



Swindon Tuition Centre
Nurture & Nature Project

Why nurture?

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, well-being 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.

The Six Principles Of Nurture (Nurture Group Network):

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
2. The classroom offers a safe base
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
4. Language is a vital means of communication
5. All behaviour is communication
6. The importance of transition in children's lives

Ref: Lucas, S., Insley, K. and Buckland, G. (2006) Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve, The Nurture Group Network

Why nature?

Hundreds of studies have looked into whether experiences with nature promote learning and converging evidence strongly suggests that experiences of nature boost academic learning, personal development, and environmental stewardship. Report after report – from independent observers as well as participants themselves – indicate shifts in perseverance, problem solving, critical thinking, leadership, teamwork, and resilience. Similarly, over fifty studies point to nature playing a key role in the development of pro-environmental behaviour, particularly by fostering an emotional connection to nature. In academic contexts, nature-based instruction outperforms traditional instruction. The evidence here is particularly strong, including experimental evidence; evidence across a wide range of samples and instructional approaches; outcomes such as standardized test scores and graduation rates; and evidence for specific explanatory mechanisms and active ingredients. Nature may promote learning by improving learners' attention, levels of stress, self-discipline, interest and enjoyment in learning, and physical activity and fitness. Nature also appears to provide a calmer, quieter, safer context for learning; a warmer, more cooperative context for learning; and a combination of "loose parts" and autonomy that fosters developmentally beneficial forms of play. It is time to take nature seriously as a resource for learning – particularly for students not effectively reached by traditional instruction.

Ref: Kuo, M., Barnes, M., Jordan, C. (2019) Do Experiences With Nature Promote Learning? Converging Evidence of a Cause-and-Effect Relationship, Front Pyschol.

Project Aims

The Nurture & Nature Project combines both the benefits of nurture groups with that of outdoor learning experiences and forest school practices. We understand that the education system is not one size fits all and that to reach the children and young people who are falling out of mainstream education, we must drastically change the way we deliver the National Curriculum so that every child really does have the chance to succeed.

The Nurture & Nature Project is an innovative hands-on and specialist learning programme aimed to promote positive outcomes for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. Through this project, Swindon Tuition Centre aims to:

- Engage students and improve attendance levels
- Offer a safe space for children to be themselves and work through previous barriers to learning
- Facilitate a new love for learning
- Improve communication, language and literacy
- Improve emotional literacy
- Improve behaviour and build resilience

We aim to the above by

- Using a combination of nurture activities and forest school activities alongside outdoor learning activities that focus on Literacy, Maths and PSHE.
- To use more hands-on, out the box ideas for English and Maths
- Delivering individualised lesson plans that work towards EHCP targets on a daily basis
- Promoting a positive attachment with their Key Tutor
- Including child-led activities alongside the core adult-led activities

Purposeful location

We run our Nurture & Nature Project between two locations.

Days and Timings:

We run our project from 11.30 - 3pm daily

- Monday and Friday at our Gorsehill Centre
- Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Stanton Forest Park

Our Gorsehill Centre has three classrooms, a kitchen for cooking and an outdoor garden.

At Stanton Park we have 185 acres and the indoor Fungi Room.

3.5 hours per day/ 17.5 hours per week (max 18)

Project Model

We can design a bespoke programme to meet your school's needs. Here is an example timetable of a Forest School day:

11.30- 12: Arrival, welcome, feelings circle, today's learning objectives

12 - 12.30: Social lunch time, building a fire, marshmallows on fire

12.30 - 1.30 Activity one: INSERT Outdoor Literacy example

1.30 -2 Activity two: Rope tying, listening to instructions, not giving up, helping others

2-2.30 Activity three: Child - led activity/ choice

2.30 - 3pm Tidy up, review learning objectives, praise cards, certificate nominations.

Here is an example timetable of a centre-based day:

11.30- 12: Arrival, welcome, feelings circle, today's learning objectives

12 - 12.30: Social lunch time

12.30 - 1.30 Activity one: INSERT Indoor Literacy example

1.30 -2 Activity two: INSERT academic theme activity

2-2.30 Activity three: Horticulture (planting) & Child - led activity/ choice

2.30 - 3pm Tidy up, review learning objectives, praise cards, certificate nominations.

Reintegrating back to a school setting

In this time, children will learn academically and socially as they develop confidence, become responsive to others, learn self-respect and begin to take pride in behaving well and in achieving. Through regular assessment of the Boxall Profile, a child's progress will be closely monitored and as they develop the level of resilience and emotional awareness and security needed, the reintegration plan can be drawn up.

We recognise transitions as extremely important in children's lives. Transitions can be gradual or sudden and can affect different aspects of the pupil's life and may last for various lengths of time. All children experience changes in their life at certain points, but it depends on their personality, the nature of transition and the support they receive from family and school, how they react to these turning points.

Whatever the transition is in the life of a child or young person, they cannot be left alone with their fears and emotions caused by the change. The effect of having positive relationships during

periods of transitions is therefore vital. Effective communication between nurture staff and pupil is essential because the children need opportunities to express their thoughts and the feelings. Support from the adults around them in this critical period will help the children to work their way through the transition and do not let it to come a negative influence on their development.

With records of progress in the areas of social, emotional and behavioural development, staff will identify the right time for a child to reintegrate back into school. The transition may include an STC Tutor supporting the child in their new school for some of the time, induction days or the decision to continue attendance at the Nurture & Nature at least one day per week.

What theories and methods underpin the project?

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Attachment theory
- Current research in Neuro-Science
- Social learning theory
- Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy
- Importance of transitions in childhood

What are the benefits for the child?

- Social inclusion
- Academic attainment
- A chance to succeed

Who are the key staff involved?

- Jo Vertannes (Business Development Manager)– Qualified in Leadership and Management and the Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups.
- Nicky Hewlett (Service Delivery Manager and DSL) - Qualified in Management, Health and Social care Children and young people, Behaviour management.
- Clare Paine (Level 3 Forest School Leader and Behaviour Specialised Tutor)
- Dan Francis (Behaviour Specialised Tutor and outdoor enthusiast)

