



Glasgow City Council

Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Education Services

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Nurturing approaches in Glasgow schools and early learning centres

Purpose of Report:

To inform the committee of the progression of Glasgow Education Services' 'Nurturing City' approach to supporting children and young people's emotional and social development. The strategic implementation of nurturing approaches across the city enables staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative, and efficient way for our communities.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to note the update and Education Services' work to create safe and responsive learning environments, support attuned staff and facilitate positive relationships which will promote children and young people's social and emotional development, wellbeing and engagement with learning.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No consulted: Yes No

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

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1 Why a nurturing approach in Glasgow?

1.1 Towards the Nurturing City - Our Vision

'In Glasgow we aim to ensure that all our schools and nurseries are places in which children feel welcomed, nurtured and secure. We want children and their families to feel that their needs are understood and met in our schools and nurseries. To do this we work to help all staff continually develop nurturing approaches so that they can meet the needs of all children.' Glasgow: Towards the Nurturing City

A nurturing city has schools in which children and young people feel they belong, they are listened to and they and their families are valued. The ethos of nurturing schools is supportive and all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. In nurturing schools, staff continually and collaboratively evaluate their practice to ensure that it promotes the wellbeing of all children and young people. They understand that supporting all children and young people and ensuring they make the best possible progress depends on the curriculum they provide, on learning and teaching of the highest quality and on their commitment to continuing professional development.

[Every Child Is Included and Supported](#)

1.2 Given the significant impact of poverty on the early childhood experiences of many children and young people in Glasgow, the nurturing approach allows Education Services to intervene as early as possible to support and mitigate against barriers which poverty can bring.

Through a comprehensive training programme, we enable all staff to apply the principles of nurture in all our classrooms and playrooms.

1.3 *The concept of nurture highlights the importance of social environments – who you're with, and not who you're born to – and its significant influence on social emotional skills, wellbeing and behaviour. Children and young people who have a good start in life are shown to have significant advantages over those who have experienced missing or distorted early attachments. They tend to do better at school, attend regularly, form more meaningful friendships and are significantly less likely to offend or experience physical or mental health problems.*

The nurturing approach offers a range of opportunities for children and young people to engage with missing early nurturing experiences, giving them the social and emotional skills to do well at school and with peers, develop their resilience and their capacity to deal more confidently with the trials and tribulations of life, for life.

Nurture UK

2 Glasgow's Nurturing Story

2.1 Glasgow's nurturing journey began in 2000 when four nurture groups were introduced to schools across the city. The impact of these groups was rigorously evaluated by Glasgow Educational Psychology Service (GEPS). This research

demonstrated that children who received a targeted nurturing approach made gains in social and emotional development, engagement with learning and gains in attainment. Further research indicated that the impact of nurture was also longer-term allowing Glasgow Education Services to maintain some of our most vulnerable children in Glasgow schools rather than purchasing placements outside the city.

The success of these groups led to further investment and the city now has 68 funded nurture groups in primary schools.

2.2 Nurture also became a feature of the inclusive support offered to young people at the secondary stage, with the Glasgow model for nurture being adapted to the context of secondary schools. Evaluation of these groups also showed significant impact for young people at this stage and now 16 secondary schools across the city run self-funded nurture groups. The targeted support the groups provide contributes to closing the attainment gap and improving social and emotional wellbeing.

2.3 As research into nurture continued it became apparent that many more children would benefit from a nurturing approach and so, to ensure equity of access, thinking turned to how we could ensure all children and young people benefitted from a nurturing approach in Glasgow schools and early learning centres.

2.4 In session 2012-13 the vision of *Towards a Nurturing City* was developed and Educational Psychologists delivered training on the six principles of nurture (Nurture UK) to all staff in all schools and early learning centres.

Since then, we have developed a comprehensive programme of professional learning, delivered by both educational psychologists and our Nurture Development Officer. This allows all our establishments to access training which facilitates the development of nurturing school communities.

2.5 To support our progression with the Nurturing City vision we have also developed, in partnership with Education Scotland, a framework for self-evaluating nurture practice. [Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach](#) is now widely used across Glasgow Establishments to direct their nurture journey.

2.6 Nurture in the early years has been a particular focus over the past session in line with targets from the Glasgow Integrated Children's Services Plan. An online modular training programme has been developed to fit the needs of staff in this sector with the expectation that all establishments will complete these modules over the next few years.

2.7 As a consequence of the successful implementation of a range of nurturing approaches which contribute to raising attainment and reducing exclusion, Glasgow is now a leading city in the UK with a number of other authorities in Scotland. Education colleagues in Northern Ireland and England are also being supported by Glasgow to implement nurturing approaches in their context.

3 The nurture principles

3.1 Developed by Nurture UK, the 6 principles of nurture provide a basis for understanding children's social and emotional learning needs and give us a framework for thinking about how our classrooms and playrooms can better support the developmental needs of all our children and young people.

The principles direct our thinking about what children and young people need to thrive and allow educators to better understand children's development, moderate their own behaviours and assess and plan for additional support needs.

3.2 The six principles of nurture are:



4 Support for Glasgow Education Services Staff

4.1 Nurture Steering Group

The implementation of nurturing approaches across Education Services in Glasgow is overseen by a Steering Group comprising representatives from all sectors of education and HSCP colleagues. The group focuses on staff training, quality assurance and self-evaluation, research and development, and consultation with key partners.

4.2 Nurture Development Officer

The role of Nurture Development Officer (NDO) is to support the implementation of nurturing approaches in Glasgow. Through the strategic direction of the nurture steering group, the NDO develops training packages for staff which meet the current needs of the children, families and workforce, such as nurturing staff wellbeing, recovery and reconnection during the pandemic and nurture in residential children's houses. The NDO ensures GCC nurture training for education staff is informed by up-to-date research, evidence based practice and local and national priorities such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma informed practice.

4.3 The main courses delivered by the Nurture Development Officer both run 5 times a year. These are

- The theory & practice of nurture
- Understanding the nurturing principles.

The numbers accessing Glasgow nurture training during session 2021 - 22 increased from 253 (2020 – 21 session) to 276. The courses are delivered either in person or online, to accommodate learner preferences.

The theory and practice of nurture course has been developed by Glasgow Educational Psychology Service and is rated 30 masters credits by Glasgow Caledonian University. This course enables staff to work in a nurture group or take forward whole school nurturing approaches. It is accessed mainly by GCC education staff but also colleagues from around the UK, such as Scottish Borders Council and Hertfordshire Virtual School.

4.4 The NDO and the nurture steering group host an annual Glasgow nurture conference each year, to inform education staff of current nurture developments and share good practice through keynote speakers and Glasgow nurture practitioners. This session all conference delegates rated the content highly relevant to their work. Inspiring contributions from staff and pupils emphasised the importance of relationships and have encouraged delegates to use strategies discussed on the day such as ‘upper nurture’ and focusing on being a key adult for vulnerable children. Income is generated from nurture training and the annual nurture conference.

4.5 Supporting the wellbeing of education staff is essential to help them support the children, young people and families of Glasgow. The NDO and GEPS have developed a range of training materials and courses as part of the ‘nurturing staff wellbeing’ programme. Training sessions run throughout the year which provide staff time to reflect on their own wellbeing needs and strategies to use with their own staff team.

4.6 The NDO contributes to training programmes for GCC staff such as probationer teachers, early career teachers, early years leaders and residential children’s house staff.

5 Glasgow Educational Psychology Service (GEPS)

Educational Psychologists in Glasgow support the Nurturing City vision by developing and delivering training, researching current and new practice and consulting with key stakeholders to help inform improvement priorities.

5.1 During session 2021-22 GEPS supported staff professional learning by providing input to:

- 340 Probationer Teachers who reported a greater understanding of Nurture as a whole school ethos as well as an intervention and ways to implement that within the classroom.
- 32 Establishments are currently working on targeted nurture principles as part of our whole school implementation process (14 establishments are awaiting training, totalling 46 establishments)
- 100 early years practitioners through online *Early Years Modules* developed in collaboration with colleagues in the Early Years Sector.

5.2 GEPS has also consulted with:

- 190 parents and carers on parental engagement to inform best practice guidelines for schools and to create a professional learning module on best practice in engaging with families.
- 50 teachers regarding what helps support *mental health and wellbeing*. Key themes have been identified and disseminated.
- Colleagues from the ASL Sector *through a collaborative action research project* to explore applicability of nurture in the ASL sector. Information will be used to develop a framework for this sector.

5.3 GEPS have linked with Educational Psychologists across the UK on our Glasgow Nurture model. The service also worked with Erasmus staff and publicised work via Twitter and large-scale conferences *and there has also been a [Podcast](#)* broadcast to 2,276 followers on Glasgow Nurture.

6 Nurture groups

Glasgow has nurture groups in the primary and secondary sectors. They are embedded in school policy and procedures as part of a targeted, early intervention strategy to help close the attainment gap and support the wellbeing of our most vulnerable families. Most pupils in a nurture group are in SIMD 1 & 2.

Nurture groups have particular assessment criteria, planning and evaluation. A range of activities can take place in a nurture group which help to build positive relationships and help children to make attachments to key people in school. This provides a safe base in which development in learning, social and emotional skills can take place.

6.1 Primary nurture groups in Glasgow

There are 68 GCC funded nurture groups in Glasgow. 17 in the North West, 27 in the North East and 24 in the South of the city. The funding is related to a nurture teacher and support for learning working being allocated to the school to run the nurture group. They adhere to the Glasgow model of nurture groups, which is based on research and evidenced based practice. The nurture teacher will also run groups with older pupils - upper nurture - and run weekly sessions with the parents/ carers of the children in the nurture group. This additional time with parents/ carers usually takes the form of an activity with their child and is also an opportunity to build positive relationships, with staff providing additional support and advice.

6.2 Nurture group quality assurance

Quality Assurance in our nurture groups ensures our most vulnerable children and families are being supported by staff who are knowledgeable and skilled in attachment, trauma informed practice & the nurturing principles. This deepens their understanding of the children in their care.

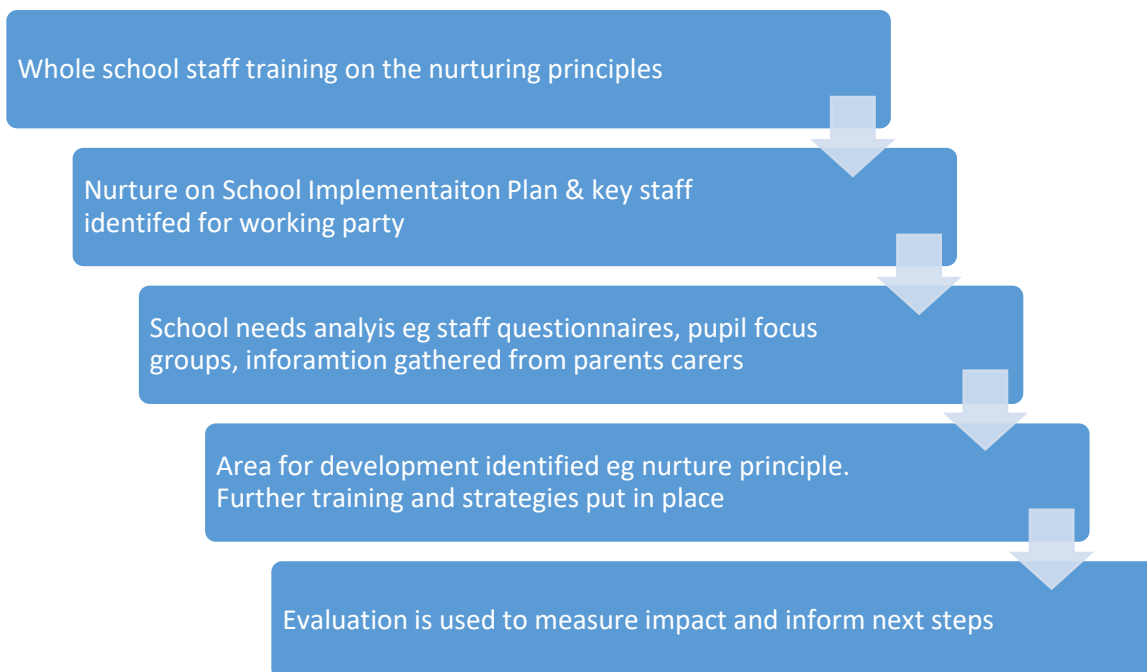
GCC nurture groups have a range of quality assurance methods including a quality assurance visit every two years to ensure good outcomes for children and fidelity to the Glasgow model of nurture.

6.3 Secondary nurture groups in Glasgow

Secondary nurture groups in Glasgow run in a similar way to primary. It is early intervention so the core group pupils will be from S1 and the group runs in the morning, usually for the first 2 periods. Additional groups can be run at other times of the day. These groups are also staffed by 2 adults; a teacher and support for learning worker who have been trained in 'the theory and practice of nurture'. There are 16 secondary schools in Glasgow who run nurture groups according to the GCC model. As with primary, there are quality assurance visits.

6.4 Whole school approaches

Glasgow has developed an implementation model for whole school nurturing approaches, which is outlined below.



To support the implementation of whole school nurturing approaches advice, consultation and training is offered from GEPS and the NDO. GEPS have developed modules on each of the 6 nurture principles to ensure a deeper understanding of how nurture informs classroom practice.

Here is a link to a [video](#) which gives examples of some whole school nurturing approaches.

7 Partnership working

7.1 HSCP: children's houses

As the nurturing city, education services continue to strengthen links with our colleagues in HSCP in order to improve outcomes for our care experienced pupils. The residential children's houses (RCH) in Glasgow are all undertaking nurture training, which began with the care experienced team supporting 1 house. The NDO is training the remaining 18 houses in a nurture programme that has been developed for the Glasgow houses, which will be completed by March 2023. There is follow up

mentor support provided by GEPS for each house. The delivery of nurturing approaches to RCH staff is part of a wider strategic system change to support the implementation & fulfilment of 'the promise' including reducing restraints. RCH managers are reporting impact in staff confidence, reduction in violent incidents and young people's engagement with education.

7.2 Other local authorities

Glasgow supports local authorities and education colleagues through consultation, training and arranging visits to Glasgow schools to see nurture groups and whole school nurture in practice.

7.2.1 Support at an authority level – Scottish Borders Council

GEPS & NDO have provided consultation & training to SBC staff to support them with how to implement a whole authority approach and to put in place nurture groups in their secondary schools, through attending the theory & practice of nurture course. The impact has been that the nurture groups are now running and this is now being developed at the primary stage. SBC colleagues continue to attend GCC training.

7.2.2 Support at school level – Scalby School, Scarborough

Scalby school in Scarborough visited Glasgow for consultation with NDO and GEPS. Visits to GCC secondaries were undertaken. Subsequently the NDO delivered training to the Scalby trust schools. The impact has been that Scalby adopted a similar nurture group model to GCC, resulting in 11 out of 12 pupils who were at risk of exclusion returning to school full time. The school are now beginning to implement whole school nurturing approaches.

7.2.3 Support for authority services: Hertfordshire Virtual School Team

Ongoing work with the virtual school team in Hertfordshire to skill all staff with a view to capacity building in Hertfordshire schools

7.2.4 Currently GCC nurture groups are hosting visits from primary school staff in East Dunbartonshire and staff from 2 secondary schools from Northern Ireland, providing practical support to help establish their nurture groups.

8 Impact

8.1 Boxall research from primary nurture groups

In session 2021 – 22 quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from GCC nurture groups to gain an overview of the impact of GCC nurture groups across the city.

This study showed that significant progress was made in all of the 20 strands of the Boxall Profile (used to assess and set targets for children), this is a very strong indicator of the validity of the GCC model and that the nurture group intervention is effective for this population. For example, the nurture groups are supporting children to make progress developmentally and with their social and emotional needs through improving listening skills, engagement in learning opportunities and building resilience. Information was also gathered from children using focus groups and from parental questionnaires. A thematic analysis was carried out which found their views on nurture groups related to feelings of safety, wellbeing, social & emotional development.

A full report of the research is available from GEPS.

8.2 Staff feedback

Feedback is gathered through course assignments and course evaluation, with a follow up to ascertain the longer term impact of the course on practice.

Here are some examples from feedback.

Areas of impact are shown in **knowledge** gained on the course:

'How to apply my knowledge into practice, through the Boxall profile to set pupil targets'

Develop/ deepen **understanding** of children's needs to support their wellbeing through nurturing approaches:

'A better understanding of how my behaviour can help a child.'

'I'll have a better understanding of why children exhibit behaviours and what can be done to help.'

Learning **skills** to implement in the classroom:

'Better able to support all the children I work with, everyone benefits from Nurture. Feel more confident when raising issues related to children with attachment issues.'

Longer term impact from follow up evaluation:

'It has already had an impact as I've used the strategies with different children in my class. I think it has encouraged me to be self-reflective regarding nurture and think about how my behaviour in situations.'

8.3 Nurture survey:

Every year Educational Psychologists carry out a survey of nurturing practice across the city. This allows us to chart progress, identify areas for development, and celebrate good practice.

In session 2021-22 this is what staff told us:

Almost all respondents said that nurturing approaches are central to their ethos. As a consequence of focusing on nurturing practice they reported:

- Improved knowledge and understanding of pupil wellbeing (92%)
- Increased use of nurture-informed strategies (73%)
- Consistency of language used (72%)
- Most reported enhanced staff wellbeing as a consequence of attending training.

8.4 Feedback from parents and carers

Feedback from parents and carers are built in to nurturing approaches.

Nurture groups

In nurture groups, parents and carers are part of the assessment process and ongoing review while their child is in a group. They are also part of the evaluation of the intervention when it is completed. Feedback themes are related to the impact of nurture on their child and the positive relationship with nurture groups staff. Here are some examples.

'I think [child] is benefitting from nurture room....she has come on in such a long way with interacting with other children'

'Thank you for inviting me to your stay and play in the Rainbow Room this morning. I had a calm and happy experience and it was also informative. It was

lovely to share some time with [child], Miss X, Miss X and other families in that nurturing environment.'

Whole school nurturing approaches

When using a whole school nurturing approach, views of parents and carers are gathered at the initial stages and then annually, which contribute to the school self evaluation procedures. They are central to the development of a nurturing school. GEPS captured this in the research paper '*The Nurturing Establishment: Gathering children and parental/carer views of their experiences of a nurturing establishment*' which was published in The International Journal of Nurture.

<https://www.nurtureuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Nurture-Journal-Vol6-2020-FInal.pdf>

Covid 19

During the pandemic parents were asked about their experiences of nurturing schools and home schooling.

They told us:

- 80% found the communication and support from establishments helpful.
- 49% were contacted daily or multiple times each week.

"I really appreciate the way the school and teachers are doing their jobs. Whenever I needed their help, they are available."

8.5 Feedback from children and young people

Feedback is gathered from pupils in a nurture group while they are in the group, related to their targets, and when they have returned to their class full time.

Here are some comments from core primary nurture group children about their time in the nurture group.

"Help me when I'm mad or sad"

"Helped me with my targets"

"Do better at listening"

"Help people when they feel sad and lonely. Make them feel better with love and care"

"Help me make friends"

"People are respectful and caring. People care about me and treat me like a big family."

Here is a video with secondary and upper nurture group children talking about the impact of being in a Glasgow nurture group.

<https://youtu.be/Z6t3C7wf4vc>

9 Current priorities

9.1 The work of the nurture steering group aligns with the GCC Integrated Children's Services Plan and supports the council priorities of raising attainment and improving the health and wellbeing of communities. In addition to ongoing support to nurture

groups and whole school environments, several areas have been identified to further embed nurturing approaches.

These include:

- Nurture in the early years
- The ASL sector,
- Parent/ carer support,
- Nurture at night-time
- Supporting new arrivals to Glasgow.

10 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications: N/A Within Current Planning

Financial:

Legal:

Personnel:

Procurement:

Council Strategic Plan: Specify which Grand Challenge (s) and Mission (s) the proposal supports. Where appropriate the relevant Commitment can also be listed.

Grand Challenge 1

Reduce poverty and inequality in in our communities

Mission 2 – Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families before and through school

Grand Challenge 2

Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our cities

Mission 3 - Raise attainment amongst children and young people

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.

Yes,

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? This paper addresses Equality Outcomes 10 & 14. Positive impact on raising attainment and improving the learning and wellbeing of school communities.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. This proposal will help to address socio- economic disadvantage

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify: N/A

What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal? N/a

Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target? N/A

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

No

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report
Y/N

If Yes, please confirm that

a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

11 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the update and Education Services' work to create safe and responsive learning environments, support attuned staff and facilitate positive relationships which will promote children and young people's social and emotional development, wellbeing and engagement with learning.