

Time to Nurture

Responding to the social-emotional development crisis in our schools

Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties are on the rise for pupils across England's schools.¹

Yet too often, the causes of these difficulties remain unidentified and unaddressed^{2 3}- meaning many children are unable to achieve and thrive at school.

This report, spanning 2017/18 to 2023/24, draws on the largest dataset on pupil social-emotional development in England, based on over 850,000 Boxall Profile® Online assessments completed for almost half a million pupils (482,813).

Our findings suggest that identifying and addressing children's social-emotional development needs is associated with better pupil wellbeing, behaviour and ability to learn.

Despite this, schools are not currently required, supported or incentivised to assess these foundational needs - or understand and respond to them.

1. [Special Educational Needs in England, Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/672423/special_educational_needs_in_england.pdf)

2. [Identifying SEND, Education Policy Institute](https://www.educationpolicyinstitute.org.uk/identifying-send/)

3. [Now you see us report, nurtureuk](https://www.nurtureuk.org/now-you-see-us-report/)



“I find it really hard to imagine how you could develop inclusive practice unless nurture is absolutely at the heart of it.”

Lucy Stephen, Director of Learning Support,
Homewood School and
Sixth Form Centre

Findings and recommendations

Our key findings:

- Social-emotional development needs are widespread and often hidden.
- Using nurtureuk tools and interventions to identify and address pupils' social-emotional development needs is associated with improved behaviour and attendance, and reduced suspensions and exclusions.

Our recommendations for Government:

Ensure schools have the support they need to identify and address pupils' social-emotional development needs.

- Reduce the cost of lost learning and enable early intervention by funding universal social-emotional assessment in schools, supported by DfE statutory guidance.
- Tackle escalating costs associated with pupil exclusion by investing in effective whole-school nurturing approaches.

The report presents data on the levels of social-emotional development needs in schools nationwide, and builds on previous nurtureuk research from 2018.

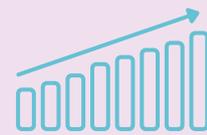
The need to nurture our children's social and emotional development has never been more urgent.

The full report offers a clear, practical two-step approach already working in thousands of schools: identify social-emotional development needs early, and respond through inclusive, relational practice. Real change begins when we understand each child's unique needs - and act on them.



43%

of pupils have moderate or high social-emotional needs



Since 2018, the proportion of pupils with high social-emotional needs has risen by

60%

Based on Boxall Profile® Online assessment data spanning 2017/18 - 2023/24

[Read the full report here!](#)

