DATA LABEL: PUBLIC

West Lothian Council

EDUCATION SERVICE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

NURTURE PROVISION UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (DEVELOPMENT)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Panel of the impact of Nurture Groups within West Lothian Schools and to provide an interim evaluation of the impact of this work.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the information contained in the evaluation report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	**Council Values**	Focusing on our customers' needs being honest, open and accountable providing equality of opportunities developing employees making best use of our resources working in partnership
II	**Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)**	None
III	**Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers**	None
IV	**Impact on performance and performance Indicators**	Inclusion and Wellbeing workstream Performance indicators (still in development)
V	**Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement**	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed. We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities.
VI	**Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)**	None

VII Consideration at PDSP 6th September 2016

VIII Other consultations None

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Background

West Lothian Council has a long history of effective Nurture Group work, starting in 2006 with the implementation of small scale projects focusing on Nurture Groups. This work has grown over the last 10 years and has been supported by significant time limited investment funding on two occasions.

Nurture Groups are a proven intervention with a wealth of evidence which demonstrates impact on the development of healthy relationships in the early years. Nurture groups play a key role in closing the attainment gap.

During the school session 2015-2016, West Lothian Council provided funding for 45 primary schools to allocate nurture teacher allocation. ranging in complement depending on the size and needs of the school[1]

The aim was to achieve successful and sustainable implementation of nurture groups (NGs) in the 45 primary schools through:

- Nurture staff development
- Raising awareness of the impact of nurture approaches
- Measuring impact of nurture groups

How the Educational Psychology Service has supported the project

A Nurture Development Officer (NDO), four educational psychologists (EPs) and the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) Research Assistant have been involved in the project forming a nurture team within the EPS.

A detailed plan of the nurture implementation process can be found in Appendix 1 of the full report.

[1] Note: this funding will continue into session 2016-2017 but on a reduced basis for all schools.

Summary of interim evaluation data

Staff Development & Training

Based on the evaluation information gathered this session, staff development opportunities have been very positively received by staff and the supports offered to schools have been found to be useful. In particular, these have included: initial training sessions, the nurture development officer support and the nurture network sessions.

Leadership support within schools was also found to be high - a large number of managers have attended nurture training and showed an interest in the development of nurture training specifically for managers.

Raising awareness of the importance of a nurturing appraoch is a priority across the authority and in addition to whole school awareness raising training, schools are taking their own steps to embed nurture in the wider life of the school (eg. professional dialogue and engaging with the nurture principles as staff groups). Additional information shared by schools highlighted the value of the supports available on an authority level.

Engagement of children and young people

Information gathered from both primary and secondary schools indicated that Nurture Groups are being accessed by a wide age range of children. The majority of these children are in the P1-3 age range. This is in line with the original focus of the project and is in keeping with early intervention. Similarly within the secondary sector, nurture support is targeted to S1 and S2 pupils which demonstrates the nurture project previously supported by the authority has been sustained.

School self-evaluation data

Based on primary schools' own self-evaluation of impact, feedback indicates that nurture is having a positive impact on:

- individual pupils' social, emotional and behavioural development and skills for learning (particularly co-operation skills, attention, emotional awareness and self-esteem/confidence);
- partnership working with parents and
- the wider life of the school, especially in the areas of understanding of pupils' needs and the ability to support pupils.

This feedback suggests that in a relatively short space of time, nurture is developing children's skills and removing barriers to learning which in turn has the potential to improve engagement with learning and raise levels of attainment. In addition to the targeted nurture support, schools are indicating that on a wider level they are better able to support pupils within their setting.

Fidelity to the evidence-based Nurture model

The nurture group intervention is based on key factors and fidelity with these is important for greatest success. Three key elements for success include:

- using the Boxall Profile to assess social and emotional profile
- social interaction over snack time and
- having two adults present to demonstrate positive interactions

Based on feedback from primary schools, the majority of schools were able to implement these factors consistently within their setting and indicated that they would be able to continue to deliver these strategies with reduced funding. Additionally, schools described ways in which they were planning to widen nurture to other classrooms and to develop a whole school approach.

Challenges

Challenges, such as funding and timetabling, can often be associated with the implementation of nurture groups and these were referred to on a number of occasions throughout the evaluation process. From the information gathered there was a strong commitment to nurture and the potential it has for positive impact on targeted vulnerable individuals and on a wider school approach.

E. CONCLUSION

The interim evaluation provides valuable information to demonstrate the impact of nurture on targeted groups of pupils and at whole school level. The EPS is keen to continue to build on this and ensure sustainability of nurture approaches.

In light of the evaluation information, the focus next year will be on embedding nurture practice across the authority and looking at a Nurturing Schools approach. Similar staff development opportunities and support will continue for nurture staff/schools, including initial nurture training for new staff.

A 'champions approach' will be taken to develop whole school nurturing approaches. Management and identified additional staff will continue to be supported by the Nurture Team to lead and facilitate developments in their own setting. There will be further evaluation in July 2017.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Fixsen, D.L., Blasé, K., Duda, M., Naoom, S., & Wallace, F. (2009). Core implementation components. *Research in Social Work Practice*, 19, 531-540

Appendices/Attachments: Nurture Interim Evaluation 2015-2016; Appendix 1: Nurture implementation process

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Date of meeting: Tuesday 6th September 2016