The effectiveness of Nurture Groups: preliminary research findings

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Introduction and background
This paper is developed from an interim report of the second phase of the University of Leicester (formerly, University of Cambridge) Nurture Group Research Project. This is a two-year national study of the personal, social and educational outcomes associated with Nurture Group placement.

The current paper provides a brief summary of key findings from the project which have emerged from an interim analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on children’s performance in Nurture Groups over a period of two terms. It is important to stress that existing research indicates that for the majority of children the duration of placement in a Nurture Group should be between two and four school terms. On the basis of this we would expect, therefore, the positive outcomes reported here to be improved on over time. The performance of these children after four terms will be reported in a subsequent paper.

Nurture Groups
The earliest Nurture Groups were set up by Marjorie Boxall, an ILEA Educational Psychologist, in 1970 (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000). They took the form of discrete classes for approximately 12 students, located in mainstream primary schools, staffed by a teacher and a specially trained teaching assistant. They were set up in response to what was seen as the alarming prevalence of emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) among children entering mainstream primary schools, the effect of which was to disrupt the education of children in mainstream classes. Boxall’s analysis of the many cases she encountered highlighted the importance of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969; 1973; and 1980) in the aetiology of these problems, and it is this theoretical position that underpinned Nurture Group philosophy.

The guiding theory of Nurture Groups is that children who exhibit emotional and behavioural difficulties are often experiencing emotions and exhibiting behaviours that, developmentally, are appropriate to children of a younger chronological age. Normal infant behaviour, for example, is characterised by extreme egocentrism, and a concomitant disregard for the needs and feelings of others. In order to progress from this state to the level of social competence that is required in the standard infants school classroom, the individual has to go through a set of experiences that enable him/her to locate themselves as distinct individuals in relation to other people. This process is essential to healthy psychological development in general, since without such progress individuals will be severely impaired in their ability to understand and regulate their behaviour, form relationships and to communicate with others. The process is also vital in laying the social and psychological foundations for learning.

Another useful theoretical model which helps to illuminate the underlying purpose of the Nurture Group approach is Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs. Nurture Groups, it can be argued, cater specifically to pupils who have difficulty in achieving a sense of security and safety. Such difficulties hamper their access to the higher level needs of affiliation, self-esteem and self-actualisation. Although Nurture Groups, like many effective educational provisions, provide strong support for self-esteem and self-actualisation needs, they do so in the context of an understanding of the importance of meeting safety and affiliation needs as the necessary foundation for the higher level needs.

These understandings are consistent with the psychodynamic principles informing the work of some of the early work with ‘maladjusted’ children. This helps us to understand the way in which Nurture Groups can be seen to represent one of the most sustained interventions that applies a therapeutic approach in mainstream school (Cooper, 2001).

History
Outside of Inner London, early examples of Nurture Groups were to be found in other LEAs in England, notably Bath, Bristol, Derby, Kent, Newcastle and Sheffield. This first wave of groups flourished and received national and international attention (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000). During the 1990s, however, renewed interest was shown in these groups as a result of a combination of factors including: the rising tide of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD) among young children in the early years of schooling; the awareness raising work of the Nurture Group Consortium; and the endorsement of the approach by the DfEE in the 1997 Green Paper.
Excellence for All (DfEE, 1997) and other official publications. This second flowering of the Nurture Group approach has been the subject of wide interest among LEAs in England and Wales. Many have Nurture Groups, are in the process of establishing Nurture Groups or have plans to establish Nurture Groups. Most of the existing groups have been established since 1998, many with money provided by the Government’s Standards Fund initiative. There are also new groups in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Although evidence from systematic evaluation studies is rare, a retrospective study carried out by the London Borough of Enfield (Iszatt & Wasilewska, 1997) found that of 308 children placed in six Nurture Groups since the 1980s, 87% were able, after an average placement of less than one year, to return to mainstream classrooms. Eighty-three per cent required no additional SEN help, while only 4% required stage 3 support (that is requiring additional resources and expertise under the SEN Code of Practice, DfE, 1994, outside the school’s normal range of resources). Thirteen per cent of the Nurture Group students went on to require Statements, including 11% of the original cohort who required placement in special schools. Comparison between this group and a second group of 20 children who had been assessed as having the level of difficulty to justify Nurture Group placement, but for whom no placements were available, found much higher levels of persistent difficulties, with 35% being placed in special schools and only 55% managing to cope in mainstream schools without additional help. The Enfield study also compared the cost of Nurture Group placement with other forms of provision. They found that the cost of Nurture Group placement was between ten and 30 times less than residential school placement, and less than a quarter of the average costs attracted by Statements for pupils with EBD. A further interesting but unresearched aspect of Nurture Groups is the claim attributed to head and class teachers Iszatt and Wasilewska, 1997, that Nurture Groups can have a significant impact on whole-school approaches to dealing with learning and behaviour, whereby aspects of Nurture Group philosophy and practice become integrated into mainstream teachers’ classroom practice through liaison between Nurture Group and mainstream staff (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000).

Phase 1 of the Nurture Group study
The current study has developed from our first phase study of the nature and distribution of Nurture Groups in England and Wales (Cooper, Arnold & Boyd, 1999). There were two important outcomes of this research. The first was the identification of key characteristics by which a genuine Nurture Group can be defined (see Figure 1). Central among these characteristics are the ways in which:

- the practical, day-to-day work of the Nurture Group is rooted in an understanding of the developmental needs of children, the interdependence of social, emotional and cognitive factors, and a commitment to the fostering of positive, healthy development;
- the work of the Nurture Group is fully integrated into mainstream school and LEA policies and structures, so as to avoid the ‘sin bin’ trap;
- children’s admission to, progress in and eventual departure from the Nurture Group are informed by the use of appropriate diagnostic and evaluative tools, such as the Boxall Profile (Bennathan & Boxall, 1998).

Figure 1: The Characteristics of Nurture Groups (From: Cooper, Arnold & Boyd, 1999)

| These characteristics were developed by the Project team in consultation with the Nurture Group Consortium, teachers, learning support assistants and others who attended the four-day course. Schools have found them helpful when setting up new Nurture Groups. |
| They are subject to further development and refinement as the Project and the training courses continue. |
| a) A Nurture Group is integrated provision. It is an agreed part of an LEA/school continuum of special educational needs provision, either as an integral part of an individual school or as a resource for a cluster of schools. |
| b) The curriculum includes the National Curriculum and takes full account of school policies. |
| c) All staff work towards the child’s full return into mainstream classes. |
| d) Children attend the Nurture Group for a large part of each day or for substantial regular sessions. This can be on a short or medium-term basis, but is usually two to four terms. |
| e) Two adults work together modelling good adult relationships in a structured and predictable environment, where children can begin to trust and to learn. |
| f) It supplies a setting in which missing or insufficiently internalised essential early learning experiences are provided. |
| g) The emphasis is on supporting positive emotional and social growth and cognitive development at whatever level of need the children show by responding to them in a developmentally appropriate way. |
| h) There is an emphasis on language development through intensive interaction with an adult. |
| i) Social learning through co-operation and play with others is essential and the group is constituted with this in mind. |
| j) Staff involve parents/carers as early and as fully as possible and have a positive attitude towards them. |

The second important finding was that there were four basic variations of the Nurture Group theme:

- classic ‘Boxall’ Nurture Groups, which accord in all respects with the model established by Marjorie Boxall, (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000);
- variants on the classic model which differ in structure and/or organisational features from the Boxall groups, but which clearly adhere to the core principles of the classic approach;
- groups that bear the name ‘Nurture Group’, or are claimed to be variants on the Nurture Group concept, but that do not conform to Boxall principles;
• groups that bear the name ‘Nurture Group’ or are claimed to be variants on the Nurture Group concept, but that contravene, undermine or distort the key defining principles of the classic Nurture Group.

Phase 2 research questions
The second phase of the project focuses on the effectiveness of Nurture Groups and a series of research questions.

1. What are the effects of Nurture Groups on children’s social, emotional, behavioural and educational functioning?
2. How do different variants on the Nurture Group approach compare in terms of their effectiveness in promoting the positive social, emotional and educational development of pupils?
3. What is the impact of the Nurture Group approach on the mainstream schools they serve, in terms of mainstream teachers’ perceptions and practice?
4. What are children’s and parents’ perceptions of and attitudes towards Nurture Groups?
5. What, if any, are the perceived effects of Nurture Groups on parents’ ways of relating and dealing with their children?

The current paper focuses on question 1, with some reference to questions 2, 3 and 4.

Research design
The study is longitudinal in design, taking place over two years. During this time the progress of students attending Nurture Groups will be measured and compared with the progress of two comparison groups:

Comparison group 1 is a group of children matched with the Nurture Group students for age, gender, educational attainment and level of SEBD in mainstream classrooms in the Nurture Group schools.

Comparison group 2 is a group of children matched for age and gender with Nurture Group students but without emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Research instruments
Levels of SEBD will be assessed and monitored for all the participants using the Goodman ‘Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire’ (SDQ) (Goodman, 1999; 1997). This is a 25-item behaviour screening questionnaire, which measures five sub-scales: hyperactivity, conduct problems, emotional symptoms, peer problems and prosocial behaviour. It has been found to produce results consistent with more established behaviour rating scales, such as Achenbach’s ‘Child Behaviour Checklist’, and Rutter’s ‘Child Behaviour Rating Scale’ (Goodman, 1999). It also includes an ‘impact supplement’ which seeks to reveal perceptions of the level of distress and social impairment associated with the symptoms revealed by the checklist (Goodman, 1999). In this study the SDQ is used with mainstream teachers to assess children’s behaviour in their classrooms.

In addition, pupils attending the Nurture Groups are assessed using the Boxall Profile (Bennathan & Boxall, 1998) which is completed by the Nurture Group teacher. This is a detailed normative, diagnostic instrument (Bennathan & Boxall, 2000; 1998), which can be used to measure a child’s level of emotional and behavioural functioning, as well as highlight specific targets for intervention within a child’s individual functioning. The profile is divided into two main parts, each divided into 34 statements. The first part deals with developmental factors underpinning the individual’s ability to engage effectively in the learning process. Section two of the profile deals with the child’s behavioural characteristics that may inhibit or interfere with the child’s social and academic performance. Each of these items is broken down into a series of sub-items that take the form of descriptive statements which the respondent is required to rate.

Parent perceptions are accessed using a semi-structured telephone interview. Pupil perceptions are accessed using a face-to-face informant-style interview.

Students’ educational progress is assessed using National Curriculum and teacher perception data focusing on progress in English, mathematics and science. Initial intentions to employ the baseline assessment data now routinely gathered in schools was abandoned owing to the difficulties involved in comparing data from different LEAs.

Procedures
SDQ and Boxall Profile data are gathered on all students when they enter the Nurture Group. These measures are repeated during the second and third term of their attendance in the Nurture Group, or upon their full-time return to a mainstream class if this is sooner. Interviews are carried out over the same period. Academic progress data is gathered annually. Comparison group data is taken over the same timescale using the SDQ only.

Participating pupils, schools and LEAs
This interim paper is based on data from:

Pupils
The study involves 342 pupils, of whom 216 are in Nurture Groups and 64 are matched children with SEBD in mainstream classes, while 62 are matched children without SEBD in mainstream classes. In October 1999, 84% of primary school children were aged between 4 and 7 years, and 16% were aged between 7 and 10 years.

Schools
These pupils are distributed between 25 state-funded schools, of which 23 are in the primary sector and two are in the secondary phase.

LEAs
The schools are distributed across eight LEAs of varying sizes, including rural, unitary and metropolitan types, drawn from geographically diverse locations throughout
England, including areas of high, medium and low levels of social deprivation. Two LEAs have markedly diverse ethnic populations.

Interim findings
It should be stressed that what follows is an account of interim findings only. The longest period of time that any student has spent in a Nurture Group is one year. Earlier research indicated that the average length of stay for pupils in a Nurture Group was one year or three terms, with a maximum length of stay being four terms (Iszatt & Wasilewska, 1997). It should also be noted that not all the data pertinent to our research questions has yet been processed. These findings, therefore, represent a snapshot picture which may change when the full data set is examined.

Evidence of educational, social, emotional and behavioural progress
SDQ (Table 1a) and Boxall Profile (Table 1b) data show consistent levels of improvement in the mean scores across all Nurture Groups.

The SDQ data describe mainstream teacher rating of children’s behaviour in mainstream classrooms. At entry, 92% of children in Nurture Groups are in the abnormal or borderline range on the SDQ, when they are observed in mainstream classrooms, compared with 84% of matched mainstream pupils with SEBD. By the third term, this has changed to 63% for Nurture Group pupils compared with 75% for pupils with SEBD. The mean differences between these scores is statistically significant (chi square, \( p<.000 \)). Variation in the numbers of pupils for whom we have data at time 1 and time 2 is due to the movement of pupils from the study.

Table 1a: SDQ scores for Nurture Group and mainstream pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDQ 1</th>
<th>Nurture Group pupils</th>
<th>Mainstream pupils with SEBD</th>
<th>Mainstream pupils without SEBD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>8% (n=17)</td>
<td>16% (n=10)</td>
<td>98% (n=61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borderline</td>
<td>17% (n=35)</td>
<td>13% (n=8)</td>
<td>2% (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abnormal</td>
<td>75% (n=158) (92%)</td>
<td>72% (n=46) (85%)</td>
<td>0% (n=0) (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| SDQ 2 | Normal | 37% (n=55) | 25% (n=16) | 94% (n=58) |
| Borderline | 20% (n=29) | 20% (n=13) | 7% (n=4) |
| Abnormal | 44% (n=65) (63%) | 55% (n=35) (75%) | 0% (n=0) (7%) |

The Boxall Profile data is provided by Nurture Group staff, and describes the progress of children as observed in the Nurture Group setting. It should be pointed out that an unpublished statistical comparison of the Boxall and SDQ instruments indicates that the two measures tend to identify the comparative levels of normality/difficulty (that is, they highlight the same children as having difficulties).

Data from the Boxall Profile scores paints a positive picture, also showing statistically significant improvements in mean scores on both the developmental and diagnostic strands between the beginning of term one and the end of term two (see Table 1b). The crucial point to note is that mean improvements on each of the Boxall strands, between the beginning of term one and the end of term two, are statistically significant (see Figure 2 for more detail of the components of each strand).

Table 1b: Repeated measures analysis of variance for Boxall Profile Scores for the Nurture Group pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measur es ANOVA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Strand 1 Organisation of Experience</td>
<td>40.45</td>
<td>13.53</td>
<td>50.56</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>90.27</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Strand 2 Internalisation of Controls</td>
<td>36.69</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>44.65</td>
<td>10.54</td>
<td>69.52</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Strand 1 Self-Limiting Features</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>7.60</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>34.72</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Strand 2 Undeveloped Behaviour</td>
<td>13.06</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>9.57</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td>32.91</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnostic Strand 3 Unsupported Development</td>
<td>27.82</td>
<td>15.89</td>
<td>22.81</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>17.19</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Items making up the Strands of the Boxall Profile

Developmental Strands
1. Organisation of experience
   - Gives purposeful attention
   - Participates constructively
   - Connects up experiences
   - Shows insightful involvement
   - Engages cognitively with peers

2. Internalisation of controls
   - Is emotionally secure
   - Is biddable and accepts constraints
   - Accommodates others
   - Responds constructively to others
   - Maintains internalised standards

Diagnostic Profile Strands
1. Self-limiting features
   - Disengaged
   - Self-negating

2. Undeveloped behaviour
   - Makes undiffererntiated attachments
   - Shows inconsequential behaviour

3. Unsupported development
   - Avoids/rejects attachment
   - Has undeveloped/insecure sense of self
   - Shows negativism towards self
   - Shows negativism towards others
   - Wants, grabs, disregards others
Data from teacher perceptions indicate that progress is being made in pupils’ academic progress (see Table 2). As yet we have no comparative data against which to judge these perceptions. However, it should be stressed that lack of educational progress is a key criterion for entry into a Nurture Group.

Table 2: Teachers’ perceptions of Nurture Group pupils’ educational progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress Area</th>
<th>Worse</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Some Progress</th>
<th>A Lot of Progress</th>
<th>No Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures show percentage of Nurture Group pupils in each category (n=196)

These perceptions are echoed by parents (see Table 3, below).

Impact on mainstream schools
To date we have data from 79 mainstream class teachers in schools in our study. There is clear evidence from interviews with teachers that Nurture Groups are perceived to have a positive influence on schools as a whole. Ninety-six per cent of staff interviewed expressed the belief that having a Nurture Group had a positive impact on the school as a whole. Forty-six percent indicated a strong positive impact, while 50% indicated some positive impact. Four per cent indicated no impact, while no teacher indicated a negative impact. Positive impact is felt in terms of the following key features:

- the development of more nurturing attitudes and practices throughout the school;
- changes in the ways in which teachers think and talk about children;
- contribution of nurturing principles to whole-school policies;
- increased sense of empowerment with ‘difficult’ students;
- evidence of an increased awareness of developmental issues and the relationship between social-emotional factors and learning.

Parents’ perceptions of Nurture Groups and their effects
Parents’ perceptions of Nurture Groups varied from negative to highly positive in terms of their effects on their child’s progress and development (see Table 3). The majority of parents felt that placement in the group had had a positive effect on the social, emotional and behavioural development of their children. Many parents felt that this progress would not have been made in the mainstream setting. This perception was even held by some parents who reported being at first resistant to the idea of a Nurture Group placement for their child, but who changed their view on seeing positive changes in their children which they attributed to the effects of placement. Commonly cited improvements were in the child’s attitude towards school and motivation to attend. In addition the children’s behaviour, both at home and school, was seen to improve. Dissatisfaction was associated with a perceived lack of progress rather than a deterioration in children’s performance.

Table 3: Parental perceptions of their child’s progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress Area</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>Worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Progress</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment of School</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Totals</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table shows percentages of parents nominating each category (n=89)

With regard to the impact of Nurture Group placement on parent-child relationships, there is clear evidence of parents feeling less anxious and more optimistic about their child’s development.

Children’s perceptions
Difficulties have been encountered in accessing pupils’ perceptions in a reliable manner. It is difficult to know the extent to which young children understand what is required of them in the interview situation, and the purpose behind the questions they are asked. It is clear, for example, that many of the children interviewed in this study did not wish to be disloyal to their teachers and schools, and gave very guarded answers to questions that asked them to compare their experience of life in the mainstream classroom with life in the Nurture Group. However, the children were able to talk about aspects of the Nurture Group that they found valuable. Particular issues to emerge repeatedly from these interviews were positive references to:

- the quality of interpersonal relationships in the Nurture Group, and their fondness for the Nurture Group staff;
- opportunities provided in the Nurture Group for free play and opportunities to choose activities;
- the quietness and calmness of the Nurture Group environment;
- the pleasant nature of the Nurture Group environment in terms of its physical attributes;
- the high quality and engaging nature of particular activities that are provided in the Nurture Group, such as meal and snack times;
- the predictability of the Nurture Group routine.

These highly positive comments have to be put in the context of the very negative perceptions of school and schooling that the children’s parents and teachers say prevailed among these children prior to being placed in a Nurture Group.

Differences in the performance of types of Nurture Group
The majority (17) of the Nurture Groups in this study conform to the ‘classic’ model, where between ten and 12
children attend for 4.5 days per week while remaining on the register of mainstream class where they register daily and attend for a half day per week. The groups are located on the premises of mainstream primary schools and are staffed by a teacher and a learning support assistant (LSA).

Variations on this model in the current study include:

- one full-time group where pupils spend all of their time in the Nurture Group;
- two groups in secondary school settings;
- five groups running on a half-time basis.

At this stage we have observed no statistically different outcomes between these different types of groups. One LEA which has several half-time Nurture Groups appears to have students in the mainstream improving at a greater rate than those in the Nurture Group. On closer inspection this surprising result is caused by the extremely atypical scores of one of the schools. Other half-time groups in the same LEA are scoring at or above the mean level achieved by the 4.5 day groups.

Discussion and conclusions
The following limitations to the current report must be acknowledged in any interpretation of these interim findings:

1. The study is only half complete. Additional cases, which will be added to the final analysis, will compare performance at the beginning of term one with performance at the end of term four.
2. The small amount of variation between types of Nurture Groups makes it difficult to draw any conclusions about the relative merits of different types of Nurture Groups.
3. We cannot assume that the current rates of improvement will be sustained. The overall effects of Nurture Group provision on the current cohort of participants cannot be judged until they have completed their period of enrolment in the Nurture Groups and are returned to full-time mainstream class placements or referred elsewhere. It will be important, for example, to compare rates of progress over this period of time with our two comparison groups.
4. We have yet to collect and analyse all of the data for our second non-SEBD comparison group.

With these qualifications in mind, the interim findings show that, in these LEAs, Nurture Groups appear to have added value to the work that schools do with children with SEBD. However it should be stressed that, on the basis of these findings, placement in the mainstream is also associated with improvements in SEBD albeit of a lower magnitude than in the Nurture Groups. This finding gives rise to a number of possibilities that the extensions to our research will explore, such as:

1. The school is the key independent variable, and schools that are effective in supporting children with SEBD can benefit from the additional support of a Nurture Group.
2. The Nurture Group is the key independent variable. Nurture Groups can influence the climate and practices of schools where they are placed and improve the quality of response to SEBD throughout the school.
3. Nurture Groups have no sustained influence on pupil progress. The findings may be an artefact of the short time-span and limited scope of the data gathered and, over time, the differences we have observed will disappear.

It is impossible for us at this stage to choose between these possibilities in any definitive sense. What we can say, however, is that the quantitative data presented here is very encouraging. In the short term, Nurture Group placement appears to have had a positive effect on a significant proportion of pupils. The qualitative data support this, and indicate that Nurture Groups are perceived to have wider benefits to the schools where they are located. There is also evidence to suggest that the parents of children in Nurture Groups benefit from the positive progress made by their children in terms of their feelings towards their children. For many parents, the Nurture Group gives them reasons for optimism and relief from the sense of hopelessness and negativity that has hitherto surrounded their children’s educational experience. These findings suggest that Nurture Groups may have a significant contribution to make to mainstream schools by helping them to expand their capacity to cater for the needs of children with social, emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. The indication here is that Nurture Groups offer something far more substantial and enriching than a pleasant environment. The evidence of this study suggests that such a holistic approach has the potential to produce positive outcomes across a wide range of variables, include social, emotional, behavioural and educational functioning of children; parents’ attitudes towards their own children and the school; and the positive functioning of whole schools. Further analysis of our data will shed further light on these issues.

References


Acknowledgements

The first phase of the project described in this article was funded by the DfEE, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the University of Cambridge School of Education Research and Development Fund. The second phase is funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the DfEE.

Thanks are due to Dr David Whitebread, of Homerton College, Cambridge, for advice and support with statistical analysis.

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Accepted for publication: September 2001