities like understanding of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and aptitude to conduct a Boxall assessment.

Barriers
- Sometimes Nurture Leads felt they were being asked to select students based on non-Nurture principles, hindering effective selection:

"We've found it's been very prescribed that we need to choose those children, whether there are other ones that actually it might benefit more." Nurture Lead

- Nurture Leads found when mainstream teachers chose students to refer to Nurture Groups, students were not being selected based on ability.
- Communication issues before starting meant implementation in some schools felt rushed at the outset, impacting effective planning. E.g., communication that the project was going ahead came with short notice, meaning staff training and building works for the Nurture Group needed to happen quickly and at the same time:

"As the local authority moves forward to put these in place in other settings, there should be a really clear plan as to how this is implemented." Nurture Lead

- When setting up Nurture Groups was rushed, steps could happen in the wrong order. E.g., Nurture Leads were asked to begin planning the Nurture room before they had completed their Nurture training so could not plan the room most effectively.

Supporting Nurture Leads
What worked
- Support from Head Teachers and senior leadership for Nurture Leads, the project and Nurture strategies:

"There's a united front here ... I don't really understand how it could work if the SLT weren't behind you the whole way." Nurture Lead

- Where the Nurture Leads were given autonomy in running the Nurture Group.

Barriers
- Some Nurture Leads found they or their support staff were not able to give the attention to the Nurture project it needed when their time was not protected. E.g., they were required to do lunch cover or support non-nurture students.
- When Nurture support staff were required to split time with non-Nurture duties, there was less time for reflection and collaboration with the Nurture Lead:

"They're very strict with [Nurture Group Assistants'] contract ... in the afternoons, she's elsewhere in the school. So, I don't really get any time with her besides, actually, when the children are there. So, there's not a lot of time to sort of reflection or sort of working together on the home hub." Nurture Lead

- A sense that a lack of cohesion between Nurture and mainstream classes hindered maintaining gains after students finished their nurture intervention:

"We kind of teach them the skills of regulation in here and then when they go into mainstream, we don't have the spaces that necessarily allow them to do that." Nurture Lead

- Lack of collaboration between Nurture Group and whole school Nurture initiatives may have hindered joined up working.

Coproducing with parents / carers
What worked
- Securing parent / carer buy-in and harnessing their support for their children in Nurture Groups to coproduce the project appears to be a key factor for successful projects.
- Coproduction with parent / carers included addressing concerns about the Nurture project.
- Successful Nurture projects addressed parent / carer concerns and secured buy-in through a range of approaches. E.g., meetings before the student began their intervention to inspect the Nurture room, parent / carer evenings, explaining the approaches used by reviewing a Nurture timetable:

"If they had had something like this when I was at school, things could have turned out differently for me." Parent / carer

- Students benefited where there was regular, supportive communication between Nurture Leads and parent / carers. This may have contributed to a sense their support continued across settings, making it easier to go from one to the other:

"I just wanted to reflect on how well it's working communicating with the parents on a weekly basis ... we've seen a reflection of the students coming in and having that support all round." Nurture Lead.

Barriers
- Parents / carers could be initially sceptical about Nurture Groups and schools found this hindered gaining consent for participation.
- Parent / carer scepticism about Nurture Groups arose due to assumptions from previous experience of alternative provision. E.g., that it would be similar to a Pupil Referral Unit.
- Also, from scepticism about efficacy of Nurture Groups:

"If [they're] not doing well in class, how can taking them out of class every morning help?" Parent / carer

Principles and recommendations for successful Nurture Projects

This final section offers principles and recommendations that are derived from the findings of this study. It is suggested that this summary is used to support the planning and implementation of future Nurture Projects:

1. Well-resourced bespoke Nurture Group rooms promote significant positive outcomes for students with SEMH, interaction, and learning needs.

   Well-resourced Nurture Group rooms should:

   a. Be discrete from mainstream settings in the school.
   b. Include space and equipment for communal food and dining activities.
   c. Include comfortable relaxation areas.
   d. Have specific emotion regulation resources.
   e. Give students choices where to complete learning tasks.
   f. Have age-appropriate games and toys.
   g. Gain and value Nurture student voices to coproduce the space.

   Nurture Leads suggested resourcing mainstream classrooms with complementary Nurture facilities could maintain gains when students return to mainstream:

   "Looking at how classrooms can mirror a kind of more nurturing approach in terms of physically what they look like."

2. Where schools are already further along in developing a culture and ethos underpinned by the 6 principles of Nurture, it supports implementation of Nurture Projects .

   To promote a nurturing ethos when implementing a Nurture Project in a school with more ground to cover:
   a. Use Boxall profile data across time points to demonstrate to teachers that approaches are evidenced.
   b. Share parent / carer feedback to evidence Nurture student progress,
   c. Have teachers visit Nurture Groups to increase understanding of approaches and rationale.
   d. Have a champion for Nurture within school senior leadership.
   e. Provide whole staff training on Nurture principles to address concerns about Nurture approaches and equip staff to support the Nurture project.

   Nurture Leads suggested exploring additional training for all staff by external professionals to develop buy-in:

   "If it's somebody internal that stands up, there's a lot of judgment."

3. Where local authorities and schools devote enough time to coordinate planning ahead of implementation, it supports coherent delivery and reduces strain on Nurture teams.

   Careful planning should:
   a. Develop a logical sequence of stages for setting up the Nurture Group.
   b. Communicate with Nurture Leads to give sufficient time not to rush setting up the Nurture Group.
   c. Consistently staff the Nurture team with professionals capable of nurturing approaches with students.
   d. Define clear student selection criteria to set up small Nurture Groups, based on Nurture principles.
   e. Give the Nurture Lead autonomy over student selection.

   Nurture Leads suggested focussing on group dynamics when selecting students:

   "Working out how to identify the right young people to get the right dynamic in a secondary setting would be my key tip to myself."

4. Nurture Leads can be more effective running Nurture Groups when properly supported.

   Supporting Nurture Leads should:
   a. Protect the time of all Nurture Group staff to focus exclusively on the Nurture Group.
   b. Give Nurture Leads autonomy in running the Nurture Group.
   c. Connect Nurture Leads with colleagues working on whole school Nurture approaches.
   d. Foster close collaboration with school senior leadership.

   Nurture Leads suggested peer supervision opportunities could further support them in their role:

   "Groups like this [evaluation focus group], where we're sharing ideas, are invaluable."

5. Coproduction of Nurture projects with parent / carers of Nurture students supports setting up Nurture Groups, tracks student progress across home and school, and provides feedback to support buy-in amongst mainstream staff.

   Parent / carer coproduction should:
   a. Use parent / carer evenings, visits to Nurture rooms and explanation of Nurture approaches to address concerns and increase confidence in Nurture approaches.
   b. Include regular communication to develop relationships and compare observations of students across settings.
   c. Make parent / carers feel heard by inviting feedback and suggestions.
   d. Involve parent / carers in deciding if the student should be selected for the Nurture Group.

Nurture Leads suggested developing parent / carer collaboration by training Parent Support Advisors in Nurture principles:

"*It would be really helpful if they were Nurture trained and were part of the team in communicating with parents and going out ... in the community.*"

Appendices

Appendix A: Nurture Group Numbers

School	Number of students in Nurture Group	Number of students who contributed to evaluation	Year Groups
1	10	8	7,8
2	12	11	1,2
3	9	3	8,9,10,11
4	17 (2 groups)	14	1,3
5	6	5	1
Total	**54**	**41**	**1,2,3,7,8,9,10,11**

Appendix B: Introduction to Nurture

'Nurture Groups are in-school, teacher led psychosocial interventions focused on supporting the social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties of children and young people. They are founded on evidence-based practices and offer a short-term, inclusive, targeted intervention that works in the long term.' Nurture UK, (2019).

Nurture UK offers a National Nurturing Schools Programme based on John Bowlby's (1988) Attachment Theory. It focuses on developing positive and lasting relationships, emphasising the importance of the child's emotional bond with caregivers. The approach is based on 6 Nurture principles:

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

Nurture Groups provide a warm, nurturing and accepting environment for children and young people to develop secure, positive, and trusting relationships with adults in school. Ideally designed for six to 12 children or young people and is run by two members of staff who have received Nurture UK training.

Nurture uses the Boxall Profile developed by Marjorie Boxall (1979) to select and plan support for Nurture Group students. See Appendix B1 for an explanation and examples of the Boxall Profile.

Nurture Groups (NGs) are recommended by the Department for Education (Marshall, Wishart, Dunatchik, & Smith, 2017) as an effective mental health provision in schools.

A primary school Nurture room on this project
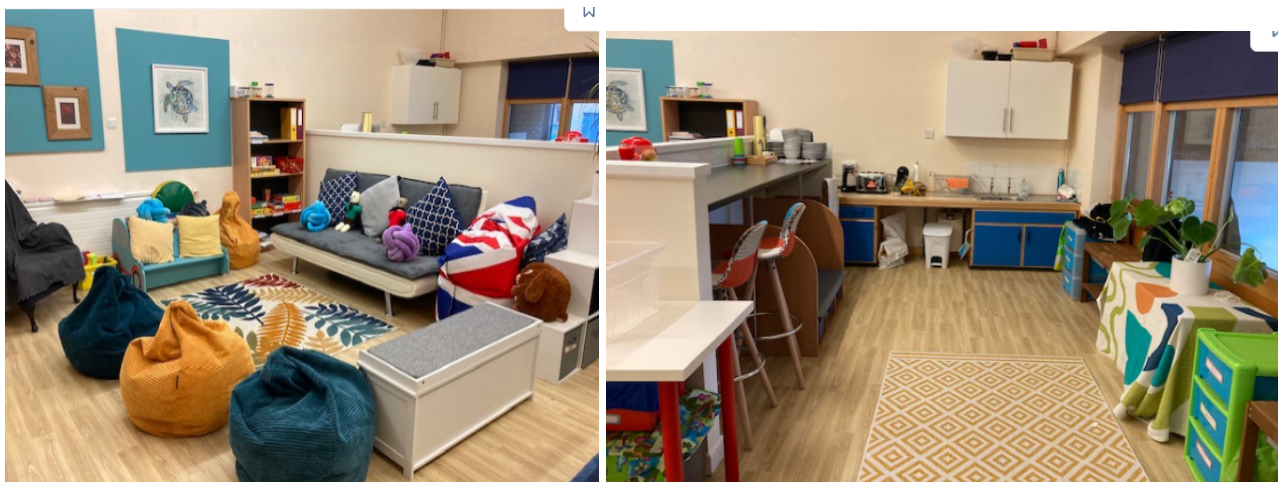
A secondary school Nurture room on this project

A primary school Nurture Group timetable

| The Home Hub timetable	Arrival 8:40-9 Ch register in-class	9-9:20 'Free play'	9:30-10:10 Group time	10:10-10:30 Group Snack	10:30-10:45 Break	10:45-11:35 Focused teaching	11:35-11:45 Story time	11:45-12:45 Lunch End of NH
Monday	9:00 collect children from class	Observe children	Group work	Toast time		1 adult= 121/ group 1 adult= with other children.	Story time	Ch back to main class
Tuesday	9:00 collect children from class	Observe children	Group work	Toast time		1 adult= 121/ group 1 adult= with other children.	Story time	Ch back to main class
Wednesday	9:00 collect children from class	Observe children	Group work	Toast time		1 adult= 121/ group. 1 adult= with other children.	Story time	Ch back to main class
Thursday	9:00 collect children from class	Observe children	Group work	Toast time		1 adult= 121/ group. 1 adult= with other children.	Story time	Ch back to main class
Friday								

Morning

Appendix C: Research methods and discussion

C1: Quantitative Data – Attendance and Behaviour

Attendance and behaviour data (suspensions) for Nurture Group students was collected from schools before starting their Nurture Groups and after they returned to mainstream provision.

These pre- and post-intervention measures suggest positive but uneven impacts on attendance and suspensions.

- One secondary school accounts for the majority of the changes in attendance and suspensions.
- Secondary schools account for more change in attendance and suspensions than primary schools.
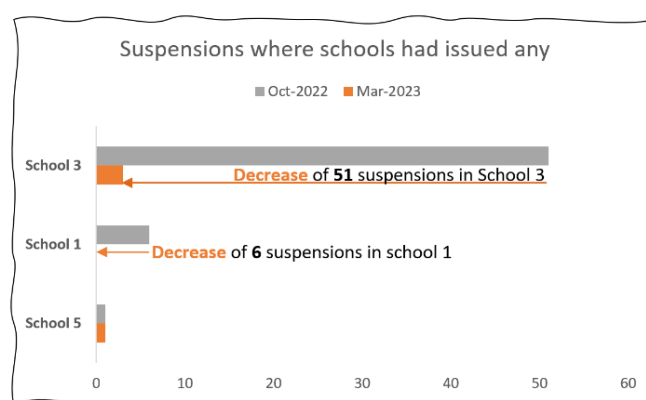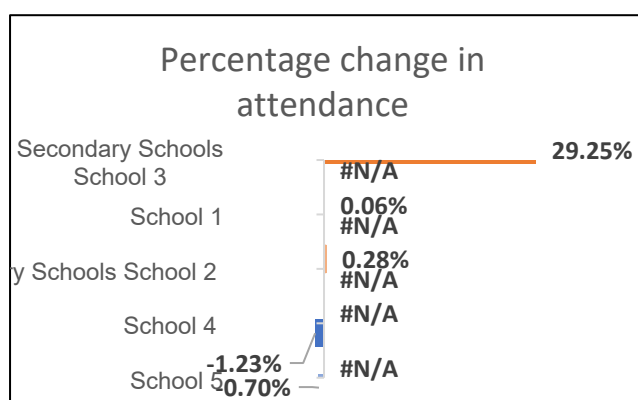
C2: Quantitative Data – Boxall Profiles (SEMH)

Boxall Profiles (Bennathan & Boxall, 2013) for each Nurture Group student were completed by a member of school staff who knew them well to provide a SEMH measure before and after their Nurture Group interventions (see below for an example of a profile completed on the NurtureUK online platform: https://www.nurtureuk.org/).
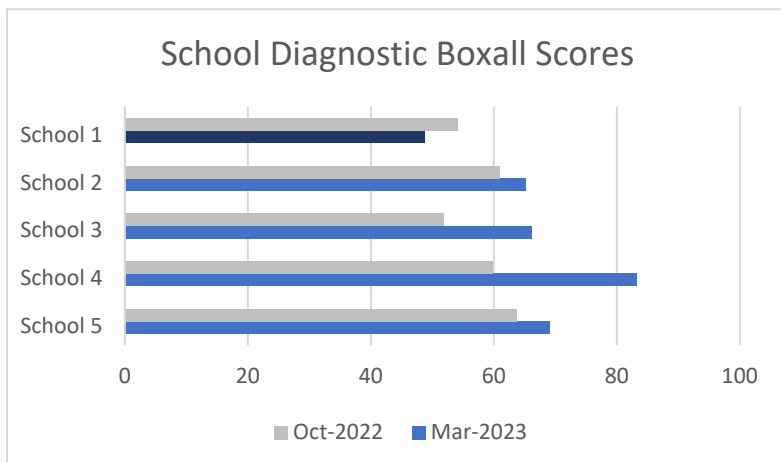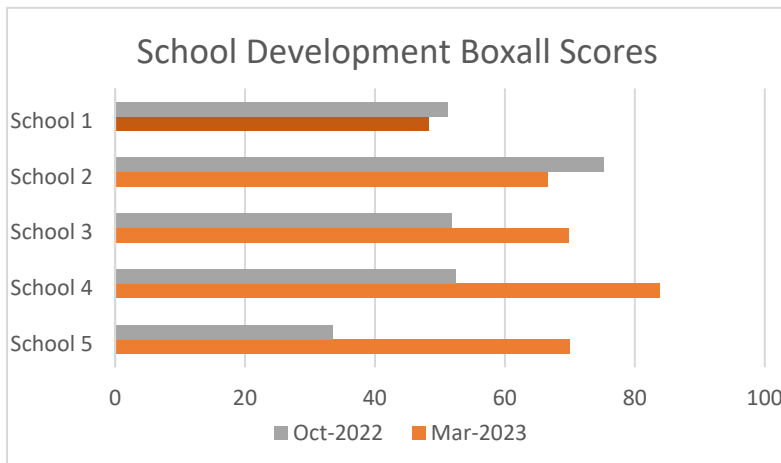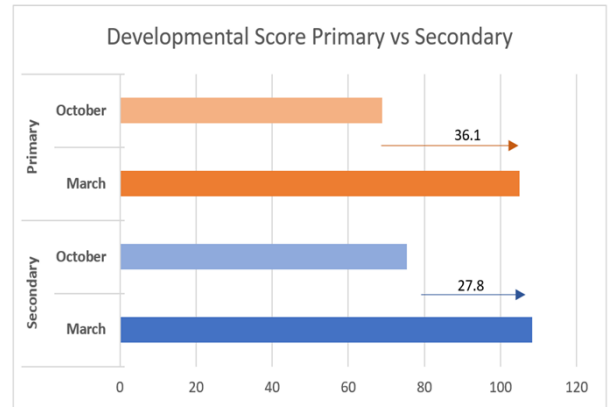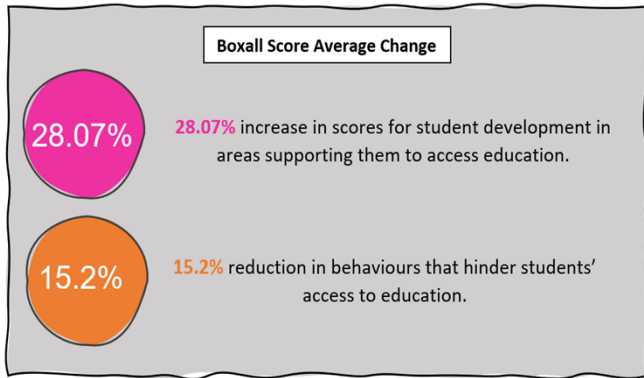
There are two different Boxall profile questionnaires – one for primary and one for secondary. The boxall is split into two sections:
- Developmental strands -the skills children need to gain from accessing the Nurture Group to enable them to engage in learning (e.g. 'Gives purposeful attention' and 'engages cognitively with peers')
- Diagnostic profile - the barriers preventing them from engaging in learning, play and self-regulation (e.g. 'Disengaged' or 'self-negating')

The aim is to have **an increase in the developmental strands** score and **a decrease in the diagnostic profile score.**

Pre- and post-intervention measures suggest significant positive impact of the Nurture Groups on SEMH:

- Effects were similar across primary and secondary schools (schools 1 and 3)
- The largest improvements were in developmental scores.

Boxall Score Average Change

28.07%

28.07% increase in scores for student development in areas supporting them to access education.

15.2%

15.2% reduction in behaviours that hinder students' access to education.

Developmental Score Primary vs Secondary

School Development Boxall Scores

School Diagnostic Boxall Scores

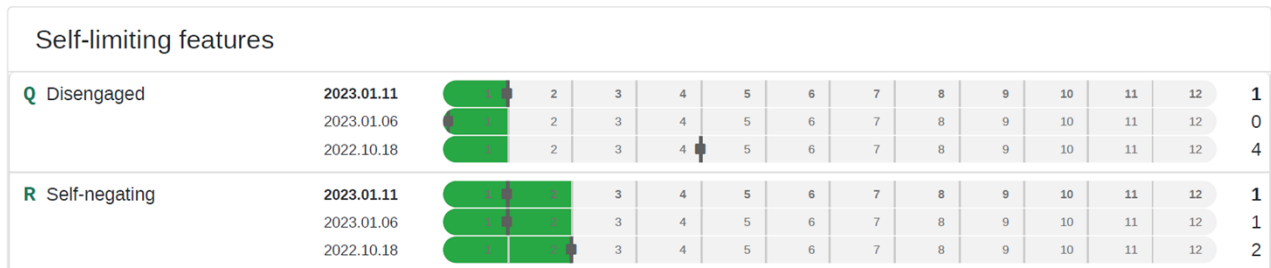Examples of a Boxall Profile developmental and diagnostic strand subsection completed for this project on the NurtureUK online platform. The green tabs to the right of the histogram are considered 'average scores in a sample of competently functioning young people aged *either primary or secondary'*. The black marker on each row is the individual young person's score; the larger the gap, the more delayed the young person is on the individual skill. The aim of the intervention is to reduce this gap.

Developmental

Organisation of experience

Strand	Date	Score
A Gives purposeful attention	2023.01.11	17
	2023.01.06	17
	2022.10.18	12
B Participates constructively	2023.01.11	10
	2023.01.06	10
	2022.10.18	8
C Connects up experiences	2023.01.11	11
	2023.01.06	12
	2022.10.18	8
D Shows insightful involvement	2023.01.11	16
	2023.01.06	19
	2022.10.18	14
E Engages cognitively with peers	2023.01.11	7
	2023.01.06	7
	2022.10.18	4

Diagnostic

Self-limiting features

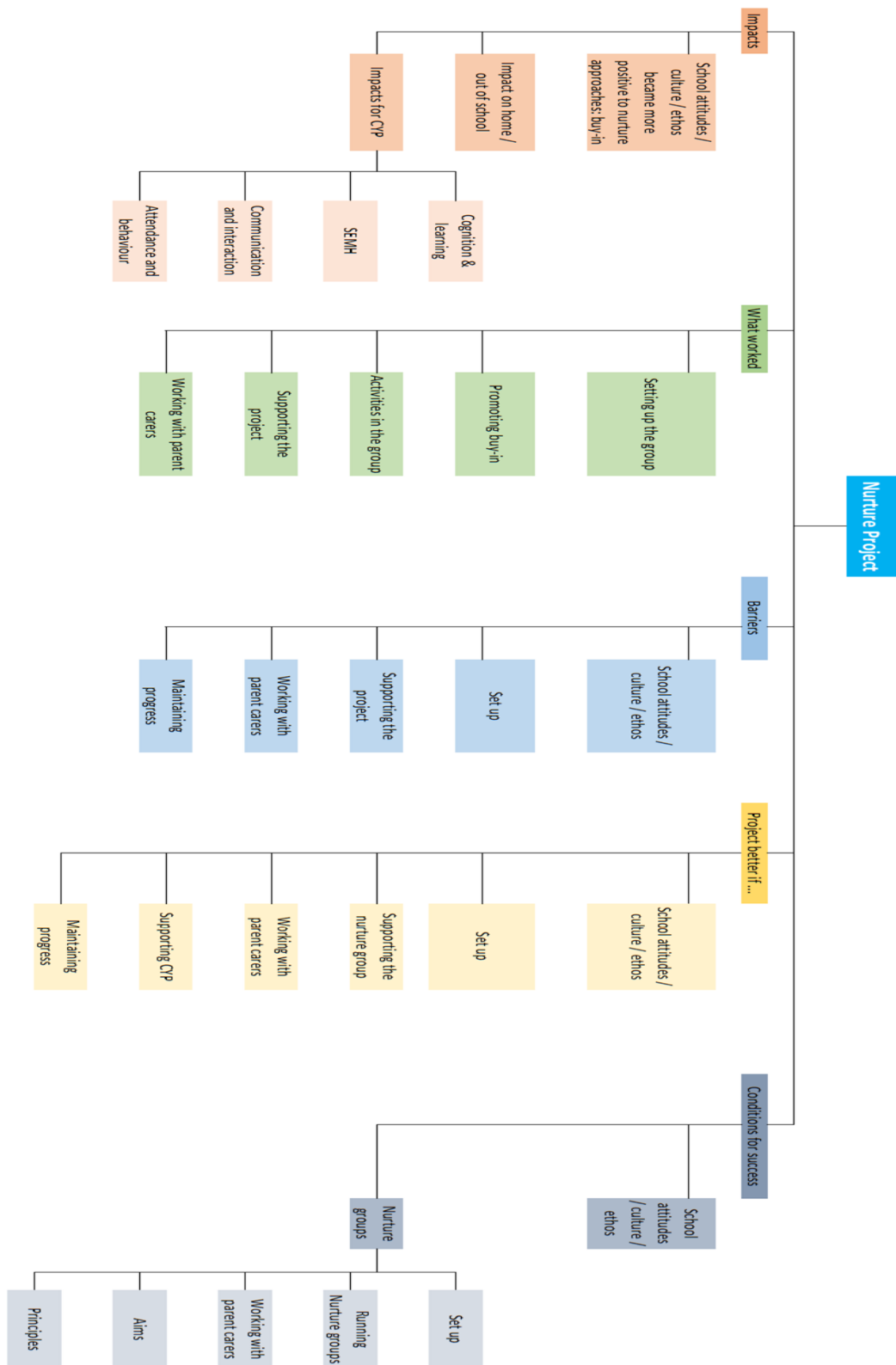| Strand	Date	Score
Q Disengaged	2023.01.11	1
	2023.01.06	0
	2022.10.18	4
R Self-negating	2023.01.11	1
	2023.01.06	1
	2022.10.18	2

C3: Nurture Lead Feedback

Nurture Lead feedback was obtained using one focus group. The focus group was conducted on Microsoft Teams. It was hoped this would be more convenient for participants and encourage attendance and allowed for recording and automatic transcription of the focus group.

An Educational Psychologist facilitated the focus group following an appreciative enquiry format (see below for the appreciative enquiry focus group schedule). An Assistant Educational Psychologist supported the focus group.

An Assistant Educational Psychologist then conducted a thematic analysis following the procedure described by Braun and Clarke (2021). The analysis generated the below thematic map:

Thematic map

Appreciative Inquiry Schedule

Introduction Thank you all for attending today's focus group. This is being run as part of the local authority's evaluative project. Michael and Hannah are facilitating this process and will have been or are due to visit your setting to gain the views of CYP attending the Nurture Group. This focus group will provide us with a space to reflect and discuss the process of implementing and running a Nurture Group. The feedback received will help to provide actionable next steps to support the implementation of Nurture Groups in North Somerset. You will have a right to confidentiality and anonymity through this process. All focus group data will be anonymised e.g., pseudonyms will be used for staff and settings. I will be recording via teams but will only process an audio recording, so your face or video won't be used. Please note that participation is voluntary, and you have a right to withdraw from the project up to a week later as the audio will be transcribed by then so we won't be able to identify you. The information collated will be used to write a report to the LA and may also be used in future publications relating to Educational Psychology. For the purposes of transcribing during the focus group please can you state your name prior to speaking. If you get disconnected at any point Michael and Hannah will re-admit you and their contact number is on the chat. I will go around now and ask each person to state their name, setting and role. Please can you also confirm verbally that you consent to being part of this project.	

Define – 'sharing constructions' Aims to promote the focus of the inquiry during the initial stages	• **How do you define nurture?** • **What's the purpose of your Nurture Group?** • **How will you know that it is successful?** Prompts – • *What is it that you are working towards?* • *What is the aim of the group?* • *What are you trying to achieve?* • *Who is your Nurture Group aimed at?* • *Tell me more?* • *How is this similar or different from others?* • *How did you get this understanding?* • *What's been the process in understanding the purpose of a Nurture Group?*
Discovery – '*the best of what is or has been*' During this initial stage, participants are invited to reflect on and discuss *the best of what is or has been.*	• Please take some time to tell me an anecdote or reflection of the best it's been in your Nurture Group?' What works? • What is that you are doing in the here and now for your Nurture Group that makes you really proud? • What factors contributed to this success? who else was involved? • How did they contribute? • Knowing what you know now, what you do wish you knew at the beginning. what could have helped to set up your Nurture Group better? Prompts – • *What image springs to mind? how does that look feel/ what do you see?* • *What's making you the best team that you could be?* • *What do you think contributed to your success as a group?* • *What does success look like? Tell me more/ and what else?* • *What do you do exceptionally well for cyp in the Nurture Group?* • *What does your setting do well for cyp in Nurture Group that we can learn from?* • *How did it positively impact you and your setting?* • *What qualities and skills helped you to be the best that you can be?*
Dream- *'what might be'* This stage involves creating a positive image for the	• 'What are your hopes, dreams and aspirations for the Nurture Group?' • Imagine at the end of the pilot your dream for the Nurture Group has been realised, what does it look like? How would it run? How would it be funded? How would your Nurture Group lead use their time?

future. Participants are invited to imagine the organisation or system at its best	- How would you feel? How would the cyp feel like and respond? - What impact has would this have on the CYP and staff in the school? - What about embedding the values and ethos of nurture in across the whole school, how would that be implemented? What or who could make this easier to achieve? Prompts – *How would you know that you've achieved your goal and what would that look like?* *And what else (pause) and what else?* *Who would be the first to notice?* *What would the parents notice?* *What would the school staff notice that is different?* *If someone else came it to visit your school, what would they notice is different in your Nurture Group?*
Design- 'what should be' Participants are invited to develop concrete proposals of their ideal organisation or system, based on previously successful examples	- In an ideal world if there were no obstacles (finances/resources/physical layout) what would your ideal Nurture Group entail? How would it run? What resources or finances would you have? What would the physical layout be like? - How can you move from where you are right now, to where you want to be? - What do you see as potential ways to achieve this future? - A local authority aspiration is for all schools to be nurture led, how would you see that being achieved in the future? Prompts – *Tell me what staffing, ethos, training and parental involvement would ideally look like?* *Can you describe several key ways forward that might make this a reality?* *Are there any approaches or practices you would hope to use in the future?* *What support do you need?* *What changes need to be made in the short-term and in the long term?* *What can others do to help you to move towards where you want to be?* *Who could be of help? Who could do more?*
Destiny- 'what will be' Participants are invited to use the outcomes of the Design phase to create new targets, fill gaps and bring all of the previous phases together into a logical conclusion. Consideration is given to how are we going to make the changes.	- Thinking about next steps how could we further embed the principles of nurture in your setting and community, who could help and how?' - If there was one action you could take to sustain the positive changes you have experienced, where would you be willing to start? Prompts- *What are your priorities to further embed whole school nurture principles?* *How do you hope to sustain the change?* *How will you further develop your practice?* *Who could you work with?* *What further training or CPD might you need?*
After last question provide a debrief and also sign post to wellbeing charities if anyone is distressed. Stay behind online to check in with anyone who might need emotional containment.	Is there anything that you wanted to share that hasn't been asked?

C4: Nurture Group student feedback

An Assistant Educational Psychologist visited each Nurture Group after children and young people had either finished their time in the provision or their time was coming to an end. The researcher met with the children and young people as a group, in their school with their nurture staff. Sessions lasted approximately an hour.

The researcher's visited five schools (three primary schools and two secondary schools) and, met with 41 students, representing 76% of the students who attended nurture provision.

The procedure was semi-structured and included discussion questions and a card choosing activity. Students also completed an adapted Kinetic Family drawing activity (Burns & Kaufman, 1971). See below for the drawing activity schedule. Each session was adapted based on the age of the child or young person and their level of language and needs.

Students were asked to pick the feelings they felt most in Nurture Group from a set of Karen Triesman Therapeutic Treasure Deck Feeling Cards ([A Therapeutic Treasure Deck of Feelings and Sentence Completion Cards (Therapeutic Treasures Collection): Amazon.co.uk: Treisman Clinical Psychologist trainer & author, Dr. Karen: 9781785923982: Books](#)).
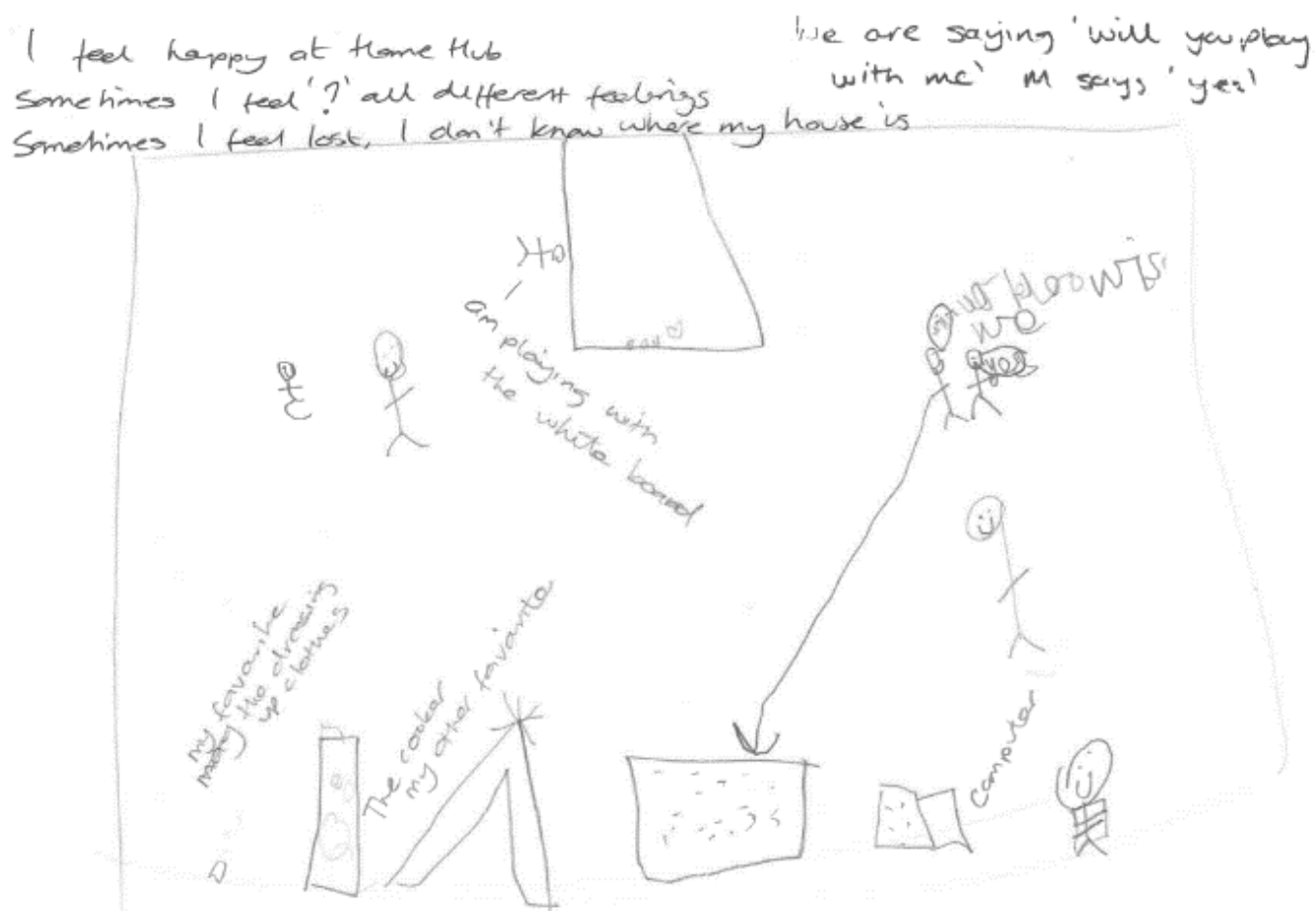
Nurture student drawings

Picture 1
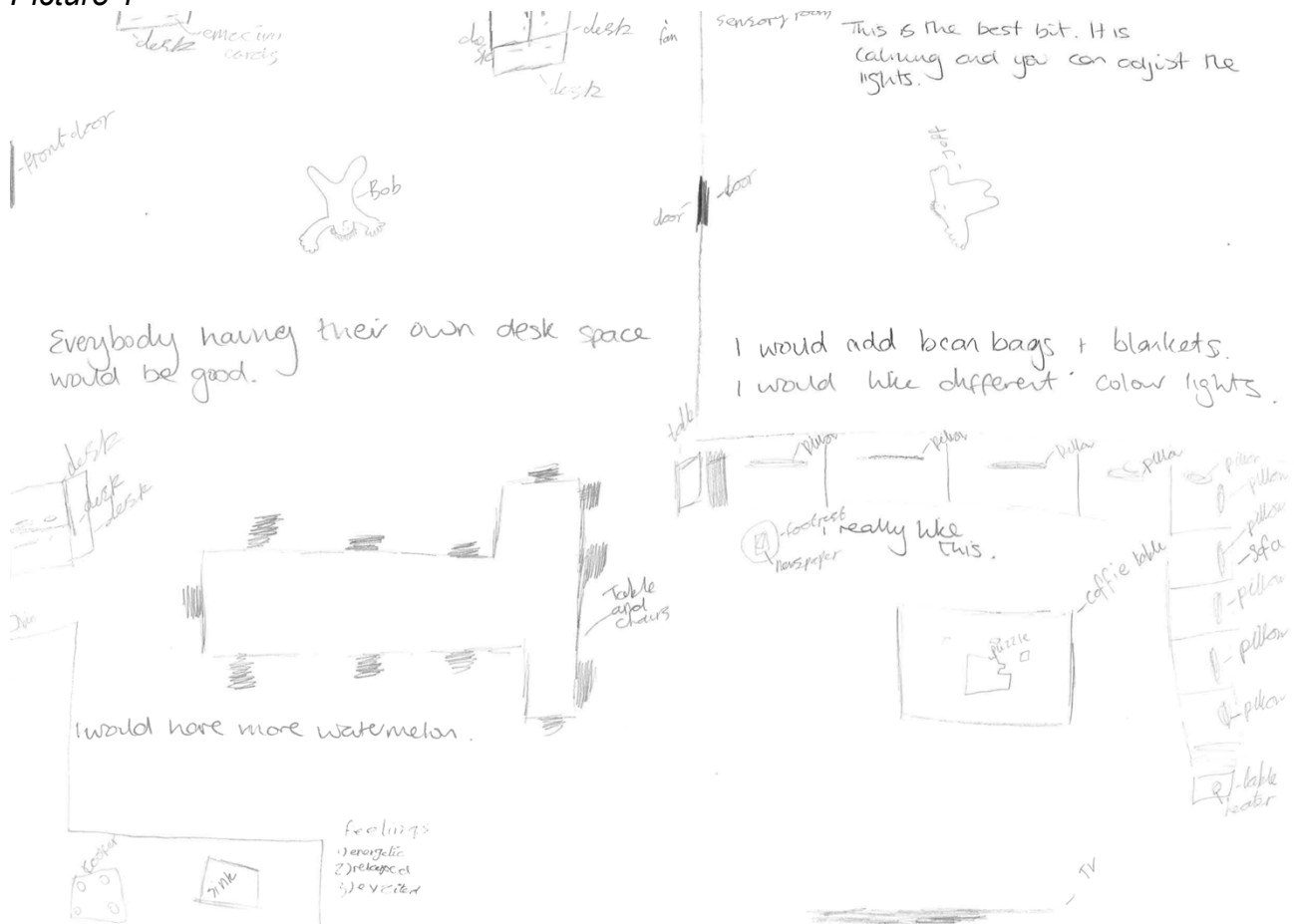
The value Nurture students placed on having comfortable areas to relax and socialise is suggested by the prominence and detail of this area in the bottom right quarter of this picture by a Year 8 student. Also, by how the student expressed to the researcher (captured in researcher notes on the picture) that they would add more comfy furnishings to improve it further.

Picture 2

I feel happy at Home Hub
Sometimes I feel '?' all different feelings
Sometimes I feel lost, I don't know where my house is

We are saying 'will you play with me' M says 'yes'

This Year 1 student drew themselves asking a friend in the group to play with them and the friend saying "yes". This supports that students developed a sense of belonging in their Nurture Groups.

Picture 3

This Year 1 student has given significant space in the bottom left of the picture to the Zones of Regulation display board and individual student Zones of Regulation charts. The student told the researcher (recorded in the notes on the picture):

> *"When I see my feelings, I can have that feeling."*

They have also drawn a sensory tent on the right of the picture, suggesting students value and use emotion regulation resources and are consciously drawing on them to develop emotional literacy.

Student voice collection schedule

Children and young people need to be provided with meaningful opportunities to share their feelings, what they like most and, what they would change about their nurture provision. Pupils need to know that it is safe and that it is important for them to express their views on what happens in their nurture provision. They need to know that what they say is valued and will be listened to and considered.

Aims:
- To collect the voices of Children and Young People (CYP) who are part of the pilot NGs in North Somerset
- To better understand CYPs experiences of nurture provision, their thoughts, and feelings

Script
Intros
Explanation of the session
- Getting your view of Nurture group because we heard you have done really well and we would like to understand what helped so other students might benefit too.
- Just some fun drawing activities, not a test, you can keep your work.

Ground rules
- For sense of safety and acceptance
- Agree rules about taking turns / listening to each other; not gossiping about what people share after the session; respecting what people say

Any questions / concerns?

Introduce each other using Bertie Bear or similar prop based on their age and needs – the person holding the bear introduces themselves and shares what they had for breakfast (this is a warming up exercise with the aim to establish a quick relationship with pupils and create a sense of safety).

Roll the Dice Game; roll the dice, what number it lands on share that number of things you like about nurture provision, if you feel you can't tell us can you show us (adapted for those who don't yet feel confidence to verbally share).

Kinetic Nurture Provision Drawings

Differentiation / preferences: Students can do own drawing on A4; on A3 / flip chart with partner / group; instruct adult what to draw (last resort if really hate drawing, zero confidence); take pictures on school phone or ipad.
If taking pictures, recording discussion will need to be on separate note paper, noting the student, the picture and what they share about the picture.

Task 1
Aim: Students draw their nurture room, including significant features of it, and something they wish it had.
Rationale: To gain perspectives on what a Nurture group is; what features are important for the students and why; how it could be better; anything they don't like.

Instructions
1. Draw your Nurture room, fill the page
2. Draw what you like, rub out what you like, we will need to do a tiny bit of writing on your picture just to catch what you are sharing because it's really important.
3. Draw so someone who never saw it before would understand what it is really like. But you can use your imagination too.
4. Give time limit
5. Prompts: draw your favourite thing; least favourite; something you wish was in the Nurture group / would make it the best Nurture group
6. Discussion: why is it your favourite (can they draw a picture to show why, label it, you label for them)

Task 2
Aim: Students draw the people in their group doing activities (free to draw what they want)
Rationale: To gain perspectives on how they see themselves and others in the group; what activities are important to them and why; their feelings towards themselves and others in the group.
Instructions
1. Draw everyone in the group, no stick drawings, they have to be doing something
2. Give time limit
3. Prompts: Draw their facial expressions; where are they in the room; are they using any of the room features you drew? Who is always there / sometimes there? Draw adults and students.
4. Discussion: why does she look like that, what just happened? Do any of these people help you, how? Is there anyone you wish could be there, why? Most important person for you?

Wrap-up *(script)*
Thanks, and appreciation
Any questions?
What happens next
- Offer they can complete drawings and forward on? Will need to give deadline.
- We will share simplified findings.

C5: Parent / carer feedback

Feedback from parent / carers of Nurture students was collected by Nurture Leads and then shared with the researchers for this evaluation. Feedback was collected during the project at parent / carer evenings and further feedback was invited by email at the end of the project.

Some highlights are shared in full below:

"I can't believe the change in him - we notice it in his comprehension and confidence."

"If they had had something like this when I was at school, things could have turned out differently for me."

"I would like to say how grateful I am that [my child] has had this opportunity to attend [nurture provision]. This has helped him feel so confident and proud of himself, he comes home saying he has done independent learning and doing great with his phonics. Thank you again."

"The [nurture provision] has provided a consistent, calm and most importantly safe environment for my son. With the consistency of the two teachers in the nurture provision he has been able to establish attachments which has been essential to his feeling safe in school. The separation anxiety which was a massive struggle for us both at his previous school disappeared very early days as he knew exactly what his day looked like and formed relationships with the same teachers. This calming environment and the routine have been able to help him regulate but most importantly learn. I was previously told that he could not learn in a school environment and certainly not work unsupported, this has been proven to be untrue as I have never known him to talk and share so much about what he's learned but also is working unsupported in many areas. Where school had previously felt unsafe the nurture provision has been an essential part of him settling in and being happy in a new school environment."

"[She] has become much more confident with her speech and vocabulary, she really tries hard to communicate more with us, and I can see her searching for words to use to explain herself much more than before. She also speaks up more with other friends and family members whereas before she would tend to shy away."

References

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