IMPROVING PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ENHANCED NURTURING APPROACHES: AN EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

Nurture interventions were offered to 15 'key to success' primary schools, following access to a core package that focused on readiness and self-evaluation. The schools involved were identified on the basis of the percentage of pupils living in deprivation. Based on the identification of need, schools were offered a range of interventions from training to consultation. Video Enhanced Reflective Practice was used as a coaching and mentoring tool throughout to develop and embed skills that underpin nurturing practice. This was supported by funding provided through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The aim of this evaluation was to determine the impact of these activities on pupils' and teachers' perception of the learning environment, and on pupils' social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A total of 380 primary aged pupils and 115 class teachers participated in the study. Independent samples t-tests revealed pupils had a significantly improved perception of the learning environment. This study illustrates that enhanced nurturing approaches allow for a more nurturing ethos to become embedded, which is of benefit to all pupils' wellbeing, including those facing poverty-related educational barriers. Moreover, it contributes to the wider literature on the positive impact of nurturing classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

This study took place in the context of improvement work carried out in 15 mainstream primary schools as part of The Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC; Education Scotland, 2018), a national initiative that seeks to raise attainment for all while also narrowing the poverty related attainment gap in seven local education authorities across Scotland. This five year funding initiative utilises The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) to target local authorities in Scotland that have the highest concentration of school children living in deprivation. SAC considers literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as the bases and catalysts for successful academic attainment. The focus of the current report is the impact of funding on health and wellbeing in one of the chosen local authorities. Fifteen schools that had access to additional funding took part in an evaluation conducted by the Educational Psychology Service over the course of 2016-17, undertaken as part of ongoing reporting to the Scottish Government. This allowed us to ascertain where schools were prior to and after a year of accessing Attainment Fund activities in relation to the desired longer-term outcomes. The anticipated long-term outcomes are outlined within the Nurture Logic Model (see **Appendix 1**). This tool was created by the project co-ordinator and SAC Lead Officer to inform planning, implementation and tracking of progress.

Since early 2016, 15 'key to success' schools across three localities have formed the 'nurture layer' of the local authority initiative. Although these schools shared a high percentage of pupils living in deprivation, there were inevitable differences in each school's circumstance and also in terms of a nurturing ethos. The overall aim was therefore to create more nurturing classrooms, schools and communities to benefit all pupils, as proposed in level 1 of Mackay's Model of Nurture in Education (Mackay, 2015). This model, along with a small yet expanding number of studies, highlights that when the nurture principles inherent within nurture groups are applied more widely across primary schools, learning and teaching is improved (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007; Doyle, 2004; Lucas, 1999). All schools therefore received a core package that focused on providing the theoretical background to nurturing practice; thereafter, schools had the opportunity to opt into bespoke offers of

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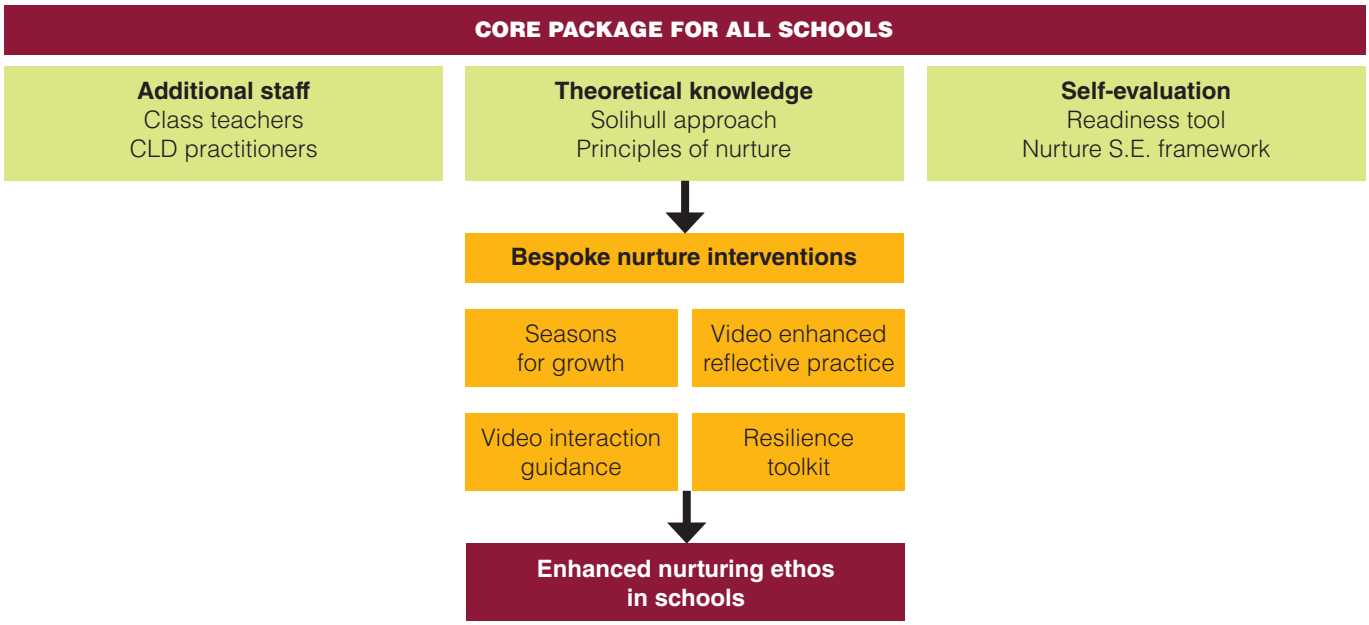
Figure 1: *Flow chart outlining core package and bespoke nurture interventions for schools*



nurture interventions to promote equity (see **Figure 1**). Implementation science guided the introduction of nurture interventions to ensure that each school's efforts were appropriately focused and tailored to address their specific needs. The Educational Psychology Service supported schools in their improvement journey using the stages of implementation detailed within the "Framework for Implementation – Nurture" (see **Appendix 2**; Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, & Wallace, 2009), along with senior colleagues from Community Learning and Development.

The Psychological Service played a fundamental role in the delivery of this core package by supporting schools with robust self-evaluation and staff development. As part of the core package, schools accessed additional class teachers to provide existing staff members with increased capacity to fully engage with the improvement work. Moreover, schools gained more intensive support from additional senior community learning and development practitioners to focus on parental engagement and family learning, in alignment with the identified nurture priorities of the school. To develop a shared vision (Fixsen et al., 2009), the Nurture Logic Model was generated to outline the desired short, medium and long term outcomes for schools to work towards. Fixsen et al. (2009) identify 'readiness and commitment' as the core component in their first stage of nurture implementation. To that end, all 15 schools involved in this improvement work firstly engaged with a readiness tool to identify their capacity for change. Following on from this, the schools began their own self-evaluation by engaging with North Lanarkshire's Nurture Self-Evaluation Framework (NLC). This framework allows each school to audit their own practice while also identifying a nurture principle that requires attention within the establishment. This identified area was then incorporated into the school's improvement plan to ensure all staff shared a clear focus. This self-evaluation activity also allowed schools to plan and assess their next steps in terms of the bespoke nurture interventions available.

There is ever growing emphasis on the importance of robust self-evaluation within schools. It is now widely recognised as being at the core of all planning within schools and is, in fact, considered an essential element of schools' practice (MacBeath, 2005). Self-evaluation is a regular and cyclical process whereby schools develop a much deeper understanding of themselves; this enables establishments to identify weaknesses and enhance strengths to more systematically embark on an improvement process. Self-evaluation is advantageous because it shifts the responsibility of developing and maintaining effective quality assurance procedures on to school leaders while also contributing to programmes of continuous professional development (Kyriakides & Campbell, 2004). Inherent however within self-improvement is the assumption that schools are ready and have capacity to embark on an improvement cycle. The information within both the readiness tool and self-evaluation framework highlighted that building staff capacity in the area of nurture was a shared focus across the schools. School staff were therefore exposed to training that explored the theory underpinning the nurturing principles. Each school also received training in the Solihull Approach (https://solihullapproachparenting.com) that reinforced and extended this thinking around the underpinnings of nurture. This core package ensured that the 15 schools were adequately prepared to further develop their nurturing practice and implement bespoke nurture interventions.

Based on learning from their self-evaluation, schools were able to identify and access any nurture interventions they felt would be advantageous. This included Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP) which was accessed by staff members from at least five of the schools. Using the principles of attunement (Birbeck et al., 2015), teachers were provided with theoretical background on the significance of communication and interaction in the classroom. The training adopts a coaching and mentoring format whereby teachers regularly use video to reflect on their practice in relation to the attunement principles, which highlights the positive impact of this. It enables teachers to apply their knowledge of nurture and resilience during their interactions with children. Furthermore, five schools accessed and received training on the use of the Resilience Toolkit (North Lanarkshire Educational Psychology Service, 2017), developed by the Psychological Service to support the planning of pupils experiencing adversity by implementing evidence based interventions. Nineteen class teachers also accessed Seasons for Growth training that equipped them to support children in their own establishment who may be experiencing loss, separation or divorce. Psychological Service also provided targeted and intensive therapeutic support in the form of Video Interaction Guidance for pupils experiencing attachment difficulties. Finally, the schools were also able to access universal offers in the areas of literacy and numeracy. Crucial to the success of this work was regular meetings throughout the term between the SAC team and the leaders of the schools, as these occasions provided the opportunity to update, provide examples of best practice and maintain focus on the long-term aims.

A social-ecological model of pupils' school experience

The social-ecological model holds that many factors, at various levels, shape the school experience and attainment of primary aged pupils (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The overarching tenet of the model is that while behaviour is understood primarily by individual differences, the context in which the behaviour occurs must also be considered. Previous research has outlined five levels within the framework: the individual child, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Barboza et al., 2009; Lee, 2011). While factors at the levels of mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem less directly impact pupils, factors at both microsystem and individual level are recurrent, immediate and apparent to the child. Moreover, although each of the aforementioned levels certainly influence pupils' school experience, it is beyond the scope of the present study to consider factors at all five levels. On that basis, only factors at an individual and microsystem level were explored, as these are considered central to children's social development (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

At the individual level, research has consistently illustrated that attainment can be best achieved when pupils are healthy, emotionally secure and psychologically at ease with themselves (Thorburn, 2014). Children considered to be 'most deprived' according to their socio-economic status however are more likely to present with social, emotional and/or behavioural issues. The research illustrates that addressing these health and wellbeing needs is central to reducing the poverty-related attainment gap (Higgins, Kokotsaki, & Coe, 2012; Sharples, Slavin, Chambers, & Sharp, 2011). Inevitably however, psychological and emotional attributes of students' learning are susceptible to change from the environment and social interactions (Sedlacek, 2005).

In accordance with the social-ecological viewpoint, contextual factors have been identified as central to facilitating effective whole school approaches aimed at developing pupils' social and emotional skills. Moreover, one of the most important aspects in ensuring an intervention continues to have a positive impact after its cessation is pupils' perceived quality of their learning environment (Bailey, Duncan, Odgers, & Yu, 2017). Indeed, the learning environment is often conceptualised as both teachers' and pupils' subjective perception of the learning setting (Frenzel, Pekrun, & Goetz, 2007). Studies have frequently demonstrated the powerful effects of the way in which pupils perceive their school, teacher and classmates on key outcomes. For example, both pupils' and teachers' sense of school cohesion has been found to promote successful pupil outcomes (Stewart, 2008) and equally, pupils like school more when they feel supported by their teacher and peers (Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, & Delucchi, 1996). Similarly, pupils who feel accepted within their school have an overall more positive orientation towards school, their teacher and classwork (Osterman, 2000). This research suggests positive pupil outcomes are more likely to occur when teachers and pupils share a common positive view of the learning environment.

Ireson & Hallam (2005) provide some explanation of these findings as they argue that pupils who feel supported within the school community are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and to become autonomous learners; thereby increasing the chances of positive pupil outcomes. Longitudinal research (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007; Wang & Holcombe, 2010) strengthens this view, as it found pupils' perceptions of the learning environment shaped their level of school participation and engagement the following academic year, consequently influencing their academic attainment. Interestingly, pupil perception of the learning environment was also found to influence pupils' utilisation of self-regulation strategies, the use of which has been found to improve learning achievement (Zimmerman, 2000). Combined,

this body of research evidences the impact of social-ecological factors at both individual and microsystem level on children's wellbeing, learning experience and academic success.

Aim

The aim of this evaluation was to determine the following:

1. Have there been improvements in both teachers' and pupils' perception of the learning environment as a result of the Attainment Fund activities focused on enhancing nurturing approaches?
2. Have pupils' social, emotional and behavioural difficulties reduced?

METHOD

Participants

Pupils

Data included in this evaluation comes from pupils within the 15 nurture layer schools. These pupils were selected using stratified random sampling on the basis that they were living within deciles 1, 2 or 3 and were therefore considered 'most deprived' (according to the SIMD 2012). Within the 15 schools, three pupils from each class were randomly identified from a database and invited to participate. Participants were aged five to 11 years from Primary 1-7 classes. As the testing period spanned two academic years, children had moved on a stage at the time of post-test and, in some instances, had either left the school (n=18) or had a new decile that meant they were no longer considered 'most deprived' (n=124; according to the updated SIMD 2016). As a result, the Primary 7 pupils from pre-test had now moved on to secondary school. Likewise, the new Primary 1s who were randomly selected from the database in a similar manner (based on their SIMD 2016 categorisation) had not participated at pre-test. This meant that although proportionate sampling was achieved at pre-test, this was not entirely possible at post-test. The number of overall participants therefore varied from pre (n=381; 188 males and 193 females) to post test (n=337; 178 males and 159 females), as did the number of participants within each SIMD decile. Despite the decile changes, the majority of participants remained to be considered 'most deprived' at post-test (i.e. 90.5%).

Class teachers

Data included in this evaluation also comes from class teachers within the 15 nurture layer schools. Due to changes in staffing and movement between stages, it was not necessarily the same teachers included in the evaluation from pre to post test (n=111 and n=115, respectively). Only one school did not have their class teachers complete the 'My Class Inventories' (MCI), meaning the data on teacher perception is representative of 14 schools.

Measures

Pupils

Pupils completed a MCI (Fisher & Fraser, 1981) to capture their perception of their current learning environment. This measure has 25 items constituting five subscales: satisfaction with classwork, friction among peers, sense of competition among them and classmates, level of difficulty with classwork, and sense of cohesion among the class (Fraser, 1998). It was therefore anticipated that a more nurturing ethos would be evidenced through improvements in these areas. The measure is considered internally reliable with a Cronbach Alpha of .58 to .82 for the various subscales (Fisher & Fraser, 1981).

Class teachers

Class teachers also completed a MCI based on their perception of their classroom and pupils within their class. They then completed a Strength and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997) for each of the three identified children in their class. The SDQ is an extensively used brief behavioural screening questionnaire designed for children aged four to 17 years. The SDQ contains 25 items covering five subscales, each with five items describing positive and negative attributes of children. The five subscales are: emotional problems, hyperactivity, conduct problems, peer problems and prosocial behaviour. The SDQ total difficulties score, which is the sum of the emotional, conduct, hyperactivity and peer subscales, has been found to be a sound measure of overall child mental health problems in studies from around the world (Achenbach et al., 2008; Goodman & Goodman, 2009; Klasen et al., 2000). Internal reliability for the teacher rated questionnaire has been found to range from .63 to .83 across the subscales; with test-retest reliability ranging from .72 to .85 (Stone, Otten, Engels, Vermulst, & Janssens, 2010). The SDQ therefore provides a valid measure of children's social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Goodman, Ford, Simmons, Gatward, & Meltzer, 2000).

Procedure

The evaluation was undertaken over the course of a year, with children and class teachers participating at two set time points one year apart – March 2016 and February/March 2017. This provided a baseline of pupils' health and wellbeing prior to schools accessing the core package and any bespoke offers, and then again after a year of being within the nurture layer. Given that the pupils involved at pre-test had moved on a stage at the point of post-test, they therefore had a new class teacher and similarly, the class teachers had a new class of pupils. The data was therefore explored at a school level with comparisons of each stage being made to determine if for instance, pupils' perceptions of the learning environment at Primary 3 had improved this

year as a result of the activities. The procedure for collecting data was replicated at both time points of the evaluation, meaning the data was collected in the same manner for both pre and post-test. SDQ and the Teacher MCI were distributed to class teachers approximately a month prior to a research and development officer visiting the school (i.e. visiting in March 2016 and then again in February/March 2017), to ensure teachers had adequate time to complete these in full. A research and development officer then visited the schools to support the participating pupils with completing the MCI measure. Pupils were taken out in small groups (maximum nine per group), depending on their stage and abilities. At this visit, the research and development officer provided verbal instructions to the group of pupils on how to complete the MCI and the measures completed by class teachers were collected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *Have there been improvements in both teachers' and pupils' perception of the learning environment as a result of the Attainment Fund activities focused on enhancing nurturing approaches?*

Appropriate data assumptions were explored prior to statistical analysis of the pre and post measures. The output of these allowed for parametric statistics to be conducted, and so independent samples t-tests were used for mean comparisons. Comparisons of means were explored from 2016-2017 for each primary stage across the measures. Considering the numerous opportunities the schools had accessed, it was anticipated that whole school developments would have ensued and therefore same stage comparisons were viable and should evidence improvements in pupils' and teachers' perceptions. Given the number of variables being compared and therefore the increased likelihood of a Type 1 error, a Bonferroni adjustment was used to raise the level at which results would be accepted as statistically significant to $p < 0.01$.

Independent samples t-tests were employed to analyse the MCIs completed by pupils and teachers. In terms of pupils' perception of the learning environment, the results varied depending on the stage of pupils. Significant improvements were found for Primary 4 pupils' perception of the learning environment in terms of enhanced satisfaction and reduced friction (see **Table 1**). For all other primary stages, no significant changes were found.

The teacher-rated MCI did not reveal any significant changes. It should be noted however that teachers' means on the pre-MCI indicated a very positive perception of their learning environment prior to Attainment Fund activities occurring.

Research Question 2: *Have pupils' social, emotional and behavioural difficulties reduced?*

SDQs did not reveal significant changes across the primary stages.

Table 1: *Primary 4 Pupil MCI, mean, independent samples t-test and effect size*

Aspects of learning environment	Mean pre (n=51)	Mean post (n=54)	Independent samples t-test	Significance (p) Effect size (d)
Satisfaction	11.08	12.48	t = -2.778	p = .007* d = 0.54
Friction	12.00	9.96	t = 3.169	p = .002* d = 0.62
Competition	12.10	11.85	t = 0.398	p = .691 n.s.
Difficulty	7.27	7.46	t = -0.426	p = .671 n.s.
Cohesion	10.82	10.78	t = -0.066	p = .947 n.s.

*significant p-values

DISCUSSION

The results outlined above demonstrate that Primary 4 pupils from the 'key to success' primary schools had improved perceptions of their learning environment following a year of nurture interventions provided through SAC. These findings appear to highlight that schools' efforts to embed nurturing approaches are effectively contributing to a more positive and supportive environment for pupils in school, including those facing poverty-related educational barriers. This is extremely encouraging given that the literature has consistently demonstrated that a positive perception of learning environment increases a pupil's sense of belonging to a school (Stewart, 2008), motivation to achieve (Ireson & Hallam, 2005), engagement and academic attainment (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). A supportive learning environment is also thought to act as a buffer to children's potentially challenging personal circumstances.

No significant changes were found to pupils' social, emotional and behavioural functioning in the SDQ. It should be noted however that as the teacher-rated version of the SDQ was employed for this study, their observations of pupils may not have fully detected sensitive changes in this area of wellbeing. To avoid this, future studies could perhaps utilise the self-report version of the measure, where age appropriate.

The current study has allowed for important progress to be made towards nurture in education becoming a universal concept as opposed to the benefit of only vulnerable pupils, by upskilling whole school staff teams in the theory and practice of nurturing approaches (Mackay, 2015). Furthermore, while there is a wealth of evidence on the positive outcomes achieved from the provision of targeted nurture groups, there is significantly less around whole school nurture provisions. This is regrettable given that nurture groups are not always feasible. Moreover, whole school nurturing approaches can reduce the need for this level of support. The current study goes some way to address this, as well as tackling Mackay et al's call to 'investigate different models in comparison with traditional nurture group structures' (MacKay, Reynolds, & Kearney, 2010).

Limitations

One possible limitation of this study is that because children had a new class teacher and had most likely moved to a new classroom by the time of post-test, their perception of the learning environment would inevitably differ. Given the shared focus however on nurturing approaches, whole school changes were expected and improvements should have been visible at every stage. With this evaluation returning significant positive trends, this indicates improvements did not happen by chance as children could easily have disliked their new class. Furthermore, it is unlikely that their classmates changed from year-to-year, nor the curricular areas they engage with, and as demonstrated previously these are very salient aspects of the classroom experience. This therefore means that improvements occurred despite many determinants remaining the same.

Another possible limitation is that the measures of learning environment employed for this evaluation were self-reported by nature and provided only perception data. Self-report perception data is of course confounded by individual respondents' personal beliefs and biases. To minimise this limitation however, both teacher and pupil perceptions of the learning environment were gathered, allowing for triangulation of teachers' views with those of their pupils; therefore meaning the data included in this study came from the whole school population. Furthermore, social desirability effects are to be expected when teachers are reporting on their own classroom. Efforts were made to combat this, by having teachers and pupils complete the measures entirely independently from the external researchers carrying out the study, and assuring all participants that their responses would be anonymised and confidential; this therefore increased the chances of participants providing their honest views within their responses. Generally, the trends found in teachers' perceptions were similar to those of their pupils, which enhanced the reliability of the perception data. As noted in the results however, teachers' perceptions did not change significantly from pre to post-test. This is most likely due to teachers reporting so positively about the learning environment at pre-test, which did not allow for substantial improvements to be evidenced at post-test.

The bespoke approach that was necessary across the schools inevitably led to variation in the way in which they each worked to enhance nurturing approaches and in what they accessed. The current evaluation was limited therefore by only being able to capture the combined efforts across the schools and not the outcomes of any particular activity (i.e. specific outcomes of training around the nurture principles etc.). Moreover, schools were able to access training in the area of literacy during the time period covered within the present evaluation. This cannot be discounted as a potentially confounding variable. It should be noted however that uptake of literacy development opportunities was a voluntary extra and so only a small portion of the schools included in this evaluation accessed these.

In terms of the study's methodology, it was limited by having no matched control schools. This makes it more challenging to attribute the improvements in learning environment to the core package and

bespoke interventions that schools accessed. This was unavoidable however given the exploratory nature of the evaluation. Moreover, other schools in the same local authority that were similar in terms of deprivation, were themselves part of either the 'literacy layer' or 'numeracy layer' of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, and so could not provide a suitable control sample given the activities they were engaging in.

Future recommendations

In relation to the Nurture Logic Model, the results of this evaluation confirm that schools are meeting the anticipated medium term outcomes, i.e. 'Staff members are applying the nurture principles in practice' and 'All schools undertake opportunities for bespoke training based on self-evaluation'. In terms of the longer-term outcomes that are not anticipated until 2020, results suggest that schools are on track to meet these. The data, for example, shows that at least a proportion of children within the nurture layer are showing trends in the desired direction. Future studies could revisit this sample of children and explore the long-term impact of the desired outcomes.

The current study explored the combined impact of a core package and nurture interventions on pupils' perceptions of the learning environment and their social, emotional and behavioural functioning. These areas, while important and appropriate for this evaluation, are not representative of all aspects of health and wellbeing. Further research could therefore seek to explore the impact of such activity on other aspects of health and wellbeing, such as life satisfaction and so on. Moreover, the study did not include an attainment measure pre and/or post-test and so the impact on participants' attainment could not be determined. A recent study however, conducted in a similar local context, demonstrated the positive effect of enhanced nurturing approaches on attainment (MacKay et al., 2010). Future studies could incorporate this into their research design and explore the causal links between the two more explicitly.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this evaluation highlight the benefits of enhancing nurturing approaches in primary schools where a large number of pupils are facing poverty-related educational barriers. Beyond the core package that schools involved in this evaluation accessed, they were also exposed to a range of professional development opportunities and targeted nurture interventions. Combined, these efforts have benefited pupils' experience of the learning environment. This is in accordance with the most recent proposed model of nurture in education; particularly level 1 "nurturing schools and communities", that is intended to benefit all children, not just those who have needs which require access to a more intensive nurture group setting. A follow up evaluation after some time may be beneficial to explore the extent to which the positive improvements found in this study have been sustained.

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APPENDIX 1: CANcan Nurture Logic Model

"To raise attainment and narrow the poverty related attainment gap in North Lanarkshire"

INPUTS
What do we invest?

Time and expertise of:
- Head teachers
- Teachers
- Educational Psychologists
- CLD Staff
- Continuous Improvement Service

Additional (from funding):
- Backfill Teachers
- Additional Teachers
- CLD Senior Practitioners
- SAC Attainment Advisor (ES)

Funding from:
- CANcan

OUTPUTS

What we do

Develop capacity of teachers and other staff involved in support centred around the school

Develop sustainable systems to promote and enhance parental engagement in children's wellbeing and learning

Develop a framework for self-evaluation of nurture approaches and implement the use of such

Support schools through improvement planning cycle to begin embedding nurturing principles into practice

Provide bespoke staff development opportunities on:
- The Solihull Approach
- The principles of nurture
- Understanding attachment
- Therapeutic Intervention using Video Interaction Guidance (VIG)
- Teacher interactions and attunement using Video Enhanced Reflective Practice (VERP)
- Seasons for Growth for children experiencing loss, divorce or separation
- The Resilience Toolkit to enhance planning for children experiencing adversity

What we reach

School aged children

School aged children residing in SIMD 1/2/3

Head Teachers, Teachers & School Staff

Educational Psychologists

Parents

CLD Senior Practitioners

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

Additionality:
- Schools effectively utilising additional staffing

Staff-evaluation:
- NLC's Nurture Self-Evaluation (SEF) Framework and training package established (aligned with HGIOS 4)
- 22 Nurture Layer Head Teachers and 12 CLD Senior Practitioners participate in professional development and training in use of NLC's Nurture SEF
- 22 Nurture Layer schools complete readiness tool, Nurture SEF, determine baseline and assess next steps

Building staff capacity:
- n% of staff trained in the Solihull Approach
- n% of staff trained in nurture principles
- n% of staff trained in understanding attachment
- n% of staff trained in VIG
- n% of staff trained in VERP

School improvement planning:
- 22 Nurture Layer schools include nurture priority in their school improvement plan for 2016-17

Monitoring and tracking:
- Establish baseline data for 22 Nurture Layer schools
- Provide feedback to schools on baseline data to inform planning
- All schools are able to identify children living in SIMD 1, 2 & 3
- Identify school training and support needs

Narrowing attainment gap (targeted):
- School staff effectively identify and support children with compromised emotional wellbeing
- Children with unmet attachment needs benefit from relational approaches embedded in school ethos

MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES

Raising attainment for all, i.e. universal:

Self-evaluation:
- All schools will be implementing the NL Nurture SEF as part of ongoing improvement planning

Building staff capacity:
- n% of staff are applying the nurture principles in practice
- n% of staff demonstrate changes in attuned interaction
- All schools undertake opportunities for bespoke training based on self-evaluation

Outcomes for children:
- Emotional wellbeing of children in sample group will have improved as measured by SDQ
- Children's perception of classroom ethos will be more positive
- Monitoring and tracking data will demonstrate positive changes to attainment

Narrowing the attainment gap, i.e. targeted:

Building staff capacity:
- School staff continue to effectively identify and support children with compromised wellbeing
- n% of staff use effective planning for children with adverse childhood experiences

Monitoring and tracking:
- Establish baselines for 22 nurture layer schools
- All schools are able to identify children living in SIMD 1, 2 & 3 who are being targeted, and how their wellbeing is being improved
- Effective implementation of targeted interventions to support wellbeing
- Schools are using effective measures to record child progress and then inform potential future interventions

Narrowing the attainment gap, i.e. targeted:

Building staff capacity:
- School staff effectively identify and support children with literacy difficulties
- n% of staff using literacy interventions, i.e. Wave 3, Better Reading, Rainbow Reading, VERP, More to follow

Monitoring and tracking:
- All schools are able to identify children living in SIMD 1, 2 & 3
- All schools are able to identify how these children are progressing in literacy
- Effective implementation of targeted literacy interventions
- Schools are using effective measures of literacy intervention impact, to record child progress and then inform future teaching

LONG TERM OUTCOMES
(anticipated 2020)

Raising attainment for all children in North Lanarkshire:
- 90% of children meet their developmental milestones by the end of primary 1
- 90% of children meet their developmental milestones by the end of primary 4
- 90% of children meet their developmental milestones by the end of primary 7

To reduce the poverty-related attainment gap:
- n% reduction of children in SIMD 1, 2 & 3 with compromised emotional wellbeing in Primary 1
- n% reduction of children in SIMD 1, 2 & 3 with compromised emotional wellbeing by end of Primary 4
- n% reduction of children in SIMD 1, 2 & 3 with compromised emotional wellbeing by end of Primary 7

To reduce the poverty related attainment gap by 20% (gather/check baseline data to confirm figure):
- n% reduction of children in SIMD 1, 2 & 3 not meeting their developmental milestones in literacy by the end of primary 1
- n% reduction of children in SIMD 1, 2 & 3 not meeting their developmental milestones in literacy by the end of primary 4
- n% reduction of children in SIMD 1, 2 & 3 not meeting their developmental milestones in literacy by the end

APPENDIX 2: Framework for implementation – nurture

(Adapted from Fixsen et al., 2009)

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION	CORE COMPONENT	POSSIBLE TASKS	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	NEXT STEPS
1. Exploration & adoption • Getting ready for change	**Readiness and commitment (needs analysis)** Develop capacity of teachers and other staff involved in support centred around the school • Collect data • Gather views • Readiness for change • Involve stakeholders • Evaluation measures	Use a readiness checklist to assess readiness for change Gather data from school – SIMD, exclusions, attendance, ASN referrals Consult with stakeholders on their views on needs of school Decide on evaluation measures to be used		
	Developing a clear vision • Research evidence • Goodness of fit (evidence and data) • Linking to policies and practices	Look at research evidence into nurture groups/ nurturing approaches Decide on whether a NA and/ or NG best fits needs of your context Carry out a SWOT analysis Link with school's current ethos, priorities, plans		
	Implementation group (timeline, vision, etc)	Set up an Implementation/ Steering Group (consider who to invite)		
2. Installation • Capturing hearts and minds	**Building knowledge, understanding and confidence** Staff selection • Identify appropriate staff to support training, implementation, etc. Pre and in-service training • Awareness raising (all staff) • SMT involvement • In-depth training for implementation group	Identify the key staff who will take forward training for staff – in whole school and targeted approaches Arrange an awareness raising session for all staff on Nurturing Approaches Ensure that all SMT have an understanding of a NA Arrange for additional training for those who are more involved in the implementation of Nurture		
	Organisational structures Resources • Financial, organisational, human • Physical capacity of school Consultation and coaching • Who will coach • How will they coach	Explore capacity within school to take NA/NG forward Consider how you can access additional funding for either a NA or NG Apply for funding for staff/ resources/training Decide on who is best to take coaching forward, eg. psychological service Explore whether LA has a model for coaching and support Consider whether action research might support implementation		

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION	CORE COMPONENT	POSSIBLE TASKS	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	NEXT STEPS
	Policies and procedures • Continue to check fit with school's current plans and procedures – keep, rebrand or let go of those that don't fit • Include on school improvement plan	Ensure that a nurturing approach fits with current policies and procedures – adapt policies that are congruent with this approach and rebrand or get rid of those that don't fit with this approach Include the implementation of nurture on your SIP		
	Evaluation and measurement	Decide on what measures will be used to keep track of progress – individual pupil HWB measures, staff attitude, environment audit, parent questionnaires, attainment		
3. Initial implementation • Getting the ball rolling	**Developing practice (focusing on the vision)** **Whole school** (vision, roles, tracking, procedures, evaluations) **Nurture group** (identification and assessment, target setting)	**Whole school** Identify nurture principles that you will focus on Train whole staff in nurturing approaches Identify implementation group meetings/evaluation points, etc. in school calendar Develop classroom practice around nurturing approaches – discuss these at staff meetings, PRDs, etc. Decide on staff who will monitor progress and support implementation. Discuss and implement nurturing approaches to support pupils – discuss at staged intervention meetings, etc. Develop nurturing communities within the school – break time buddies, family support, groupwork. Discuss NAs and principles at staff meetings, assemblies **Nurture groups** Timetable NG staff time for assessment, NG classes, etc. Gather assessment data on children. Discuss children to be included in NG – set up appropriate selection processes Consider how to allow time for mainstream teachers and NG teachers to liaise. Liaise with parents/carers Set clear targets for NG children and review regularly.		
	Problem identification and solution finding • Accept barriers/problems as part of process • Provide opportunities to discuss these and find solutions • Continue to gather evidence and data and ensure decisions are based around these	Ensure coaching/mentoring procedures take place to share successes/ problems Set up opportunities to share classroom experience – teacher learning conversations Set up networking opportunities for staff or embark on an action research group to monitor and evaluate practice Continue to evaluate and measure impact		

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION	CORE COMPONENT	POSSIBLE TASKS	WHERE ARE WE NOW?	NEXT STEPS
4. Full implementation • Making it natural	**Gaining Momentum** • Leadership – keep on agenda • Share aims with all • Update policies • Information sharing	Ensure the aims of the intervention are understood and shared by all staff, pupils, parents/carers and the wider community including partner agencies. Develop a communication/information sharing strategy. Key members of staff should model the approach – use the relevant language Keep on SMT agenda Update whole staff, pupils parent council on progress using a wide variety of communication channels. Development of an information sheet or information on the website on nurturing approaches for parents/carers		
	Continued training and support for whole school community • Learning rounds • Involvement of children/yp • Involvement of parents/ carers	Follow up on whole staff training by providing more detailed, needs led training Provide opportunities for staff to observe others lessons (learning rounds), see observation profile Introduce nurturing approach and nurturing principles to children/young person and parents/carers. Highlight and share innovative practice		
	Monitor and review progress • Continue to gather evidence in relation to progress/ impact • Embed in systems – use language	Use action research or other evaluative measures to ensure that changes have had an impact Make changes and adapt where necessary Use language associated with a Nurturing approach		
Sustainability	Planning for short and long term • Plan for ongoing evaluation • Maintain and review systems • Ensuring planning for long term sustainability	Update evaluations in line with how NA is developing Use self-evaluation to ensure implementation is going well and look at next steps Discuss succession planning for different roles – eg. NG teacher, NA lead.		