

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: NURTURING SCHOOLS
Meeting: EDUCATION EXECUTIVE
Date: 17 JUNE 2014
Author: JOINT ACTING DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Council on the progress made with nurture classes pilot (Year 2) and the development of nurturing approaches across establishments in Falkirk.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 (i) **Current Schools**

At its meeting on 14 March 2012, Falkirk Council agreed to support a pilot programme of nurture classes in a number of schools in areas of multiple deprivation, targeting identified pupils in Primary 1 to Primary 3. Although Council aim was to establish four nurture classes, Education Services, by flexing some existing resources, were able to set up classes in five schools from within the £290k funding provided:

- Bainsford Primary School
- Nethermain Primary School
- Sacred Heart RC Primary School
- Westquarter Primary School
- Easter Carmuir Primary School

(ii) **Current Resources Provided to Each Class**

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Teacher | 1.0 FTE |
| • SflA | 0.6 FTE |
| • Family Support Worker | <u>0.2 FTE</u> |
| TOTAL | <u>1.8 FTE</u> |

2.2 **Strategic Aim of Nurture Classes**

Nurture 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.

2.3 How the Nurture Classes Operate in Falkirk

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 Target groups are vulnerable children who typically have a history of withdrawn or disruptive behaviour, who are at risk of exclusion or who may have a pattern of non-attendance or experience difficulties in the family environment.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.

- 2.4 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 within two to four terms. The resource is flexible to allow for a small minority of children who may need to access the support over a longer period of time.

- 2.5 Nurturing Schools is a whole school approach to supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Our Nurture Classes provide a restorative experience of early nurture, predictable routines, clear boundaries, consolidation of learning opportunities adapted to the pupil's needs and emotional growth. This is to help our vulnerable children develop trust in adults, self-confidence and organisational skills to enable them to benefit from the opportunities offered in our schools and return to their mainstream class within the period of a year.

- 2.6 The approach although most commonly used with early primary stage children can be translated into early years; upper primary and secondary settings. Nurturing approaches have been highlighted as an effective intervention by Education Scotland and their underpinning ideology is closely reflected in national policy and legislative papers such as Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) (2008) and the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009). Together with initiatives such as Psychology of Parenting, the Family Support PSP and ongoing working in the Early Years collaborative this puts Falkirk squarely on course to shifting the balance of public services towards early intervention and prevention by 2016 and beyond.

3. **CURRENT PROGRESS TOWARDS OVERALL AIMS**

- 3.1 In the five schools named in 2.1 support has been provided to continue to develop a flexible model of Nurturing Practice. This includes providing schools with the Glasgow audit tool "How Nurturing Is Your School?" and the "Dumfries and Galloway Nurturing Approaches Toolkit: School improvement through self-evaluation". These have been used to explore Nurturing at a whole school level.
- 3.3 The Nurture Project Steering Group has met in August and November 2013 and in February 2014.

- 3.4 There has been a significant training input to the pilot. Training has been provided to the current cohort of schools on Enhancing Nurturing Communication. New staff coming into the project and other interested staff have been trained on “How to Set up a Nurture Class,” and “How to Use the Boxall Profile.” Speech and Language therapy provided Training on “Talking Mats” this was also offered to schools beyond the project, including those in the secondary sector in order to better capture the pupil voice. Input was also provided on the “Theme of Loss and Change”.

4. EVALUATION/OUTCOMES OF PILOT (YEAR 2)

- 4.1 In August 2013 the Educational Psychology Service undertook a formal evaluation of the project using quantitative and qualitative measures.
- 4.2 The outcomes indicated a positive effect on:
- social competence
 - emotional literacy
 - purposeful attention
 - participating constructively
 - Maths
 - Reading
 - Attendance.

5. PLANS FOR NEXT STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION (YEAR 3)

- 5.1 In order to ensure that all our establishments and appropriate pupils benefit from this approach we need to review our delivery model.
- 5.2 It is proposed that for the next phase of the development of Nurturing Schools in Falkirk there continues to be Nurture Classes in each Locality. More focus will be placed on extending the reach of the approach within the base schools and to all schools within the cluster.
- 5.3 The next stage of the pilot will involve:
- increasing the number of children receiving direct support
 - ensuring that the teachers currently involved share their expertise across their localities.
- 5.4 Adopting a Nurturing approach in the secondary sector will be led by Falkirk HS ensuring the development of good practice in the sector and a subsequent outreach model for high schools.
- 5.5 It has been recognised that to maximise the positive impact that this approach to early intervention and prevention has demonstrated that at least a further three years of funding will be required.

6. RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The ongoing annual cost of the implementing this approach is £290,000. This resource is used to fund the staff associated with the project. This resource is used to fund the:

(i) **Core Funding**

- Staff 1.6 FTE in each school
- Training

(ii) **Flexible Resourcing**

- Family Support

7. WAY FORWARD

7.1 The ongoing development of the approach will be reviewed and members updated on progress made and impact achieved.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that members:

- (i) note the contents of this report and the positive impact achieved; and
- (ii) receive regular updates on the ongoing impact and evaluation of the nurture approach, via Education Executive or Information Bulletin.

8.2 It is recommended that members:

- (i) approve the continuation of the development of the nurturing approach in early years establishments and schools within the given budget resources.

.....
Joint Acting Director of Education

Date: 4 June 2014

Contact Officer: Elaine Costello, ext 6642.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Falkirk Council Report - 12 March 2012 'Piloting of Nurture Classes'
2. Falkirk Council Education Committee Report - 29 January 2013 'Nurture Classes Update'