

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: PILOTING OF NURTURE CLASSES**  
**Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL**  
**Date: 14 March 2012**  
**Author: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**1. INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE OF PAPER**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval on the rationale and processes to establish 4 nurture classes in Falkirk Council primary schools and develop nurturing approaches in Early Years establishments on a pilot basis for the academic year 2012/13.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Nurture groups/classes were developed to meet the needs of vulnerable children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They have been identified as a highly successful area of good practice by the Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Strategy and an HMIE publication on the benefits of the approach is in preparation. Nurture provides both a preventative and reactive strategy for supporting children and young people experiencing, or at risk of developing, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- 2.2 A nurture class is typically formed by a small supportive group of pupils, usually within the primary 1 to primary 3 age group in a mainstream primary school. Staffed by two adults, the nurture class supports a maximum number of ten children who are having difficulties learning within their mainstream class. Target groups are vulnerable children who typically have a history of withdrawn or disruptive behaviour, who are at risk of exclusion or who may have a pattern of non-attendance or experience difficulties in the family environment. The nurture class is an integral part of the whole school as pupils attend regularly for part of the day and remain with their own class for the remainder of the day.
- 2.3 Children in the nurture programme adhere to their academic curriculum but the focus is predominantly upon social and emotional development through developmentally appropriate play and explicit modelling of social skills by the two adults. The nurture class intervention is time-limited and there is an expectation that the children will return to their mainstream class full-time in two-four terms. The resource is flexible to allow for a small majority of children who may need to access the support over a longer period of time.

**3. AIMS OF NURTURE CLASSES**

- 3.1 Research indicates that nurture classes improve social emotional functioning, language development, attainment and increase inclusion. Particular gains for pupils in nurture classes have been noted in literacy attainment. Whole school gains have been evidenced in teachers' capacity to support social and emotional needs in their own classrooms. Evidence from parents indicates strong parental approval where it has been applied
- 3.2 Nurture classes can make a significant contribution to supporting the Education Services' development and practice in relation to the following policies and legislation:

- The Curriculum for Excellence
- Getting it Right for Every Child
- Equally Well
- The Early Years Framework
- Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act (2004) and (2010).

3.3 Approaches to nurturing have been piloted in a limited way in Nethermains Primary School and the Bo'ness primary schools in collaboration with the Bo'ness Family Centre (Barnardo's). The proposed programme will build on this experience and begin to create a pool of teachers and support assistants who are trained to deliver nurture and able to train other staff in the programme.

#### **4. PROPOSAL/SELECTION CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY**

4.1 It is proposed that Council support the following developments:

- Establish nurture classes in four Falkirk Council primary schools (one within each of our current locality areas) aiming the resource at identified pupils in primary 1 to primary 3.
- Provide support to early years establishments to develop a flexible model of nurturing practice.
- Establish a Nurturing Schools Steering group comprising the Headteachers of the pilot schools, the link Educational Psychologist, ASL Officer and QIO to the project.

4.2 The proposed pilot schools for the programme are:

- Bainsford Primary School
- Nethermains Primary School
- Sacred Heart RC Primary School
- Westquarter Primary School

4.3 The four primary schools identified in 4.2 are those with some of the highest deprivation factors as measured by both Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Free Meal Entitlement. Account has also been given to 'school readiness' to be involved in nurture training. The selection has also been made to ensure representation across the four locality areas and to facilitate links with the Locality Co-ordinators.

4.4 Early years centres and Primary Schools would be invited to undergo training in nurture. Through support from Psychological Services and trained teachers, early years settings would be encouraged to develop a 'nurturing ethos' where the principles of Nurture are applied.

4.5 The Nurture approach is a mainstream, inclusive approach and selection of individual pupils for support will be drawn from the school roll and use an holistic assessment approach. The support for the individuals will be time limited and not an alternative to education provision for additional support needs.

4.6 The Pilot project will have at its core sustainability for the local authority and additional training and network events will be encouraged in order to maximise the development of nurture across the authority. The authority already has several teaching staff from schools not within this pilot with skills, experience and qualifications in this area who will be encouraged to contribute to the authority wide development of Nurture.

## 5. EVALUATION/OUTCOMES OF PILOT

- 5.1 A formal evaluation of the nurture programme would be undertaken by Psychological Services. This will involve both quantitative and qualitative assessment tools. Central support would also be provided by Psychological Services through training and monthly network meetings.
- 5.2 Schools will be supported to develop their whole school nurturing capacity through self-evaluation and improvement planning as links to the pilot project evaluation framework.

## 6. RESOURCE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Additional Staffing

Each school will be allocated:

- (i) 1 FTE Teacher
- To allow the release of an experienced member of school teaching staff to deliver the nurture programme to a maximum of 10 Primary 1 to Primary 3 children for four mornings a week. The fifth morning would be used for liaison with external agencies support services and engaging with and supporting parents.
- (ii) 0.6 FTE Support for Learning Assistant
- Allocated to each school to support the nurture class/programme.
- (iii) 0.2 FTE Family Support Worker
- To provide the parenting support worker.

These resources would be allocated on a temporary term time basis for the period August 2012-June 2013 and would be in addition to schools' normal staffing complement.

In the early years centres there are currently no implications for personnel.

### 6.2 Costing

<b>Per Individual School</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Total Costs (inc on costs)</b>
1 FTE Teacher	4 FTE	BT	£136,800
0.6 FTE Support for Learning Assistant	2.4 FTE	D	£34,800
0.2 FTE Family Support Worker	0.8 FTE	F	£14,260
<u>1.8 FTE</u> TOTAL	<u>7.2 FTE</u>		<u>£185,860</u>
Additional accommodation resources			£8,000
Devolved supply cover and CPD costs (2%)			£3,700
Management costs/overheads			£2,000
			<u>£199,560</u>
<u>Less:</u> Contribution by Education Services from Existing Budgets			<u>(£19,560)</u>
NET COSTS (for August 2012 - June 2013)			<u><u>£180,000</u></u>

**7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1 It is recommended that members:**

- (i) note the contents of this report;**
- (ii) approve the pilot of four nurture classes and the support for a model of early years practice in nurture;**
- (iii) to agree that the resources be allocated as outlined and costed in section 6.**
- (iv) seek from the Director of Education Services regular updates on the ongoing impact and evaluation of the nurture approach.**

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**Director of Education**

**Date:** 6 March 2012

Contact Officer: Nick Balchin, Principal Educational Psychologist, ext 0340

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL