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School Approaches to Improving the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Adolescents: A Review of School-based Interventions which Promote Positive Peer Relations and an Exploration of one Secondary Nurture Group.

by

Karen O'Farrell

Thesis for the degree of Doctorate in Educational Psychology

June 2019

University of Southampton

<u>Abstract</u>

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School Approaches to Improving the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Adolescents: A Review of School-based Interventions which Promote Positive Peer Relations and an Exploration of one Secondary Nurture Group.

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Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) during childhood and adolescence is critical to future success and life satisfaction and can be viewed as the foundation for healthy behaviours and educational attainment (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2018). Organisations, such as schools, who have regular contact with and influence on young people, need to ensure that their SEWB is effectively promoted. A systematic review was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of secondary school-based interventions intended to impact positively on peer relations and, hence, influence SEWB. Nine studies were identified through a systematic literature search, using a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Findings indicated a need for future research which specifically seeks to measure the impact made on peer relations, using measures which can be effectively compared across studies, in order to reach more detailed conclusions. Findings also highlighted a need to consider how the skills developed during interventions can be successfully maintained and generalised to the wider environment.

In Chapter 2, a single school case study design was employed which explored how a Nurture Group (NG) functioned within a mainstream secondary school. NGs, derived from attachment theory, have been widely implemented with vulnerable young people in mainstream primary schools to support the development of secure relationships and so promote readiness for learning. Success of the intervention within the primary school environment has led to increasing interest in the applicability of NGs to secondary school provision. A detailed consideration of whether and how NGs can be implemented successfully within a secondary school context was made. The experiences and perceptions of NG and non-NG pupils and school staff were explored through individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Thematic analysis of the data led to the identification of three main themes and nine sub-themes, which were developed across the three stakeholder groups. Findings suggest that secondary NGs can provide extensive support for vulnerable pupils, including the development of positive peer relations, but the successful implementation of NGs in the secondary school environment is likely to relate, more widely, to whole school approaches and ethos. Implications for school and educational psychology practice were considered and a number of recommendations for supporting the development of secondary NG practice were made. These included embedding NG practice into whole school culture, adopting a more flexible approach to NG organisation and considering the particular needs of Year 11 pupils.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name:	Karen O'Farrell

Title of thesis:	School Approaches to Improving the SEWB of Adolescents: A Review of School-based Interventions which Promote Positive Peer Relations and an Exploration of one Secondary Nurture Group.

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

7. None of this work has been published before submission

Chapter 1

Signature:		ate:	

Signature:

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Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Jana Kreppner, Brettany Hartwell and Larissa Cunningham, for their guidance, support and encouragement throughout the process of planning and completing this thesis. Their supervision kept me going and was key to being able to complete this piece of work. I have benefited hugely from their thoughts and ideas.

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Definitions and Abbreviations

APRI-A   Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument

BPYP   Boxall Profile for Young People

CAIR   Clinical Assessment of Interpersonal Relations

CASP   Critical Appraisal Skills Programme

CLASS   Classroom Assessment Scoring System

d Cohen's effect size

DfE   Department for Education

DfES   Department for Education and Skills

DoH   Department of Health

EHCP   Education Health and Care Plan

EP   Educational Psychologist

ELSA   Emotional literacy support assistant

FG   Focus group

GQ-6   six item Gratitude Questionnaire

IWM   Internal working model

M Mean

n fraction of the total sample

N number in the total sample

Chapter 1

NCCMT	National Collaborating Centre for Tools and Methodologies
NG	Nurture group
NGN	Nurture Group Network
$\eta2$	Eta-squared
P	Probability (significance of a test statistic)
PIR	Peer Interpersonal Relatedness
PRISMA	Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses
PSSM	Psychological Sense of School Membership
RAP	Resourceful Adolescent Programme
RCT	Randomised Controlled Trial
ROPE	Review of Personal Effectiveness Scale
SD	Standard Deviation
SDQII- S	Self-Description Questionnaire Short
SDQ-PP	Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire – Peer Problems
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SEWB	Social and emotional wellbeing
SPS	Social Provision Scale
TA	Thematic analysis
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter 1 : School based interventions to promote positive peer relations: what is being done pro-actively in secondary schools and is it effective? A systematic review.

1.1   Introduction

One in ten young people is identified as meeting the criteria for a 'mental health condition' (Department of Health (DoH) & Department for Education (DfE), 2017). The rates are seen to increase with age with 5.5% of 2-4 year olds and as many as 16.9% of 17-19 year olds meeting the criteria for a mental health diagnosis (Sadler et al., 2018). The UK government has identified the mental health of children and young people to be a priority. In the government response to public consultation on young people's mental health (DoH & DfE, 2018), education providers   are afforded a central role to work preventatively to help stem the continued rise in mental health problems amongst young people and the associated burden to individuals, families and communities. Teaching about mental health is set to become a compulsory part of the school curriculum by 2020 (DoH & DfE, 2017). Schools will be supported to teach about wellbeing and mental resilience and this will be overseen by a trained 'Designated Senior Lead' for mental health within every school. A whole school approach to supporting mental health is recommended and it is suggested that pupils should be taught about their own 'mental wellbeing' through personal, social, health and economic education and relationships and sex education.

The specific role of the Designated Senior Lead position is set to be non-mandatory. In this context, schools and colleges need to decide how they can most

effectively provide support for pupil mental health, calling for a need to carefully consider the available evidence. The influence of peers on adolescent mental health and school engagement has previously been recognised (Rueger, Malecki & Demaray, 2011) highlighting the need for secondary schools to successfully support the development of positive relations and a sense of belonging within their peer group (La Greca & Prinstein, 1999). Currently, there is a gap within the literature which has sought to evaluate school-based interventions which aim to influence adolescent peer relations and positively impact on mental health.

1.1.1   Defining mental health

Whilst the topic of mental health and young people has appeared frequently within recent literature (e.g. Atkinson et al., 2019; McLaughlin, 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2018), definitions and use of the term 'mental health' varies, with other terms such as wellbeing, social and emotional mental health, resilience and mental wellbeing also being used. Weare (2015) defines social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) as "a state of positive mental health and wellness" (p. 3) which is maintained by happiness, a sense of self-worth and successful relationships. The World Health Organisation (2012) situates mental health within a wider and more interactionist framework, providing the following definition:

> Mental health and well-being is influenced not only by individual attributes, but also by the social circumstances in which persons find themselves and the environment in which they live; these determinants interact with each other dynamically, and may threaten or protect an individual's mental health state. (p. 2)

This is the preferred definition within this review and it suggests a place for school-based interventions which consider the interplay between social/environmental and individual influences.

Schools may take three different approaches to supporting the SEWB of pupils: a universal (whole school or whole class), selective (targeted) , or an intensive intervention approach (usually involving joint working with other professionals). Current literature suggests a need for further research which considers both universal and targeted approaches to the promotion of SEWB within schools (O'Reilly, Svirydzenka, Adams & Dogra, 2018) in order to expand and strengthen the evidence base. The promotion of positive peer relations has been shown to influence the SEWB of young people (Criss, Pettit, Bates, Dodge & Lapp, 2002) with, for example, peer acceptance being recognised as a protective factor to adverse experiences (Hussong, 2000). This systematic review will therefore consider the evidence base which relates to secondary school interventions which seek to influence peer relations.

The term SEWB will be used throughout the review to refer to the positive mental health and wellness of young people which impacts on their whole self and promotes positive outcomes for future life trajectories (e.g. Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011).

1.1.2   Defining peer relations

'Peer relations' relate to peer group acceptance and relationships within a given peer group. 'Friendship' refers to a close, reciprocal, and voluntary, dyadic relationship between two peers, that is characterised by mutual affection, liking, and companionship (Rubin, Fredstrom & Bowker, 2008). Both positive peer relations and the quality of dyadic friendships promote the development of social skills, SEWB, and academic achievement (Yu, Tepper & Russell, 2009).

1.1.3 The association between peer relations and mental health

Peers are critical socialization agents during childhood and adolescence (La Greca & Harrison, 2005). For example, feedback from peers provides important input to the development of a sense of self (Prinstein & Giletta, 2016). Problems in peer relationships during childhood and adolescence have been linked to later anxiety, depression, loneliness, problems in school and delinquency (e.g., Rigby, 2000; Rubin, Bukowski, Parker & Bowker, 2008; Silver, Measelle, Armstrong & Essex, 2010). In contrast, positive peer relations, such as reciprocated and high quality friendships and peer group acceptance, have been identified as a potential protective factor (Criss et al., 2002; Malcolm, Jensen-Campbell, Rex-Lear & Waldrip, 2006). Indeed, it has been suggested that successful peer relations support the achievement of positive life outcomes through the modelling and reinforcement of pro-social skills (Clarke, Morreale, Field, Hussein & Barry, 2015) and a reduction in the participation of risk-taking behaviours (Hussong, 2000). It is therefore important to consider how SEWB, which is in part founded on relationships with others, can be improved for young people through the provision of effective social support (Rigby, 2000). In response to this, the current systematic review considers interventions which promote the development of positive peer relations through universal and targeted approaches. This excludes interventions which have a focus on bullying or bullying prevention as, although some bullying interventions take a whole school approach and include a focus on improving the social climate of a school, they are more likely to be a direct response to identified difficulties. For example, interventions may focus on the development of rules to follow in response to bullying (Cantone et al., 2015), the increase of positive bystander behaviours through the promotion of empathy to the victims of bullying (Caravita, Di Blasio & Salmivalli, 2009) or the increase of a sense of belief in being able to stop bullying behaviour (Pöyhönen, Juvonen & Salmivalli, 2010).

1.1.4   Existing school-based interventions

Historically, school-based, mental health approaches have attempted to promote the development of social and emotional skills through social and emotional learning (SEL) programmes which aim to develop young people's ability to understand, express and manage their own emotions (Weare & Gray, 2003). In particular, the development of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2005; DfES, 2007) was presented as a key approach for the UK education system from 2005 onwards. Initially adopted by 90% of UK primary schools in 2005, it was also piloted as a secondary school programme and was subsequently adopted by 70% of secondary schools in England in 2007. The evidence base for the impact it had on pupils' SEWB (that is, mental health and wellness) varied. Whilst Banerjee (2010) identified a positive impact on peer interactions and academic attainment through the adoption of SEAL as a whole-school approach, Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2010) concluded that SEAL had no significant impact on pupils' social and emotional skills and pro-social behaviours. However, both the fidelity of the implementation of SEAL and the difficulty in measuring direct impact have emerged as key challenges in the evaluation of SEAL (e.g. Humphrey, Lendrum & Wigelsworth, 2013). Schools were subsequently encouraged to use the SEAL curriculum as a template, to be adapted in response to the identified needs of individual schools (Banerjee, 2010). This in itself, would have implications for intervention fidelity (Gearing et al., 2011).

Following a change in government in 2011, and in response to the mixed nature of research outcomes, SEAL was discontinued. A focus on academic achievement within the context of current education policy sits alongside an acknowledgement of the significant mental health needs of young people within the UK. Current SEL practice in UK schools includes a diverse number of different programmes such as the 'UK Resilience Programme'

(Challen, Noden, West & Machin, 2011) and a variety of mindfulness programmes such as the 'Mindfulness in Schools Project.' (Kuyken et al., 2013). The breadth and volume of programmes is likely to continue to evolve in response to the needs of individual schools and the increased prioritisation of mental health in schools as a whole.

The implementation of whole school approaches in secondary schools presents particular challenges. Staff commitment and training need to be prioritised to maximise the likelihood of fidelity in the implementation of approaches (Weare, 2015). It has been suggested that a whole school framework should consider both universal (proactive) and targeted (responsive) approaches in order to develop the SEWB of young people and school staff (Stirling & Emery, 2016).

1.1.5 Adolescent peer relations.

Early in life, children's social interactions are largely centred on home and family (Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 2006). This experience gradually changes as children start school and are exposed to more social interactions with their peers, whilst also gradually being less closely supervised by adults. During adolescence, peer relations become more complex and more significant, with an increased amount of time being spent with peer groups (Welborn et al., 2015). This has implications for how social relationships with peers can be appropriately supported within the secondary school environment so that positive peer relations are promoted and effects on SEWB and academic achievement are effectively considered.

There is limited experimental research available, to date, which investigates how peer relations might influence pupil engagement in secondary schools (Li, Doyle Lynch, Kalvin, Liu & Lerner, 2016). There are many factors which may impact on the successful development and maintenance of positive peer relations. For example, a focus on conflict

resolution and coping skills has been shown to help young people succeed in this area (Stuhlman & Pianta, 2009). Research has also started to highlight the importance of school engagement and sense of school belonging (Fredricks, 2011; Ripiski & Gregory, 2009). Research into a sense of school belonging suggests that it may be critical in the development, maintenance and experience of feelings of relatedness for adolescents (Hamm & Faircloth, 2005). Emotional attachments, such as those experienced through relationships with peers, play a key role in the development of a sense of school belonging (Osterman, 2000), which in turn should work to promote the pro-social behaviour of pupils (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). Peer influence is therefore an important factor to consider within the development of programmes which target adolescent SEWB (Carr, 1987; Dillon & Swimbourne, 2007; Petosa & Smith, 2014).

1.1.6 Aims and objectives of the Current Review

Despite the recognition of the importance of positive peer relations during adolescence (Clarke et al., 2015; Hussong, 2000), no systematic review has attempted to examine the effectiveness of interventions which focus on this. Accordingly, the primary aim of this systematic review was to evaluate the effects of secondary school-based interventions which intend to impact positively on peer relations. It will seek to redress a gap within the current literature through description and critical analysis. It will also add to current research which consistently acknowledges peers as the central source of support for adolescents experiencing difficulties (e.g. Hussong, 2000; Steinberg, Brown & Dornbusch, 1996) and make recommendations for evidence-based approaches within secondary schools.

Chapter 1

1.2   Method

1.2.1   Search Strategy

A systematic search of the literature was conducted on two electronic databases, PsychINFO and Web of Science, to identify papers relevant to the research question. During an initial scoping search, Google Scholar and the electronic database ERIC were additionally used. However, as this did not identify peer reviewed papers relevant to this systematic review which were not also identified through PsychINFO or Web of Science, the researcher omitted ERIC and Google Scholar from the final systematic search. Search terms were identified through the reading of papers which were most relevant to this topic. The initial scoping search of the literature identified a considerable number of papers which focused on interventions related to bullying prevention, pupils on the autism spectrum and approaches which considered adolescent use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs. In response to this, the final combination of key terms used to complete the database searches were as follows: (intervention* OR strateg* OR provision OR programme*) AND ("peer relation*" OR friend*) AND ("secondary school*" OR "high school*" OR "secondary education" OR "secondary student*" OR "secondary pupil*") NOT (asd or "autism spectrum disorder" or autism) NOT (bully*) NOT (alcohol OR drug* OR smoking). The database searches were limited to papers which were: written in English, from peer reviewed journals and were published between 2005 and 2018. A manual search of relevant articles was also completed to identify any further papers suitable for inclusion in the review. The titles and abstracts of 427 papers were screened for suitability which led to 21 papers identified as relevant to the review. A further five papers were identified from a manual reference search of these articles. The pre-determined inclusion and exclusion criteria, as presented in Table 1, were then applied to these 26 papers which resulted in nine identified as suitable for inclusion in the review.

Table 1

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Include	Exclude
Studies including pupils between 11 and 16 years (secondary school age)	Studies focusing only on primary pupils or pupils beyond 16
Studies conducted within schools	Clinical trials
Interventions aimed at improving peer relationships/friendships Interventions where an effect on peer relations has been identified	Interventions aimed only at Pupils with ASD. Studies where peer relationships are only a minor part of data collected. Studies where interventions are reliant on agencies from outside of school. Studies focusing on students with severe disabilities. Studies where interventions are focused on particular gender or ethnic groups Studies researching interventions specifically related to bullying, alcohol, drugs, smoking
Quantitative designs including RCTs and those with pre- and post-data Qualitative studies Mixed Methods studies	
Measures relating to peer relationships/ friendships/social relationships and connectedness (e.g. SDQ-PP)	Other measures only e.g. depression, anxiety

Articles published as full texts in peer reviewed journals	Unpublished theses or dissertations, chapters in books
Written in English	Not written in English
Studies published between 2005-2018	Studies published before 2005

The initial systematic search was completed using PsychINFO on 10.10.18 and using Web of Science on 15.10.18. The search was repeated by a voluntary research assistant between the later dates of 28.02.19 and 04.04.19 to check for agreement. No new papers were identified which were considered relevant to this review. The reasons for excluding potentially relevant papers are presented within the PRISMA flow diagram (presented in Figure 1).

1.2.2   Identification of studies

The nine relevant papers were systematically read and reviewed. Data extracted included: basic study information (author(s), year and country); information on participants (age, gender and sample size); design of study; information pertinent to the intervention (type, duration, frequency, administration, type of control); outcome measures employed; key findings (linked to review) and any reported effect size. The data extraction table can be viewed in Appendix A.

Records retrieved from
PsychINFO
(n = 436)

Records retrieved
from Web of Science
(n= 786)

Records after duplicates removed
(n = 427)

Records screened (title
and abstract)
(n = 427)

Records excluded for lack
of relevance
(n = 407)

Articles sourced
from reference
searches
(n = 5)

Full-text articles assessed
for eligibility
(n = 26)

Full-text articles excluded,
with reasons
(n = 17)
- Focus is on students with
  "severe disabilities" (n=6)
- Focus is on student
  experiences of transition
  (n=4)
- Related to a broad topic
  base - peer relationships
  only a minor part of study
  (n=2)
- Focus is on reduction in
  conflict and bullying (n=1)
- Focus is on anxiety, mood
  and self-esteem levels rather
  than social skills/peer
  relationships (n=1)
- Study focused on
  particular gender/ethnic
  group (n=1)
- Exploratory study - no
  specific intervention (n=1)
- Study focused on
  intervention reliant on out
  of school agency (n=1)

Studies included in
Review

(n = 9)

Identification

Screening

Eligibility

Included

Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the stages of the systematic search.

1.3 Results

1.3.1 Overview of studies

A total of nine research papers were identified and analysed for data. Quantitative and mixed-methods papers were quality assessed using a revised version of the Downs and Black Checklist (Downs & Black,1998). Although originally designed to assess medical interventions, this checklist was chosen as the items appear to translate well to the socio-emotional interventions which are of interest to this review. Furthermore, the checklist provides details for each of its assessment criterion to help support the evaluative process. It has also been given a strong rating by the National Collaborating Centre for Tools and Methodologies (NCCMT; 2010). For the purpose of this review, two questions were added to the Downs and Black Checklist to assess the qualitative nature of three mixed-methods papers. These were based on questions from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP, 2014) for qualitative research and related to the rigor of data analysis and consideration of the relationship between the researcher and participants. Thus, the checklist provided a score out of 29 for the mixed-method papers and 27 for the purely quantitative papers. The qualitative papers were assessed using the CASP checklist for qualitative research which produced a score out of 10. The CASP was chosen as it also supports the evaluative process with detailed prompts to each question.

1.3.2 Quality Assessment

The outcomes of the quality assessments are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4. See Appendix B for full outcomes of the quality assessment checklists.

Table 2

Quality assessment for mixed-method papers (Revised Downs and Black, 1998)

Quality Rating	
Excellent (27-29)	
Good (21-26)	Ellis, Marsh & Craven, 2009; Jayman, Ohl, Hughes & Fox, 2018
Fair (16-20)	Caleon, King, Tan, Low, Tan & Liem, 2017
Poor (≥ 15)	

Table 3

Quality assessment for quantitative papers (Downs and Black, 1998)

Quality Rating	
Excellent (26-27)	
Good (20-25)	Rose, Hawes & Hunt, 2014
Fair (15-19)	Mikami, Gregory, Allen, Pianta & Lun, 2011; Terjestam, Bengtsson & Jansson, 2016;
Poor (≥ 14)	Dillon & Swinbourne, 2007

Table 4

Quality assessment for qualitative papers (CASP, Singh, 2013)

Quality Rating	
Good (8/10)	Kourmoulaki, 2013; Willis, Bland, Manks & Craft, 2012

Taken as a whole, the quality of the included studies varied widely. The use of different quality assessment tools means that a direct comparison across all studies was not possible, however, the quality scores obtained allow a reasonable judgement to be made with regards to the robustness of the research under review. It must also be noted that

quality appraisal was completed by the author alone and may, therefore, have been open to potential bias.

Two quantitative papers were identified to have 'good' methodologies based on a score of 20 or above (Ellis, Marsh & Craven, 2018 and Rose et al., 2014) whilst four other quantitative papers were rated 'fair', scoring between 15 and 20 (Caleon et al., 2017; Mikami et al., 2011 and Terjestam, Bengtsson & Jansson 2016). Both of the qualitative papers (Kourmoulaki, 2013 and Willis, Bland & Manka, 2012) received a rating of 8 which would suggest a 'good' methodology. Only one paper was identified to have a 'poor' methodology rating (Dillon & Swinbourne, 2007) with a score of 10/27, due in part to the fact that this study had no control group. The findings from this study have been and should be interpreted with caution.

Included Studies

1.3.3   Sample characteristics

Table 3 presents a summary of the characteristics of the nine studies included in the review. Two studies were carried out in the United Kingdom, four in Australia and one in each of Singapore, Sweden and the United States. Studies mostly included pupils aged 11-15 years, although one study included data on pupils aged 9-14 years (Rose et al., 2014). Another study included some data which also related to 17 and 18 year olds, although the majority of data was reported to address the 11-14 year age group (Mikami et al., 2011). All studies considered school-based interventions.

Table 5

Characteristics of selected papers.

Total number of papers selected	9
Journals	9 different journals: 1 British, 4 US, 2 Australian, 2 International
Methods	4 quantitative, 2 qualitative, 3 mixed-methods
Design	All studies evaluated interventions: (a) Whole class interventions approached through peer support (2), positive psychology (2), teacher professional development (1), friendship-skills building (1) (b) Targeted interventions approached through peer mentoring (1) and socio emotional competencies (2). Self-report measures were used in all papers collecting quantitative data. Informant-reports were also used in 2 papers.
Quantitative Measures of peer relations	SDQ (2), 6-item Gratitude Questionnaire (1), CLASS coding (1), Self-`description Questionnaire II (1), Psychological Sense of School Membership (1), Clinical Assessment of Interpersonal Relations (1), Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (1), Social Provision Scale (1)
Qualitative Measures	Focus groups (3), Individual semi-structured interviews (1), Open-ended questionnaire (1), Written comments post-intervention (1)
Age Range	9-18 years (focus on 11-16 years)
Gender	Where gender was reported (6) there was a good balance of male and female participants
Ethnicity	2 studies provided information on the ethnicity of participants
Number of Participants	3,235 pupil participants Plus participants in one study where combined participant scores were averaged and the schools were used as the unit of measurement

For the purpose of analysis within this systematic review, the studies were divided into two main areas: universal interventions (delivered to whole class or year groups) and targeted interventions (delivered to selected groups/individuals). The former area comprises programmes with a more ecological or holistic approach with an intention to help build, strengthen and maintain protective factors which facilitate a successful move into and through adolescence. These protective factors relate to the enhancement of wellbeing and self-concept and in particular, to the development of positive peer relations

and social support. The second area, targeted interventions, included programmes which focus in part on the development and strengthening of peer relationships but these programmes target particular groups of young people who have been identified to have additional social and emotional or learning needs.

1.3.4   Universal interventions

Six out of the nine included papers consider interventions where outcomes related to effects on whole classes or whole year groups (Caleon et al., 2017; Dillon & Swinbourne 2007; Ellis et al., 2009; Mikami et al., 2011; Rose, Hawes & Hunt, 2014; Terjestam et al., 2016). The interventions were clearly described in five of the papers, allowing for clear replication and understanding of the possible mechanisms through which any positive findings emerged. Only Dillon and Swinbourne (2007) provided an insufficient description of the intervention where further information related to the content would have been helpful.

The studies varied in relation to the primary focus of investigation, but all six were interested in what effects a specific intervention had on the development of social skills, a sense of connectedness or interpersonal relationships during the period of adolescence. With previous research suggesting that teacher instructional practice (Roseth, Johnson & Johnson, 2008) and the quality of teacher-pupil relations (Tseng & Seidmean, 2007) can positively influence peer relations, Mikami et al., (2011) were explicitly interested in investigating what effects a teacher-student relationship intervention had on peer relationships. Rose et al., (2014) investigated the impact of a friendship-skills building programme on peer interaction skills (including social awareness and empathy) when used in addition to a programme targeting a reduction in the depressive symptoms of adolescents.

The six studies evaluated school-based interventions based on a variety of methods including skills-building programmes (e.g. socio-emotional competencies such as confidence and self-regulation skills); a positive psychology informed approach (e.g. gratitude and mindfulness); peer-mentoring and teacher-pupil relationships. The studies investigated peer relations either as a main concern (Dillon & Swinbourne, 2007; Mikami et al., 2011) or as part of a wider construct of social functioning which relates to peer connectedness. Ellis et al. (2009) measured self-concept since it impacts on successful social integration with peers (Peer Support Foundation, 2001); Caleon et al., (2017) assessed the effects of a gratitude intervention on interpersonal relationships, in particular, whether it supported adaptation during adolescence through strengthening social relations; Terjestam et al., (2016) measured the effects of a mindfulness-based programme on wellbeing and social relations; and Rose et al., (2014) sought to consider the effects of a friendship-skills building programme in relation to protecting against the challenges associated with the stress of adolescence such as peer rejection and depression (Graber, 2008). The interventions were delivered by teachers (Caleon et al., 2017; Ellis et al., 2009; Terjestam et al., 2016); consultants/'master' teachers (Mikami et al, 2011); Clinical Psychology doctoral students (Rose et al., 2014) and school nurses/school staff volunteers (Dillon & Swinbourne, 2007).

1.3.4.1   Design

One study used a group randomised controlled trial (RCT) design (Rose et al, 2014) with pre-, post- and follow-up measures. The remainder of studies used either a quasi-experimental pre-post design (Caleon et al., 2017; Terjestam et al., 2016), a mixed-methods pre-post and follow-up design (Ellis et al., 2009) or a pre-post design (Mikami et al.), one of which had no control group (Dillon & Swinbourne, 2007). Sample sizes ranged

from 88-1423 students, with the majority of studies targeting young people aged 11-14 years.

Amongst the three studies with follow-up data, the duration to follow-up was 3 months in two studies (Ellis et al., 2009; Willis et al., 2012) and 12 months in one study (Rose et al., 2014). Two of the six studies included qualitative as well as quantitative data (Ellis et al., 2009; Caleon et al., 2017). Qualitative data within the mixed-methods studies was collected through focus groups and/or written-response questionnaires and findings were developed using thematic analysis.

1.3.4.2 Measures

All six studies employed quantitative measures relating to a sense of relatedness or connectedness to others (including peers); positive peer interactions; self-concept in relation to same-sex and opposite-sex peer relations; or a sense of social peer support. The two papers which employed a mixed-methods approach (Caleon et al., 2017; Ellis et al., 2009) may present a more balanced perspective by seeking to explore the different perspectives and uncover the relationships between the different factors relating to the research questions (Shorten & Smith, 2017).

A wide range of measures relating to aspects of adolescent SEWB were used across the six studies. These included pupil self-report measures which sought to assess the impact of interventions on peer relations and included a six item Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6; McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002); a questionnaire designed to measure wellbeing and social relations (using five different scales); the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM; Goodenow, 1993); the Clinical Assessment of Interpersonal Relations (CAIR; Bracken, 2006); the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2007); the Self-Description Questionnaire II Short (SDQII-S; Marsh, 2000); the Review of Personal Effectiveness Scale (ROPE; Richards &

Neill, 2000); the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI-A; Parada 2000) and the Social Provision Scale (SPS; Cutrona & Russell, 1987). No two studies used the same measure(s). Informant-rated scales were additionally used in one paper (Terjestam et al., 2016) which adds to the robustness of the findings and a team of coders was employed to score the presence of positive peer interactions in the study by Mikami et al. (2011).

1.3.4.3   Effectiveness of universal interventions on adolescent peer relations

All six studies reported some positive impact of the interventions on peer relations. There were, however limitations to these findings, with one study finding increased levels of connectedness only for opposite-sex relations (Ellis et al., 2009) and one showing reduced peer problems for only the youngest adolescent age group (Terjestam et al., 2016). The findings are considered in more detail below.

Two studies considered the impact of interventions which focused on peer-support (Ellis et al., 2009; Dillon & Swinbourne, 2007). Whilst it should be noted that the latter paper received a 'poor' quality rating, it remains interesting to consider the findings in relation to other studies. Ellis et al., (2009) used a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the benefits of implementing a peer-support programme across a two year period with students of 11-14 years ($n = 930$). This study formed part of a larger research project investigating the effectiveness of a peer-support programme developed in Australia to support the physical, mental and social wellbeing of young people (Peer Support Foundation, 2001). The programme trains older students (15-16 years) to work with groups of younger students around issues such as the development of peer support networks, goal setting and problem solving across a 12 week period. Of particular interest to this review, the programme aims to enhance student relations and promote a feeling of connectedness. The study predicted a significant increase in connectedness alongside increases in other areas such as resourcefulness, school competence and sense of self. Results found a partial

impact on student connectedness with a significant result showing an increase for opposite-sex relations ($p < .01$), but not for same-sex relations in the experimental group, when compared to the control group. These results were maintained at a three month follow-up. A 'sleeper effect' for cooperative teamwork was also found, suggesting that the programme may have initiated changes which developed over time. More research would be needed to clarify this finding.

The qualitative findings, from student open-ended questionnaires and focus group discussions, identified the strongest theme to emerge as 'student connectedness'. More specifically, students reported that the programme "encouraged students to make new friends and become closer to old friends" (Ellis et al., 2009 p. 66) and enabled friendships to be formed with older pupils. Data gathered from both younger (mentee) and older (peer support leader) students were found to agree. Further themes which arose relating to student connectedness included understanding others and their feelings, teamwork and communication and social skills.

Dillon and Swinbourne's (2007) paper also considered a peer support programme called 'Helping Friends.' The programme aims to strengthen peer relations and help develop SEWB. Students were nominated, as pupils whom peers might approach for social support, by their Year 11 peers to be 'leaders' who then voluntarily undertook programme training over a two day period. The training focused on helping relationships, problem solving and communication skills, decision making, referral for support and self-care. The intervention aimed to strengthen and extend existing social support through the upskilling of nominated 'leaders' who were likely to be approached by peers for social support. The study used the SPS (Cutrona & Russell, 1987) to gather data from secondary schools in North Queensland mostly between 1999 and 2003. The SPS was filled in by Year 11 pupils (15-16 years) pre- and post- intervention and average pupil scores were calculated for each

school. The SPS scores were taken to indicate any change in the perceived supportiveness of the school environment. There was no control group as part of this study. Results indicated small significant increases in three out of six areas relating to social support: reassurance of worth (recognition by others of competence and value), attachment (emotional closeness to another which provides a sense of security) and nurturance (awareness of being relied on by others for emotional and physical wellbeing). It should be noted that whilst repeated measures t-tests identified significant pre/post increases in these three areas ($p< .05$), the pre-programme averages for these three areas had initially been low, when compared to the other three areas which were: guidance (the giving of advice or information), social integration (a sense of belonging) and reliable alliance (awareness that others can be relied upon for help). Results may therefore reflect a ceiling effect, with no effects of the programme observed beyond a certain level.

In considering these two studies, it is possible to suggest that a focus on peer support may be beneficial to the development of a sense of connectedness with others. However, the size of effect may depend on the strength of current peer relations, as indicated by the difference seen in results relating to same-sex and opposite-sex relations in the study by Ellis et al., (2009) and the results obtained which relate to the different areas of social support in Dillon and Swinbourne's (2007) paper. The findings from Ellis et al's. (2009) study should be considered to be more reliable as the study used a mixed-methods approach, a longitudinal design and had a large sample size. The maintenance of effects and identified sleeper effects lend support to the use of a peer-support programmes which the authors suggest may lead to a continued cycle of self-improvement and growth. Qualitative findings add support to this notion.

A study by Mikami et al., (2011) considered the possible impact of improved teacher-pupil relationships on peer relationships. This prediction was founded in systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Seidman, 1988) and investigated whether positive teacher-

pupil relationships might act as a model for positive peer relations. Previous research has identified increased levels of acceptance for peers in primary aged pupils which is influenced by a child's perception of their teacher's relationship with those peers (Hughes & Kwok, 2006). In Mikami et al's. (2011) study, a professional development intervention for teachers called 'My Teaching Partner – Secondary' (MTP-S; Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami & Lun, 2011) was implemented with 88 teachers across 12 middle and high schools in South Eastern America. The age of pupils they taught ranged from 11-18 years, with about 54 of the teachers teaching in middle schools (pupil ages 11-13 years) and the remainder teaching in high schools where pupil ages range from 14-18 years. Teachers were randomly assigned to either the experimental condition, where they received the MTP-S intervention (teacher consultation which targets emotionally supportive teacher-pupil relationships, classroom management and instructional strategies such as incorporating pupil interests through observation and discussion of videotaped lessons), or to a control condition where they undertook their school's usual teacher professional development. The intervention took place throughout the school year (approximately twice a month). Classrooms, made up of 1423 pupils in total, were videoed. These recordings were then scored using the CLASS coding system to identify observed positive peer interactions which were referenced as positive, co-operative and warm in nature. Coders had undergone a two day training programme and inter-rater reliability was reported to be acceptable (*Intraclass Correlation Coefficients* = .65). Pupil self-report measures were also used to assess the quality of peer interactions. Pupils completed a four item Likert scale pre- and post- intervention.

Results from the observational coding revealed a significant link between teacher participation in MTP-S and positive peer relations: *Partial $\eta2$* = .052, which is reported to approach a medium effect size (Stevens, 2002). No change to the level of positive peer interactions was observed in control classrooms. Interestingly, pupil self-report measures

did not identify any increase in positive peer relations, with pupils continuing to report positive relations with 75% of their classroom peers. It is worth considering here why the coded and self-reported data might differ. The authors suggest that the pupils' own perceptions relating to their relationships with peers may be harder to influence than the observable, behavioural changes in peer relations. Futhermore, they argue that it is difficult to overlook the relevance of observable change in pupil behaviours and suggest that this may be most relevant, with previous research highlighting the negative impact of reduced peer group participation on academic achievement (Buhs, Ladd & Herald, 2006).

An RCT conducted by Rose et al., (2014) investigated the effects of a friendship-skills building intervention called the Peer Interpersonal Relatedness (PIR) Programme. This was used simultaneously in addition with the Resourceful Adolescent Programme (RAP), which is a cognitive behavioural therapy based intervention targeting adolescent depression. Both interventions are class based programmes which follow manual guidance. PIR is delivered across nine weeks and RAP across an 11 week period, both as 40-50 minute group sessions. Classes were randomly assigned to RAP-PIR, RAP-placebo or assessment only waitlist control groups within 4 separate schools. The measures used which are relevant to this review were the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) which measures school connectedness and the Clinical Assessment of Personal Relationships (CAIR) which measures social functioning. No significant effects were observed for interpersonal relationships at post-intervention but a significant increase in the quality of social relationships was found at a 12-month follow-up ($d = 0.55$). This may indicate a need for the skills developed relating to friendship building to be embedded before effects are seen. As the authors point out, it may also indicate an increase in the ability to engage with peers which is linked to a decrease in symptoms of depression as a result of the RAP intervention. Analysis found no significant effect on school connectedness, although a trend towards increased school connectedness was seen for

those students who completed the RAP-PIR intervention and a decrease in school connectedness was observed for students who completed the RAP only intervention. It is difficult to fully interpret the results since the improvement in social relationships may have been due to the interaction between the RAP and PIR intervention or, may have been the result of the PIR intervention alone (there was no PIR-placebo group to identify this).

Two studies considered interventions grounded in positive psychology, taking a strengths-based approach and aiming to promote the positives in life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology interventions relate to the promotion of wellbeing, which Seligman (2012) suggests is made up of five different components. One of these components is identified to be 'relationships'. Positive psychology interventions with adolescents have received some interest within the literature. Gratitude is one such intervention and positive influences of gratitude on the social relationships of adolescents have been identified (e.g. Froh, Bono & Emmons, 2010). Caleon et al., (2017) conducted a mixed-methods study to investigate the effects of a class-based gratitude intervention on the interpersonal relationships of adolescents in a Singaporean school. Four classes ($n = 103$; 12-14 years) participated. Two classes were randomly assigned to the experimental condition and two to the waitlist control condition. The intervention (comprising four 35 minute sessions delivered across a two week period) involved the use of gratitude to improve the quality of social relationships of students with parents, teachers and peers. Four key activities were developed to be part of the intervention. These were 'Counting Everyday Blessings' (listing three to five things for which they are grateful), 'Gratitude Card' (writing a letter of gratitude to another person whom they had never properly thanked), 'Mental Subtraction of Blessings' (describing what their life would be like without one of the particular blessings listed under everyday blessings) and 'Gratitude Collage' (creating a group collage using cut outs and drawing of things or people for whom they felt grateful). Pre- and post-intervention scores were obtained using the GQ-6 and a

four item scale for relatedness to parents, teachers and peers. Analysis found no statistical significance for levels of gratitude. Small effect sizes were identified for student relationships with their parents ($d = .23$) and their peers ($d = .032$) and no significant effects were found for relationships with teachers.

Qualitative data was also collected as part of this study - students were asked to record their feelings at the end of each activity. Overall perceptions of the intervention were gathered at the end of the final session. Responses were explored through thematic analysis. Three main themes were identified; affective, cognitive and social. Of interest to this review, the social theme gave rise to two subthemes: 'forming bonds' and 'opportunity to express gratitude.' Twenty percent of the pupils were reported to record that the activities had helped them to mix and bond with their friends and 39% reported that the gratitude intervention had enabled them to thank others who had helped them. These themes concur with the quantitative findings which relate to a positive effect of the gratitude intervention on peer and parent relationships. The authors suggest their results support the notion that gratitude can positively influence the development and maintenance of social relationships, a finding which has been presented by other research into gratitude (e.g. Emmons, McCullough & Tsang, 2003). The authors note that these effect sizes are small and cite that this is common when gratitude interventions are compared to approaches which are intended to induce a neutral emotional response (i.e. a waiting list control). The sample size was also small (46 experimental and 57 control group) which may have made detection of small intervention effects difficult.

Terjestam et al., (2016) investigated the implementation of another whole-class intervention based on positive psychology. This used a mindfulness-based technique which aims to develop socio-emotional learning skills through raising levels of compassion and awareness of feelings of self and others. One of the aims outlined in the study was to investigate the impact the mindfulness intervention had on social relations, which were

seen to be indicative of psychological wellbeing in adolescence. Pupils ($n = 358$; age 11-15 years) from four separate Swedish independent schools participated in the study. The intervention was implemented across an eight week period, with the experimental and control groups receiving input three times a week. The SDQ subscale 'Peer Problems' was used to measure peer relations. Analysis revealed a significant interaction ($p < 0.05$) between the experimental condition (mindfulness) and pre- and post- measures for only one age group (11-12 years) with a medium effect size ($d = 0.41$) showing a reduction in peer problems between the two time-points for the experimental group, but not for the control group. The authors suggested that this may have related to the fact that this younger age group was taught by one class teacher, whereas the older age groups were taught by different teachers for different subjects, as in UK secondary schools. This may have led to a lower level of commitment to the intervention by those teachers who were not with the class all the time. They also stated that the younger pupils were themselves more motivated to participate in the mindfulness-based programme, although additional data would be needed in order to confirm this hypothesis.

Whilst these universal interventions demonstrated levels of success in the promotion of positive peer relations, the question of whether they provide long-term benefits to adolescent peer relations is less evident since only two studies presented follow-up data (Ellis et al., 2009; Rose et al., 2014). The positive impact on peer relations of an intervention which aims to improve teacher-pupil relationships is noteworthy and highlights an influence of classroom climate on positive peer relations which may be easier to maintain through teachers' continued professional development. Finally, further research into the fidelity of application of positive psychology interventions, such as mindfulness and gratitude, is needed in order to consider how these can be successfully and efficiently built into a secondary school system. Existing research suggests that the impact of positive psychology interventions run by teachers in schools varies in response to teacher attitude

and confidence, which both affect the fidelity of implementation (Castro-Villarreal, Rodriguez & Moore, 2014).

1.3.5   Targeted interventions

Three out of the nine papers included in this review consider group-based interventions where pupil participation was targeted (Jayman et al., 2018; Kourmoulaki, 2013 and Willis et al., 2012). Jayman et al., (2018) evaluated the impact of the Pyramid intervention, which aims to enhance SEWB, using a mixed methods approach. It is implemented as an after-school club by school support staff and community volunteers across a 10 week period.

Willis et al. (2012) explored the effects of a cross-aged literacy based peer mentoring programme which was developed both to improve literacy skills and to develop social relationships, both viewed as paramount to successful and subsequent learning. The mentoring programme was implemented jointly by an English teacher within the school and an out-of-school mentoring consultant. The Year 10 mentors received initial training to develop their understanding of, and skills related to mentoring, and then met with their mentee for a minimum of one hour a week across the school year.

Kourmoulaki's (2013) study aimed to explore the set-up and impact of secondary Nurture Groups which are acknowledged by the author to influence, among other things, social skills and relations and to potentially decrease peer problems. The Nurture Groups were run by staff who had received training on Nurture Group provision from Educational Psychologists (EPs). They were timetabled on a part time basis within a Scottish secondary school.

1.3.5.1   Design

Willis et al., (2012) gathered qualitative data at three time points (on completion of training for the mentors, four months after the start of the peer mentoring programme and at completion of the programme). Thirty four pupils (12-16 years), 19 parents and 4 school staff were involved in focus groups and/or semi-structured interviews and mentors also completed questionnaires. Kourmoulaki's (2013) single case school study gathered data from 16 pupils and 12 school staff through a mixture of group and individual semi-structured interviews. The exact ages of pupil participants were not given but were within the secondary school age range of 11-16 years. Jayman et al. (2018) conducted focus groups with pupils and adults and collected pre-, post- and 12 month follow-up quantitative data from 126 pupils (11-14 year olds). Inductive thematic analysis, where theme development is directed by the content of the data, was the method of qualitative analysis in all three studies

1.3.5.2   Measures

Data was collected using individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups for key stakeholders (pupils and school staff) and telephone interviews with parents. In particular, Willis et al. (2009) used repeated focus groups with pupil participants (mentees and mentors) to gather information on pupil experiences four months into and at the end of the peer mentoring process. A short questionnaire was also used to gather written responses from the mentors on completion of training for the mentoring programme. Jayman et al., (2018) used pupil self-report and informant versions of the SDQ to measure socio-emotional wellbeing. The authors noted that the 'Peer Problems' subscale presented with a low internal reliability rating in their study despite a recognition of good reliability and validity elsewhere (Lundh, Wangby-Lundh, & Bjarehed, 2008).

1.3.5.3   Effectiveness of targeted interventions on adolescent peer relations

All three studies reported a positive impact on peer relationships through, for example, increased confidence or an increased sense of belonging. Jayman et al., (2018) provided follow-up data which evidenced a maintenance of effects over time, but the other two studies did not include a follow-up. The studies will be considered in more detail below.

The Pyramid Club intervention (Jayman et al., 2018) incorporates therapeutic activities such as circle time, arts and crafts activities, games and food preparation/snack time with the aim of facilitating and developing social skills such as listening, turn-taking and cooperation and the ability to express feelings and experience a sense of achievement. The weekly sessions are supported by a manualised programme. Similarities can be drawn to Nurture Group (NG) practice (e.g., see Kourmoulaki, 2013). NGs have been identified to have the aim of helping to develop supportive and caring relationships with others (Colley, 2009) and to increase pro-social behaviour and reduce peer problems (Seth-Smith, Levi, Pratt, Jaffey & Fonagy, 2010). They focus on modelling and supporting positive relationships and on providing a home-like environment to develop a sense of safety and security.

Quantitative analysis of data from the Pyramid Club evaluation produced large effect sizes for improvement in peer relationship problems ($d = 0.82$) and for emotional symptoms ($d = 0.79$). A 12 month follow-up analysis (using an informant-rated measure) showed maintenance of effects (peer relationship problems $d = 0.9$ and emotional symptoms $d = 0.8$). These results were supported by the qualitative findings from focus groups with pupils and club leaders. Pupils reported increased levels of confidence with improved social skills and peer relationships. These improvements were reported to transfer outside of the Pyramid Club, with pupils and club leaders highlighting an

increased ability to interact and work with others in the classroom. A sense of belonging

was reported which was supported by the development of trusting relationships. The

qualitative findings exhibited a high consistency between pupil and club leader narratives

and this supports the credibility of the findings. However, as the authors point out, when

responding to self-report measures, individuals may be more likely to present a more

favourable image of themselves (Van de Mortel, 2008).

The qualitative analysis from Kourmoulaki's (2013) exploration of NGs produced

comparable themes. Participants identified an increased sense of belonging as a result of

the intervention, which was influenced by improved interaction and cooperation with

others and opportunities to develop friendships. Improved social communication skills

were also highlighted, with NG pupils becoming more supportive of one another. In

contrast to the generalisability of skills found within Jayman et al's. (2018) study of the

Pyramid Model, findings from Kourmoulaki's (2013) NG study suggested a need to

develop ways to promote the transferability of the skills developed within the NG to the

wider school setting and beyond.

Willis et al's. (2012) qualitative study evaluated a cross-age peer mentoring

intervention which aimed to develop social relationships and learning skills (with a focus

on literacy) and to improve participation in school communities. Thematic analysis

identified that the mentees experienced an increased sense of relationship building with

their mentors over time (the intervention was delivered across the school year and

qualitative information was gathered at two different time points) and improved attitudes to

learning. The mentors themselves identified an increased ability to relate to younger pupils

within the school and described a sense that the mentees appeared more comfortable within

the secondary school environment. Greater confidence was observed, with mentees

engaging more positively with peers and teachers in the classroom. Mentees were also

observed to be better able to respond to difficulties in their relationships with others. These findings should, however, be interpreted with caution since they were supported by a limited amount of data. It would have been useful to have been presented with further quotations from the mentor and mentees. A further finding was that cross-age peer mentoring promoted social inclusion within the school environment. This outcome is perhaps similar to the sense of belonging which was identified as an outcome of the NG and Pyramid interventions. It is possible that focussing on the promotion of positive peer relations is likely to lead to an increased sense of belonging within the secondary school environment.

1.4   Discussion

School-based interventions present a significant opportunity to influence the quality, development and maintenance of peer relations which, if experienced as rewarding and supportive, are acknowledged to act as a protective factor to SEWB during adolescence (Criss et al.,2002; Clarke et al., 2015). This systematic review considered the effects of universal and targeted school-based interventions on adolescent peer relations. A total of nine papers were included, six considering whole school approaches and three looking at targeted interventions.

The quality, design and measures used within the studies varied considerably making direct comparisons difficult. Measures of peer relations formed part of the studies which were more broadly focused on the promotion of SEWB during adolescence. Results seem to suggest that the effectiveness of school-based interventions in promoting positive peer relations is mixed. Two studies, rated as having good methodologies, found large (Jayman et al., 2018) and medium (Rose et al., 2009) effect sizes for measures relating to peer relations. However, the Rose et al., (2009) study considered an intervention which was additional to another intervention aimed at reducing depressive symptoms in

adolescents. It is not, therefore, clear whether the effect sizes found were due to the friendship-skills building programme itself or the interaction with the second intervention. The Pyramid intervention study, with a good methodology, provides the most robust evidence within this review as it also included a 12-month follow-up and both quantitative and qualitative data which gathered the views of pupils and adults.

1.4.1 How can positive peer relations be successfully promoted within secondary schools?

The findings from three of the studies within this review (Jayman et al., 2018; Kourmoulaki, 2013 and Mikami et al., 2011) suggest that the modelling of warm and trusting relationships supports the development of positive peer relations. This can be seen to fit with attachment theory (Bowlby, 2008) where repeated exposure to positive relationships has been shown to support the development of a positive sense of self and so help to develop the capacity for successful and trusting relationships with others. The finding from Mikami et al., (2011), which identified the positive influence of warm and responsive teacher-pupil relations on peer relations, adds to the evidence for the usefulness of focusing on teacher-pupil relationships (through the creation of cooperative and warm classroom climates) in order to positively influence peer relations. This relates to previous findings where the quality of pupil-teacher relationships has been shown to positively influence the quality of peer relations within secondary schools (Richard, Schneider & Mallett, 2012). However, it should be noted that in the study by Mikami et al., (2011) there was no evidence to show whether the positive impact on peer relations generalised to other classrooms (led by teachers who had not been part of the intervention) and the wider school environment. This would be an interesting area for future research.

The findings cited in this review suggest that both universal and targeted interventions can impact positively on peer relations. Nevertheless, the studies evaluating

universal interventions through quantitative methods suggest some important limitations. For example, in the Swedish study by Terjestam et al. (2016), positive impact was reported only in the younger age group (11-12 years) where pupils were taught all subjects by the same teacher. Ellis et al., (2009) found long-term effects for opposite-sex peer relations but not for same-sex peer relations. The findings derived from their qualitative methods, however, identified an increase in students' perceptions of connectedness which was not limited to opposite-sex peer relations. Pupils reported that they had been able both to make new friends and to become closer to old friends. Bonding with and feeling connected to others was a theme which also emerged from Caleon et al's., (2017) study which evaluated a gratitude intervention. Quantitative results, however, found only small levels of significance for an improved sense of relatedness to parents and peers and no change to relationships with teachers.

A sense of connection to others/belonging has been identified as key to promoting healthy development through adolescence (Allen, Vella-Brodrick & Waters, 2016; O'Connor 2010). It appears from this review that targeted interventions aimed at the development of SEWB and, in part, at the development of positive peer relations, are able to promote a sense of belonging. All three papers within this review which considered targeted interventions identified themes highlighting young peoples' perceived change in a sense of belonging and connectedness following the intervention, through the development of positive peer relations and adult-pupil relations.

Data are less consistent as to whether this sense of belonging transfers from within the intervention setting to the wider school environment. For the NG study (Kourmoulaki, 2013), this was not the case, whilst for the Pyramid Club (Jayman et al., 2018) and peer mentoring (Willis et al., 2012) studies, findings suggested that pupils were able to transfer the skills to peer relationships within the wider school environment. The authors of the Pyramid Club study referred to Pyramid Club 'ambassadors' who encouraged new

participants to join once they themselves had completed the intervention. It is possible that this supports a transfer of effects to outside of the Pyramid Club itself, encouraging a sense of connectedness. Similarly, Willis et al., (2012) talked about the development of closer bonds developing between mentors and mentees over time, and it is possible that this gradual impact on peer relations leads to an effect which maintains the relationships post-intervention.

It is important to note that, unlike the other interventions considered in this review, the Pyramid intervention was delivered as an after-school club. Research has previously indicated a potential for after-school clubs to support positive peer relations (e.g. Fredricks, Hackett & Bregman, 2010; Moody, 2001) with greater opportunities for supported social interactions within smaller and potentially less-structured environments. However, research also suggests that voluntary after-school clubs are often more frequently attended by young people from a higher socioeconomic background (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005) and this may mean that those young people who may benefit most from them are less likely to be involved. This is an area where further investigation would be helpful to understand how positive impact on peer relations from both more targeted interventions and less structured provision can be generalised and how those young people most in need might be encouraged to participate.

This review also suggests that peer mentoring/support interventions can be effective in improving peer relations and that these benefits are sustained over time, so supporting SEWB. Previous research has highlighted the development of trust and a sense of connection as being key to the mentoring relationship (Dallos & Comley-Ross, 2000). This outlines once again a link to attachment theory whereby mentoring affords an opportunity to experience secure and trusting relationships which may have been missed earlier in a child's life (Evans & Ave, 2000) . Three studies within this review also

identified increased levels of peer connectedness (Dillon & Swinbourne, 2017; Ellis et al., 2009) and improvements in relationship-building skills (Willis et al., 2012). This supports findings from previous research where a positive impact on SEWB has been identified from peer mentoring (Karcher, 2005; Otis, 2006). Benefits for both the mentee and the mentor have been identified as outcomes of peer mentoring/support (Petosa & Smith, 2014) and this implies that peer mentoring would be particularly relevant when schools are considering how to promote a sense of school belonging and connection for all. With the availability of peers within schools, this is an area which could continue to be built upon at low cost to schools. Furthermore, peer support has been evidenced as an effective way of facilitating a successful transition for pupils from primary into secondary schools (Brady, Dolan & Calavan, 2014; Waters, Lester & Cross, 2014). This is a time when early adolescents face many challenges, including the maintenance of existing and the establishment of new friendships. The provision of peer support interventions at the point of transition might be a successful way to promote positive peer relations and a sense of belonging, which can have a lasting impact on pupils' SEWB.

1.4.2   Strengths and Limitations

The present review had several strengths. Firstly, the findings of this review address a relevant gap within current literature, since no other review exists which specifically evaluates the effect of secondary school-based interventions on peer relations. The inclusion of qualitative as well as mixed-methods and purely quantitative papers can also be considered a strength. This helps to elicit pupil voice and to capture experiential accounts from those involved in the interventions. In particular, the inclusion of mixed-methods papers allows for a fuller interpretation of results to be made, with the opportunity for qualitative data to expand on, reinforce or question quantitative findings. A further

strength of this review is the replication of the literature search by a voluntary research assistant which helped to reduce the likelihood of error within the search process.

A number of limitations must also be noted. Firstly, only nine studies were included in this review of which only five (Ellis et al., 2009; Jayman et al., 2018; Kourmoulaki, 2013; Rose et al., 2009; Willis et al., 2012) were considered to be of 'good' quality. It is clear, therefore, that more research in this area is needed. Secondly, the studies included were varied in their design, interested in a diverse set of interventions, used a wide variety of measures and were completed in five different countries across four different continents. Taken together, these factors mean that information has been collated from a heterogenous set of studies, making direct comparison challenging and overall conclusions difficult to make. The systematic search was limited to papers from 2005 onwards. This may mean that older papers have been excluded, although the initial scoping search suggested that research relevant to this review is limited and there was a scarcity of papers before 2005. A further limitation relates to the use of self-report measures which featured in all of the quantitative/ mixed-methods papers within this review. Although self-report measures have the advantage of straightforward administration and allow for large amount of data to be collected, they also increase the risk that participants will provide answers which they believe to be socially acceptable rather than completely truthful (Demetriou, Ozer & Essau, 2015) and findings should therefore be interpreted with caution. Finally, the inclusion of only published papers in this review presents a risk of publication bias. Findings which indicate a significant positive impact on peer relations might be over-represented in published work, while unpublished studies may be more likely to have demonstrated non-significant results. It is possible that this also influenced the number of studies available to this review.

1.4.3   Implications for Educational Psychology Practice and Future Research

The findings from this systematic review present some areas of future interest. Links can be made to the current government focus and policy regarding the SEWB of young people (DoH & DfE, 2017). The implementation of school-based interventions which impact positively on peer relations seems a valuable area to further explore. Adolescents, in particular, are faced with the challenges of seeking increased autonomy and becoming increasingly influenced by their peers. A sense of belonging and feeling connected to others are identified as key factors for SEWB (Kawachi & Berkman, 2001) and the development of adolescent programmes which target this should consider the influence of positive peer relations within this (Carr, 1987). It would be useful for future research to consider how targeted and universal approaches can be successfully incorporated into secondary school environments to support the development of positive peer relations within a whole school approach. Indeed, EPs would be well-placed to work systemically with schools to consider how best to support positive peer relations and to work with senior management teams to reflect on and help develop school policy which relates to this. Consideration of how schools can ensure they consider change which is built upon a sound base of evidence would be one effective use of EP time. Furthermore, the planned role of a 'Senior Designated Lead' for mental health within each school may present an opportunity to consider current practice within individual schools which relates to how peer relations are valued and supported and to share knowledge of and ideas towards further developing practice where appropriate. For example, exploring how NGs could be effectively set up to enable the generalisability of the skills taught and developed.

Findings from this review suggest potential for a more focused interest in promoting positive peer relations within school policy to create a greater understanding of how this links to some of the current practice in secondary schools. For example, making explicit the link between teacher-pupil relations and the impact on peer relations and

SEWB; considering how pupil opportunities to experience gratitude or mindfulness can help to develop relationships and a sense of belonging; taking a long-term view, where interventions involving the development of skills linked to positive peer relations are understood to take time to be embedded. All these areas would benefit from further research which employs a mixed-method and longitudinal design and which has an explicit focus on positive peer relations in secondary schools. The consideration of how data may be measured and analysed should be a priority to enable a more comprehensive comparison of findings.

1.5   Conclusion

This review has demonstrated some success for both targeted and universal interventions in promoting positive peer relations to support SEWB during adolescence. Peer relations have been shown to impact on feelings of connectedness to others and a wider sense of belonging. Provision offered by individual secondary schools varies in response to the diversity and needs of the pupil populations they serve, and this impacts on the ethos developed within individual schools. It is therefore likely that 'best practice' will also vary according to the needs of the school. Future research should therefore seek to explore possible ways forward using an action research or case study approach. This would allow the identification and careful consideration of the different factors which should be considered in order to effectively support adolescent SEWB, and so promote academic achievement, within secondary schools.

Chapter 2 : Can Nurture Groups work in mainstream secondary schools? A case example.

2.1 Introduction

As outlined at the beginning of Chapter 1, the mental health of children and young people is currently considered a priority within education and health policy (DoH & DfE, 2018). Recent guidance within 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' (DfE, 2018) highlights a need for schools to consider how they can best provide a "safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely" (p.6) for all pupils, in response to a picture of increasing social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. One school-based intervention, nurture groups (NGs), has consistently been identified within government guidelines and policy as an appropriate and effective approach to supporting vulnerable pupils with SEMH needs (DfES, 2005; Ofsted, 2011) and has recently been highlighted as an intervention where the development of best practice should be targeted (DfE, 2019). Furthermore, the promotion of a whole school nurturing ethos has been recognised as a useful, preventative approach to help improve the SEMH of children and young people (DfE, 2018). NGs are, therefore, of interest to current school practice and policy.

2.1.1 The theoretical underpinnings of Nurture Groups

Built on attachment theory, which stresses the importance of early experiences with caregivers in the development of SEWB (Bretherton, 1992; Bowlby, 2008), NGs intend to support the development of effective 'internal working models' (IWMs) through the experience of nurturing and trusting relationships (Bennathan, 2013). IWMs refer to a mental representation of the relationship with a primary caregiver, which acts as a template

for future relationships (Bowlby, 2008). Stable and caring, or 'securely attached,'

relationships with primary caregivers, promote the development of effective IWMs,

allowing a child's behaviour (especially their social interactions with others) to be

appropriately organised through their own expectations of themselves and others. Thus, a

child who has experienced securely attached relationships will enter into new relationships

believing that others are trustworthy and that they, themselves, are worthy of friendship.

This is likely to elicit a positive social response. In contrast, a child who has not

experienced secure attachment relationships is more likely to see the world as an unsafe

and unpredictable place and view themselves as unworthy of friendship and to have low

expectations of what they should expect from relationships with others (Pietromonaco &

Feldman Barrett, 2000).

The stability of IWMs has been an area of interest within developmental

psychology (e.g. Fraley, Roisman & Haltigan, 2013; Jones et al., 2018) with two

theoretical perspectives ('prototype' and 'revisionist') emerging within the literature (Fraley

et al., 2013). Both perspectives propose that IWMs can be updated through exposure to

new interpersonal experiences. The prototype perspective suggests that the amount of

change possible is limited by a stabilising factor (the stabilising factor being early patterns

of attachment which become apparent again in certain contexts), whereas the revisionist

perspective suggests that IWMs may be fully replaced by new attachment experiences

(Fraley et al., 2013). The notion that IWMs are continuously 'updated' and 'revised' in

response to current social experiences, provides the foundation for the idea that through the

experience of rewarding and trusting relationships the development of more effective,

secure IWMs can be promoted.

2.1.2   How Nurture Groups are run

The NG approach was originally conceived and developed by Educational Psychologist (EP) Marjorie Boxall in London during the late 1960s (Boxall, 2002) after recognising within her professional work in schools, that many children were not yet ready for the social and intellectual demands of their mainstream classrooms. NGs are a short-term, psychosocial school-based intervention, built on six guiding principles (see Figure 1) which underpin the organisation and ethos of the approach. The importance of positive relationships and healthy attachments is recognised within NG practice. Through positive relationships within the group sessions, NG staff aim to support the SEWB of vulnerable young people and, therefore, positively influence their readiness for learning.

For traditional NGs, a dedicated and established 'Nurture Room' is created within the school to provide a welcoming and safe environment (including a kitchen, dining, play, comfortable sofa and working area). NG pupils are assessed for suitability for the intervention using the Boxall Profile (Bennathan, 1998) to ascertain strengths and needs which relate to their SEWB. The scores help to identify individualised targets which aim to support pupils in developing the skills needed to be able to more successfully access learning opportunities.

Pupils ordinarily attend NG (typically made up of between 6 and 12 pupils; Nurture UK, 2019) for part of their weekly timetable (e.g. either morning or afternoon) and stay with their peers within mainstream classrooms for the remainder of the time. As a short-term intervention, pupils typically attend for between two to four terms, before being reintegrated into their mainstream classroom. NGs are run by two, ideally consistent, adults who model positive communication and successful relationships. Planning incorporates a social, emotional and academic curriculum which aims to respond to the

developmental needs of individual pupils and so 'catch up' on missed social and emotional

opportunities from early childhood (Bennathan & Boxall, 2013).

Children's learning is understood developmentally

The classroom offers a safe base

The importance of nurture for the development of self-esteem

Language is a vital means of communication

All behaviour is communication

The importance of transition in children's lives
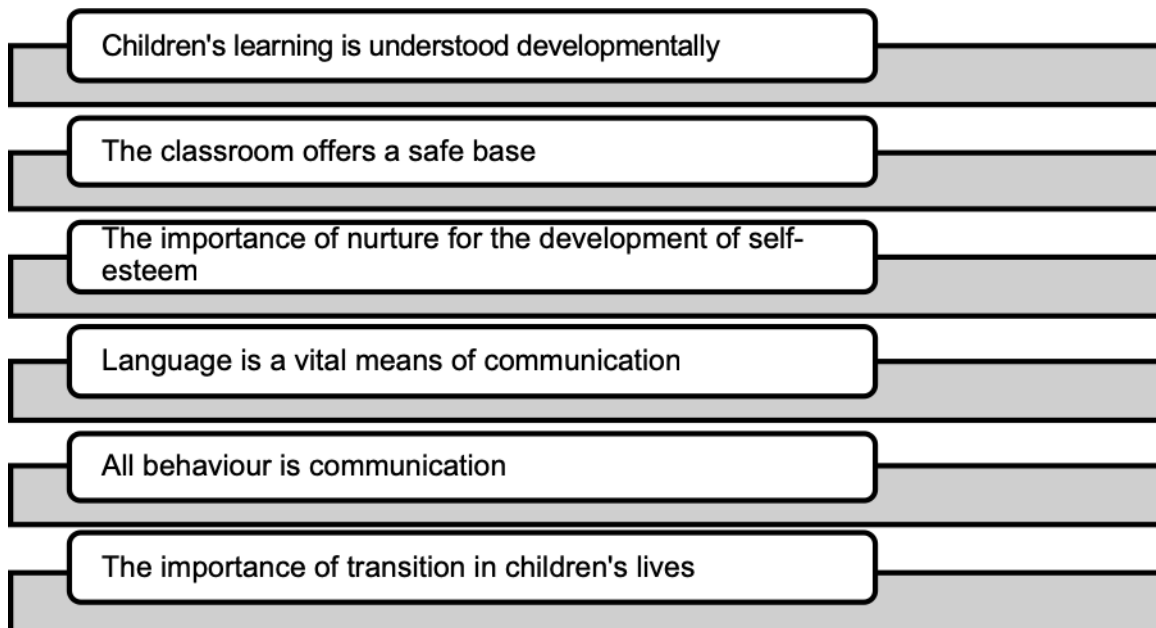
Figure 1. The six principles of Nurture Groups (Lucas, Insley & Buckland, 2006).

2.1.3   Primary Nurture Groups and existing research

Developed for application within primary schools, there is now an increasing

evidence base pointing to the successful impact of NGs (Binnie & Allen, 2008; Cheney,

Schlösser, Nash & Glover, 2014; Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007;

Ofsted, 2011). This growing literature has identified positive outcomes for primary aged

children who have additional needs relating to their SEWB and subsequent ability to

effectively access learning. For example, Reynolds, MacKay & Kearney (2009) identified

significant literacy gains for NG pupils when compared to control groups in a large-scale

study involving 32 Scottish primary schools. Pre- and post- data was gathered for 186

primary pupils across a six month period. Positive outcomes for children attending NGs

were also identified in a two year national longitudinal study by Cooper and Whitbread

(2007) which incorporated both quantitative (the Boxall Profile; Bennathan & Boxall, 2013

and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire; Goodman, 1997) and qualitative measures (staff, parent and pupil questionnaires). Data related to primary aged NG participants (n=359) and control group participants (non-NG; *n*=184) from schools across 11 demographically diverse local education authorities. Control group pupils included pupils with, or perceived by staff to have, SEMH needs (*n*=95) and pupils perceived by staff to have no SEMH needs (*n*=9). Pre- and post-data were gathered across two or four terms. Significant improvements were reported for NG pupils in relation to their SEWB and associated ability to cognitively engage in learning tasks. Furthermore, there were improvements in SEWB for non-NG pupils attending a school with an existing NG, when compared to non-NG pupils attending a school without NG provision. This suggests that NGs may positively impact on the SEWB of the wider population of pupils within the school, perhaps through the development of a nurturing school ethos.

Limitations to the impact of NGs have also been identified. For example, Cunningham, Hartwell & Kreppner (2019) identified a lack of transferability of social skills to outside of NG, with pupils reporting feelings of loneliness in areas such as the school playground. Further research might, therefore, usefully consider the experiences of young people and their peers in relation to their perceptions and understanding of NGs and how they are situated within the wider school context. In particular, eliciting the voices of pupils may help to develop greater insight into their experiences, supporting a better understanding of how provision can be most effectively implemented (Cooper Arnold & Boyd, 2001; Syrnyk, 2014).

Despite some persuasive evidence for the effectiveness of NGs, the overall body of research relating to primary school NGs should be interpreted with caution due to a range of methodological limitations including, small sample sizes (e.g. Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005; Parsons, 2012) and a lack of comparison groups (e.g. Binnie & Allen, 2008).

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2.1.4   Secondary Nurture Groups

The growing evidence base relating to the positive effects of NGs for vulnerable primary age pupils, has led to an increasing interest in the application of NG practice within secondary schools. Neuroscientific research has increasingly identified the plasticity of the human brain (Blakemore, 2008; Kolb, 2013), suggesting that the brain can be altered by new experiences beyond early childhood. In relation to the period of adolescence, growing evidence supports the notion that significant development and reorganisation of the brain occurs throughout this time (Crews, He & Hodge, 2007; Giedd, 2004) and it has further been shown that adolescents are more susceptible to changes of IWMs than adults (Allen & Tan, 2016). A 'second window of opportunity' (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006) is thereby presented in adolescence within which new pathways in the brain may be developed through exposure to environmental change which nurtures and supports positive social interactions.

Research into secondary NGs remains limited, although, initial findings have been positive. Most recently, Grantham and Primrose (2017) investigated the effectiveness of secondary school NGs and reported a positive impact on the development of social and emotional skills and a decrease in behavioural needs for pupils from seven Scottish secondary schools. Data was collected in relation to the Diagnostic and Developmental scores of the Boxall Profile for Young People (BPYP; Bennathan, Boxall & Colley, 2010), which is a version of the Boxall Profile adapted for secondary aged pupils, for 24 pupils who attended NG. These findings concur with findings from two previous studies, using the same measure, which were completed in English secondary schools (Cooke, Yeomans & Parkes, 2008; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007).

Grantham and Primrose (2017) were also interested in assessing the fidelity of NG provision across secondary schools. They used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic

analysis (TA) approach and analysed responses to questionnaires (completed by school staff from all seven schools) and interviews (for which school staff from five schools participated). Several recurring themes were identified relating to factors which seem to positively and negatively impact on the successful implementation of NG provision. Factors supporting successful NG implementation included backing from the school senior management team (SMT) to embed the NG principles and create a wider staff understanding, training for NG staff, and the development of positive and supportive relationships with other secondary NG staff through Nurture Group Network (NGN) meetings. Conversely, key barriers included timetabling, whole school awareness and understanding of the NG principles, consistency of NG staff and lack of parental involvement. Fidelity of implementation varied between secondary schools and the authors suggested that this was, in part, due to the differing needs of NG pupils and the demographics of individual schools (specific data is not presented within the paper, although all seven schools came from one local authority in Scotland). The authors noted that the qualitative findings were taken only from school staff and it would, therefore, be pertinent for further research to seek the voice of both pupils and parents.

Whilst still acknowledging important gains for NG pupils, such as increased motivation, levels of self-esteem, happiness and confidence, recent research has also identified challenges to the application of NG principles to the secondary school environment, suggesting that adaptations to the typical primary approach may be appropriate (Garner &Thomas, 2011; Colley, 2009; Kourmoulaki, 2013; de Montjoie Rudolf, 2015). Through exploring the perceptions of staff, parents and NG pupils using interviews and focus groups (FGs), Garner and Thomas (2011) concluded that NGs served a wider function within secondary schools, acting as a 'safe haven.' A less direct focus on supporting academic skills and greater focus on SEWB was also identified. Similarly, Colley (2009) gathered information from four headteachers, a NG teacher and a Special

Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo). They identified several factors including timetabling, academic demands, differing staff roles and challenges with staff communication which made the replication of the original primary NG model difficult to achieve within a larger and differently organised secondary school environment. Overall, these findings suggest that there is a need for secondary NGs to be more flexible in their organisation and approach than primary NGs.

Concerns around the transference of NG skills to the wider school environment have also been highlighted (de Montjoie Rudolf, 2014; Kourmoulaki, 2013). Both studies sought the views of NG pupils, parents and school staff within single secondary schools. An increased sense of belonging and improved social and communication skills for NG pupils were identified (Kourmoulaki, 2013), but inconsistent levels of communication between pupils, staff and parents was also found, which was considered to hinder successful reintegration into mainstream classes. De Montjoie Rudolf (2014) concluded that whole school culture might need to be addressed in order to support the transference of skills beyond the NG environment, with a suggestion that NG pupils may be at some risk of negative labelling by both peers and staff.

Collectively, findings from existing research into secondary NGs suggest a need for a more detailed understanding of how NGs might effectively work within secondary schools and how they may fit into whole school culture. Literature suggests that a shared vision, the school climate and ethos, and effective leadership may all be significant factors within whole school effectiveness (Banerjee, Weare & Farr, 2014; Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016; Roland & Galloway, 2004). Capturing staff and pupil understanding of a specific intervention (NGs), perhaps using a detailed case study approach, would help to create a rich picture of the interrelating factors which prior research has suggested impact on successful NG outcomes (e.g. Colley, 2009; De Montjoie Rudolf, 2014; Garner et al.,

2011; Kourmoulaki, 2013). Furthermore, identifying the views of non-NG pupils in addition to NG pupils may help to develop a deeper understanding of how NGs function within the whole school and would offer a unique contribution to the current research around NG practice.

2.1.5   The present study

Upon consideration of the reviewed literature, the present study took a positive psychology approach (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) exploring a NG within a school considered to offer good quality nurturing provision and holding the Nurturing Schools Award (Nurture UK, 2019). Positive psychology seeks to identify when things are going well, to understand why this is and to identify ways to nurture this (Seligman, 2002). It was hoped a case study approach would enable increased understanding of successful NG practice and purposefully inform professional practice and action (Simons, 2009).

Case studies support the development of analytical insights through an in-depth inquiry (Thomas, 2015). Sometimes criticised for lacking both rigour and the potential to generalise findings (Yin, 2009), single case studies are not always viewed as a valid way to create and offer generalisations, although it could equally be argued that a single case study promotes a detailed and interactive exploration, allowing something to be seen in its entirety (Thomas, 2015). Indeed, some researchers have highlighted a need to consider more the context within which interventions are used, in order to understand the wider mechanisms through which change occurs and to engage in more 'realistic evaluations' rather than having an explicit focus on measuring outcomes (Byng, Norman & Redfern, 2005; Greenhalgh, Kristjansson & Robinson, 2007).

2.1.6   Research questions

The research aims were exploratory and intended to consider the experiences and perceptions of pupils (NG and non-NG) and staff to try to understand the interrelating factors which may impact upon NGs within a whole school context, including factors which relate to peer relations. These aims emerged in response to an identified gap in the literature around how NG practice can be successfully transferred to the secondary school environment.

The main research question of the present study was: How can NGs operate successfully within mainstream secondary schools? A secondary research question sought to understand whether NGs might have a unique role in developing a sense of belonging with peers.

2.2   Method

2.2.1   Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how it relates to what is known or believed. In this case study, a critical realist epistemology provided the framework for the approach taken. Within critical realism, it is believed that reality is constructed by unobservable, underlying mechanisms which need to be understood in order to effectively consider the pathways through which social realities are created (Fletcher, 2017). Developed as an alternative to social constructionist (where discourse constructs reality) and positivist (where knowledge is derived from observing events) approaches, critical realism aims to make sense of reality by understanding the underlying causal mechanisms (Bhaskar, 1978). This is suited to the qualitative case study approach of this current research since the aim is to generate greater understanding of why and how a NG

may operate successfully within a secondary school (Easton, 2010) through an in-depth exploration of pupil and staff perceptions and experiences.

2.2.2   Design

In the early stages of discussing and exploring potential research designs, identifying mainstream secondary schools where NG provision could be considered to be truly based on the six principles of nurture, proved challenging. Therefore, a pragmatic decision was made to use a qualitative, inductive single case study design. A single, case study school was identified, which had earned the 'Nurturing Schools Award' (Nurture UK, 2019), in order to capture and learn from their experiences.

2.2.3   The case study school

The case study school was a smaller than average, mainstream secondary comprehensive situated in the south of England, with approximately 850 students on roll, including sixth form students. Part of a local trust of schools, the proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding (additional government funding to support the attainment of disadvantaged pupils) was below the national average and the proportion of pupils with identified Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) or with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was above the national average.

The school runs a NG as the focus of their 'Inclusion, Wellbeing and Support' system. The inclusion manager (also a subject teacher) and the deputy inclusion manger (a higher-level teaching assistant) undertook the national NG training programme in the Autumn Term of 2016. This focused on the development of a whole school nurturing approach, with the aim of promoting healthy outcomes for children and young people. As a result, the school developed their inclusion, wellbeing and support space into a NG base (see Figure 2 for a plan of the room) and centred their provision on the six principles of

nurture. The NG does not run in the same way as the 'classic' primary NG model. It provides a 'drop in' during break, lunchtimes and in-between lessons for pupils as well as providing individual and group timetabled support throughout each day. A Year 11 tutor group runs at the beginning of each day for identified pupils, which is centred on NG provision. Pupils receiving ongoing NG support are all referred to NG and assessed using the BPYP. Monitoring of progress is achieved using individual rating scales, which were developed in liaison with the school's EP.

2.2.4 Participant sample and recruitment

The deputy inclusion manager contacted the researcher in response to an advert placed with the NGN in July 2018 (Appendix C) and expressed an interest in participating. After further discussion, an introductory letter was sent to the headteacher (Appendix D) who subsequently agreed to the research going ahead.

The researcher aimed to recruit 12 participants for each stakeholder group (NG pupils, non-NG pupils and staff) since saturation is likely to occur at around this number (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). The aim was to triangulate the data from the three participant groups in order to enhance the credibility of the findings (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003) and to create greater understanding through the convergence of findings from the three data sets (Baxter & Jack, 2008).
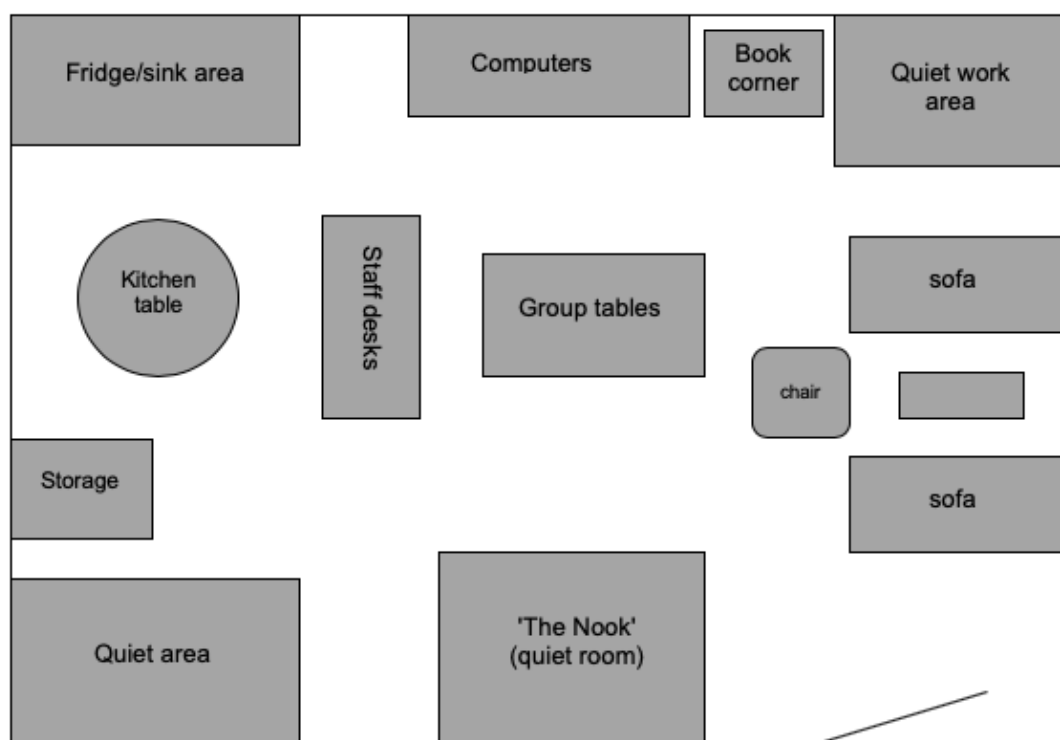
Figure 2. Plan of the NG room.

Due to some absences and the uncontrollability and limits of 'real-world' research, 11 NG pupils (some currently accessing NG and some who had previously accessed NG), 12 non-NG pupils (who made up the FGs) and 9 school staff members took part in the study (see Table 1 for participant details).

Table 1. Participant details.

Participant identification (pseudonym)	Gender	Year group (pupils) or school role (staff)
NG pupil interviews:		
Lizzie	Female	Year 11
John	Male	Year 8
Jacob	Male	Year 11
Matt	Male	Year 11
Charlie	Male	Year 9
Louis	Male	Year 11
Lucy	Female	Year 7
Rowan	Male	Year 7
Tom	Male	Year 11
Imogen	Female	Year 10
Reece	Male	Year 8
Non-NG Focus Groups:		
FG 1:		
Beccy	Female	Year 8
Kai	Male	Year 9
Benny	Male	Year 9
Lucy	Female	Year 9
Matt	Male	Year 7
Ruby	Female	Year 9
FG 2:		
Peter	Male	Year 10
Lottie	Female	Year 10
Harry	Male	Year 11
Izzy	Female	Year 11
George	Male	Year 8
Jess	Female	Year 7
Staff interviews:		
Staff 1	Male	Deputy headteacher (pastoral system)
Staff 2	Female	Emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA)
Staff 3	Male	Specialist teaching assistant
Staff 4	Female	English teacher/House coordinator
Staff 5	Male	Head of technology
Staff 6	Female	Science teacher/House coordinator
Staff 7	Male	Head of lower school
Staff 8	Female	Deputy inclusion manager
Staff 9	Male	Assistant headteacher (Key Stage 4)

The deputy inclusion manager acted as gatekeeper, identifying and approaching potential participants. The researcher requested that pupils were representative of all year groups and staff members represented different roles within the school. It was hoped that a variety of different perspectives and experiences would support the emergence of a rich and detailed understanding. Efforts were also made to recruit a balance of genders. This was harder to manage for NG pupils, which reflects the gender of pupils who access NG (there are more male pupils than female pupils). However, this could be seen as representative since wider statistics for SEND in England (DfE, 2018) evidence a continued trend in the higher prevalence of SEND (including SEWB) amongst boys (14.7%) in comparison to girls (8.2%).

Pupils approached for participation were those whom the deputy inclusion manager felt would be comfortable participating in semi-structured interviews or FGs and able to express their views and thoughts to others. For the NG pupils, it was important that suitability for NG provision had been assessed using the BPYP. Pupils who made up the FGs had not previously been referred for NG provision, but two of them had accessed the provision on a drop-in basis, either for themselves or to support a friend.

Information letters and consent forms (Appendix E) were sent to 24 parents of pupils and given to school staff members (Appendix F). Parental consent was gained for 24 pupils and times and dates for data collection were arranged by the deputy inclusion manager. The two FGs were split by age, one consisting of mainly Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils and the other also including pupils from Year 10 and 11. This was intended to help the pupils feel comfortable and enable them to fully engage with the discussion and share their own experiences (Nind & Vinha, 2014). Twenty-three pupils (9 female and 14 male) participated in the research (one pupil, for whom consent had been received, was

unavailable on the interview days), aged between 11 years 10 months and 16 years 2

months (NG pupils $M = 13.7$ years, SD = 1.62; non-NG pupils $M = 13.6$ years, $SD = 0.91$).

Twenty-one pupils were White British, one was White and Black African and one was

Black Caribbean. Ten pupils (5 NG and 5 non-NG) were in receipt of pupil premium

funding. Nine school staff members were interviewed (Table 1 gives information on staff

roles) who had been employed by the school for between 2 and 31 years ($M = 10.5$ years).

The researcher had originally intended to interview 12 members of staff, but three were

unavailable on the interview days. They represented a mix of staff from the SMT (3),

subject teaching staff (3) and support staff (3). All three support staff had some

involvement with the NG (one had a main role within NG, one spent time within NG as

part of her ELSA role and another had links to the NG through providing SEND pupil

support).

2.2.5   Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was gained from the University of Southampton Ethics

Committee (Study ID 40936) (Appendix G). Since the interviews and FGs may have led

to the sharing of sensitive and emotive information, steps were taken to ensure that any

potential negative impact was minimised. For example, the deputy inclusion lead identified

possible participants and this supported the likelihood that those pupils would be

comfortable within an interview or FG situation and were able to fully understand the

purpose of the study and their role within it. The researcher met with participants prior to

the interviews/FGs. As well as providing an opportunity to answer any questions, this was

intended to aid the development of trust and rapport and neutralise any feelings of power

imbalance between the pupil participants and adult researcher (Ennis & Chen, 2012).

Written informed consent from parents and staff, alongside assent from pupil participants,

was obtained prior to the semi-structured interviews and FGs. A debrief form was also

given to each participant at the end of the interview/FG (Appendix H) which encouraged participants to seek support if needed post-interview. This included signposts to appropriate online support and to the availability of the Deputy Inclusion Lead to discuss any worries or concerns. Data security and confidentiality were also considered and a signed confidentiality agreement (Appendix I) was obtained from the transcription service before the audio files were sent via the company's secure data service.

2.2.6 Procedures

Semi-structured NG pupil interviews.

A semi-structured interview script (Appendix J) was developed, designed to allow NG pupils to share their experiences, with a particular focus on peer relationships within and outside of NG. Discussion with supervisors and feedback from staff who ran a Key Stage 2 primary NG supported the creation of the final script. The intention was for an in-depth understanding to emerge through responses to open-ended questions which the researcher could further explore using additional probes (Crabtree & DiCicco-Bloom, 2006).

Semi-structured staff interviews.

A semi-structured interview script (Appendix K), designed to capture staff perceptions, experiences and understanding of NG provision and to consider the possible impact on and provision for peer relations within and outside of NG, was developed. Discussion with supervisors helped to finalise the interview script. After the first staff interview, the researcher considered whether any adjustments should be made. Interviews continued with the original script since this appeared to encourage discussion which related well to the research questions.

The interview context

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Chapter 2

All NG pupil and staff interviews took place in 'The Nook' (a small, separate room within the NG area). Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at any point during the interview and were reassured that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questions, with the researcher being interested in hearing about their own perceptions and experiences. NG pupils read and signed the assent form prior to the start of the interview. Individual NG pupil interviews lasted approximately 15 – 30 minutes. A 'warm-up' activity was completed first, which involved pupils sorting photographs of different school areas (not taken within their actual school, but representative of usual areas within secondary schools) and matching them to 'emojis' which represented how they felt when spending time in those areas (see Appendix L for examples). This was intended to help build rapport and so facilitate more open conversations (Ennis & Chen, 2012). Individual staff interviews lasted approximately 20 – 40 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and the researcher noted any reflections after each interview.

FGs with non-NG pupils.

A FG approach was used to elicit pupil perceptions beyond those attending NG. It was thought this would add detail and depth to understanding how the school provides for more vulnerable pupils, through the NG approach, and how peer relations may be impacted by this. The intention was to also elicit pupil perceptions relating to how peer relations are experienced and supported throughout the wider school. Two FGs were run, each consisting of six pupils of mixed age-groups. This is in line with recommendations for a FG size of between six and 12 participants (Krueger and Casey, 2002; Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins, 2010). They suggest that this helps to create an environment which is small enough to allow for all participants to be able to share their thoughts and experiences, whilst still allowing for diversity within the group.

A FG discussion schedule (Appendix M) was developed, made up of open-ended questions and suggested probes to allow the researcher to follow up on areas of interest within the group discussion (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The script development was supported by discussion with supervisors and by seeking feedback from secondary school staff who were asked to consider the language used and the relevance of the questions asked to secondary pupils between 11 – 16 years of age. After reminding pupils of their right to withdraw at any point during the FG, and gaining written assent from each pupil, the researcher introduced a 'talking stick' to the groups to try and ensure that all pupils felt able to be heard. This was passed around the group when individuals indicated they had something they wished to say.

Each FG began with metaphor activity (Appendix N) to try and engage the pupils, enable them to feel more relaxed within the context of the group and stimulate discussion (Nind & Vinha, 2014). A post-it note recording activity was also used to generate written recordings of responses to the question: 'How do you think NG supports pupils at this school?' (Appendix O). This was intended to help ensure that all FG pupils were able to share their thoughts and ideas and to enrich the descriptions and interpretations produced (Fonteyn, Vettese, Lancaster & Bauer-Wu, 2008; Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell & Britten, 2002). FGs were held in a quiet room within the school and lasted for just under one hour. They were audio-recorded and the researcher noted any reflections post-FG within a reflective journal.

2.2.7   Data collection

Prior to data collection, the researcher spent a day visiting the case study school and NG provision. This allowed some familiarity with the NG staff, provision and pupils to be developed, as well as familiarity with the wider school. Initial information-sharing meetings with the two groups of pupil participants took place at this time. All data were

collected at the case study school between November 2018 and January 2019. Pupils each

received a £5.00 Amazon voucher to thank them for their participation in the study.

2.2.8   Data analysis

Audio data was transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription service. The

data was then analysed using TA following the recommendations set out by Braun and

Clarke (2006). See Figure 3 for an outline of the six steps of analysis which aim to uncover

themes representative of the dataset. Unlike some approaches to the analysis of qualitative

data (such as narrative and discourse analysis), TA can be applied within any

epistemological approach (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and with small or large data sets

(although a minimum of six interviews is recommended to allow for meaning across cases

rather than a focus on individual or unique cases; Braun & Clarke, 2013). TA also allows

for an inductive approach whereby coding and theme development are guided by the

content of the data (Patton, 1990). It is, therefore, an appropriate method of analysis for

exploratory research, where the researcher wants to create new and deeper understanding,

within an area where limited research is available (Marks & Yardley, 2004).
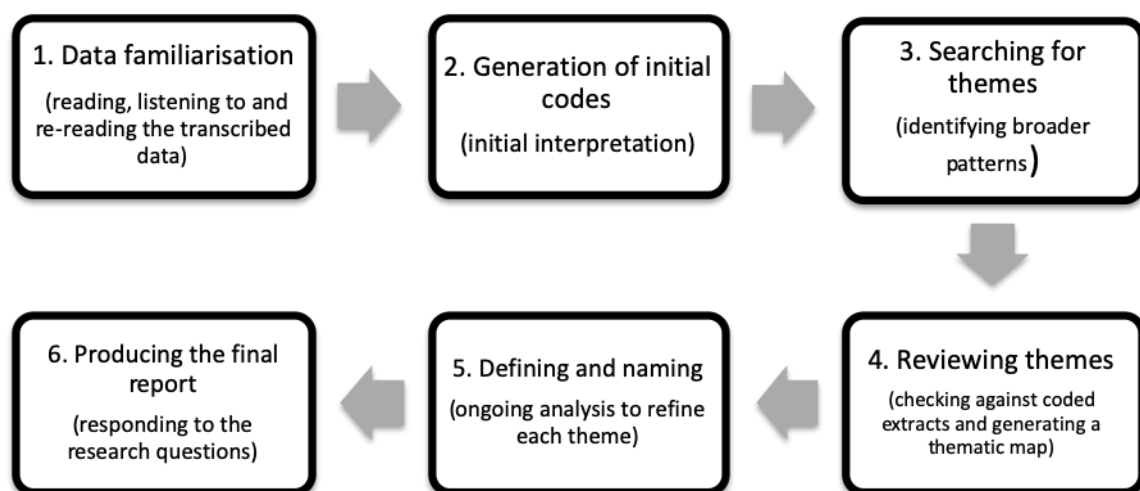
Figure 3. The six steps of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) followed by the

researcher.

2.2.8.1   Step 1: Data familiarisation

The researcher listened to the audio recordings of the interviews and read and re-read the transcribed interviews/FG discussions for each stakeholder group to become fully immersed in the data, and to ensure that the tone, pace and inflections of the individual participants were also considered alongside the written transcriptions. Initial thoughts were noted down during this process and previous reflections were revisited.

2.2.8.2   Step 2: Generation of initial codes

During this stage, initial codes (a label or phrase capturing something relevant to the research questions) were noted on each transcript (see Appendix P for an example of a transcript with initial codes). Initial coding generates a variety of different codes without a limit being placed on the number produced (Charmaz, 2006).

2.2.8.3   Step 3: Searching for themes

Emerging ideas were listed for each stakeholder group. Codes which seemed to relate to a similar theme were then highlighted with the same colour (Appendix Q) to start bringing together similar codes and to identify provisional themes. At this stage, themes were not set and it was possible that some codes might later become a theme (Charmaz, 2014).

2.2.8.4   Step 4: Reviewing themes

Codes were reviewed by creating thematic maps for each stakeholder group (Appendix R). This helped the researcher to map out potential themes and the relationship between the themes within the three different stakeholder groups. Some themes were very clearly represented across all three thematic maps (for example, NG staff, relationships and development of skills) and were therefore integrated into the final thematic map. A further

stage of analysis gave additional consideration to the themes identified across the three stakeholder groups and the researcher considered the weight given to each theme by referring to the coding manual and reflecting on the amount of participant data which supported each theme. A process of combining, dividing or eliminating themes then took place in order to produce a single thematic map which drew on data from across all three stakeholder groups. For example, themes which related to the teaching and promotion of new skills, such as 'considering the perspectives of others' and 'supporting to remain in mainstream lessons' were grouped into the sub-theme 'skill development' and linked to the main theme of 'relational factors.' There was, therefore, a process of re-organising and re-naming themes and sub-themes to best reflect an overall synthesis of all the findings. Discussion with supervisors helped to clarify thinking during this stage. The researcher reflected on whether each theme was distinctive and whether analysis was communicating a well-organised narrative about the topic under research (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.2.8.5   Step 5: Defining and naming themes

Ongoing analysis involved selecting data extracts to provide clear and rich illustrations of the themes and sub-themes. It was important to remain aware of which stakeholder groups the themes were representing and this was clearly identified within a coding manual (Appendix S). To minimise the risk of researcher bias and for clarity of the themes and sub-themes, a second coder (a voluntary research assistant) was given a copy of the coding manual, without any identified data extracts, along with all of the interview and FG transcripts (Thomas, 2006). Both of the FG transcripts and a random selection of the NG pupil and staff interview transcripts (seven in total) were read by the voluntary research assistant and sections of the text were assigned to the themes and sub-themes within the coding manual. The researcher checked the extent to which the second coder had allocated the same text extracts to the same themes and sub-themes (Appendix T). The

level of agreement was considered to be acceptable and was also confirmed through joint

discussion. This helped to support the transparency of the analysis process (Thomas,

2006).

2.2.8.6   Step 6: Producing the final report

During this stage, the researcher worked to relate the analysis back to the research

questions, using selected extracts to illustrate the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

2.2.9   Reflexivity

The personal experiences of the researcher, and the way in which they may

already view or understand something, are potential sources of bias during the process of

research (Lyons & Coyle, 2016). To increase transparency, researchers should reflect on

their own beliefs, values, position and experiences throughout the research process. This

ensures that their active role within the research process is acknowledged. During this

research, a reflective journal was kept to help consider how personal experiences and

values might influence the processes of data collection and analysis (Appendix U). This

developed an awareness of how the researcher might be influenced by certain

psychological perspectives. In particular, the researcher acknowledged an instinct to search

for strengths and positives on which to build and felt it was important to be aware of this,

during the interview process, to ensure that probes sought to further uncover positive

responses but also explored more negative ones. The researcher also reflected on how it

felt to be a researcher within a school environment. Previous experience as a teacher meant

that the researcher felt particularly comfortable interacting with young people and school

staff. Remaining mindful of the need to take on a different role as interviewer, and bring a

genuine curiosity to each interview and FG, was, therefore, important. Additionally, the

researcher felt it was important not to be influenced by thoughts relating to being a parent

when considering school provision and the SEWB of adolescents during the stages of data

collection and analysis.

Taking a Critical Realist epistemological approach to this research also informed

how data was collected, analysed and interpreted. The researcher's intention was to

provide a rich account of participant experiences (both common and conflicting truths

which represented individual participants' own experiences) in order to try and understand

the underlying mechanisms which supported NG provision within a mainstream secondary

school (Fletcher, 2017). The use of semi-structured interviews was intended to encourage

honest, free and open talk and in order to try and limit bias participants were reassured at

the start of each interview/FG that there were no right or wrong answers – the researcher

was genuinely interested in hearing true accounts of their experiences and perceptions. An

important aspect of data analysis which also aimed to limit bias, was to construct a detailed

coding manual (Appendix S) which clearly indicated which stakeholder group quotations

represented. This allowed a clear picture to form which showed which themes were

supported by all three stakeholder groups and which were more representative of one or

two of the stakeholder groups.

Findings

As shown in the final thematic map (Figure 4), three main themes were identified

through the process of TA in relation to the entire dataset, which included the three

stakeholder groups (NG pupils, non-NG pupils and school staff members). The main
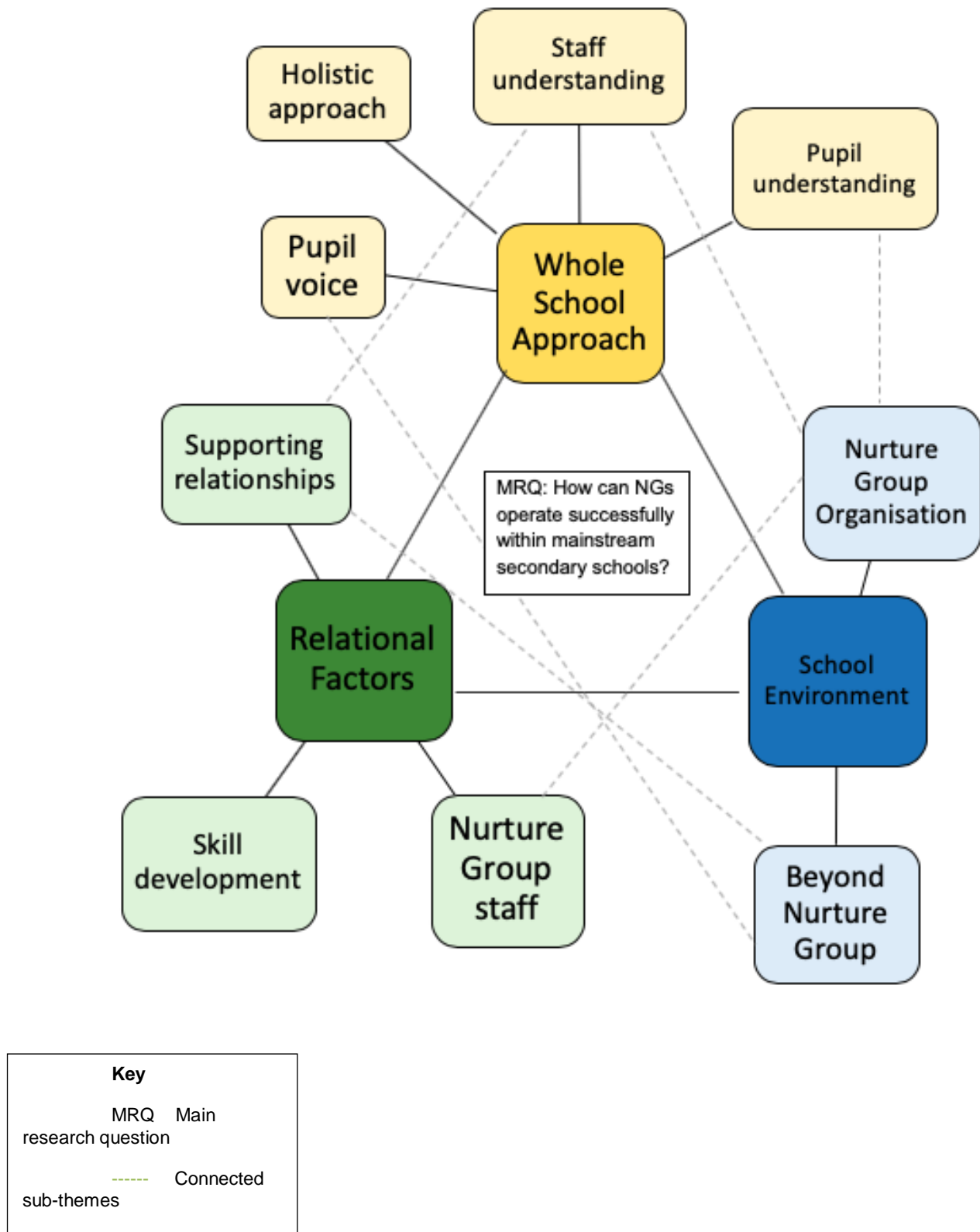
Figure 4. Final thematic map.

themes were: 'whole school approach,' 'relational factors' and 'school environment.' As

shown in Figure 4, each theme contained a number of associated sub-themes. The

following section will present the nine associated sub-themes as they relate to the three main themes in response to the principal research question: 'How can NGs operate successfully in mainstream secondary schools?' and the secondary research area considering whether NGs have a role to play in developing a sense of belonging amongst peers.

Theme one: Whole school approach. This theme related to how the approach taken by the wider school enabled the NG to exist and run effectively without a notable feeling of stigma being attached to the pupils who access NG. In this way, the whole school ethos was identified to be largely inclusive and one which incorporated the six principles of nurture. Four sub-themes were identified which were 'staff understanding,' 'pupil understanding,' 'holistic approach' and 'pupil voice.'

Sub-theme 1: Staff understanding. This sub-theme captured staff understanding of NG provision and the underlying theory and principles. Analysis suggested that NG practice was supported and valued by school staff. It appeared this was influenced by the status given to a NG approach by senior management, with the influence of whole staff INSET training and the embedding of NG principles within whole school policy documents.

> But the work they do with vulnerable students who erm, you know people who are around and about today is fantastic and the nurture principles have been part, a really important part of that and the kids know them as well. Erm, and that's been really, really important erm, and they've managed to successfully get the staff trained up in the nurture principles and put that into policy where it never appeared before. (Staff 1, Deputy headteacher)

Staff from across the school seemed to have an interest in, and understanding of, the needs of pupils who have been referred to the NG. A connection was made to possible

challenges for those children within their home lives which impacted on their ability to engage and learn in the classroom.

> I think it's critical. I think that there needs to be places in schools where children can go when everything's not okay and it's a normal thing in life that things are not okay. You know you could be going through anything that's going on in your life you need to have a place where you can just relax. And if children aren't in the right place to learn then what's the point in them being in the classroom? They might as well be somewhere where they can speak through it in a way where they feel safe, in a way, in a language that they do it in, with people who understand them(Staff 3, Specialist teaching assistant)

> So it's just, it's just like their safe place and if they haven't got that at home, if something's lacking then it can be made up here. Because before they can learn anything you've got meet their basic needs and if their basic needs aren't being met they're not going to learn anything. And this is a way of doing that. (Staff 6, Science teacher)

Sub-theme 2: Pupil understanding. This sub-theme arose from both the NG and non-NG pupils, suggesting pupils throughout the school and across year groups had some knowledge of the approaches taken in NG and the needs of the pupils who access it, which were often viewed positively.

> So the people in here can teach them how to calm down and help them repair their relationship and things like that. (FG 2)

> If like something happens and somebody dies in their family or something like that then they can immediately come up. (FG 1)

It's a fun energetic place, always, they're always in a happy mood, like a fun place
to be when you're feeling like annoyed or annoyed or angry, because they can
help you calm down. (Matt , Year 11)

Pupils seemed to understand that the NG environment was set up in a certain way
to support the needs of particular pupils.

I don't know, it's just a really warm and good environment up here. Like it's
different, completely different to the rest of the school which is good. (Charlie,
Year 9)

I think maybe, because, like the parents, you know, issues at home and stuff, so
they can come up and talk to them about, erm, this. (FG 1)

Some pupils, however, were less aware of the approach taken within NG.

Yeah, I knew that it was there, but I don't really know what they do. (FG 1)

There mostly appeared to be a lack of stigma attached to NG, which was again
evidenced by both NG and non-NG pupils.

Some people can be quite jealous because I come up here. (Charlie, Year 9)

I'd say erm, inclusion (NG) is like more respected by students… Like I'd say, just
from what I've heard, there's less jokes about inclusion than xxxx. That's what
I've heard. (FG 2)

I'm not sure but I've heard it's quite nice like they get a hot chocolate, they get to
sit down and they get to talk to people so yeah. (FG 1)

This view was not wholly supported, with some pupils in the second FG
suggesting that NG might not feel accessible or welcoming to all pupils. However, this

may have been a greater reflection on the need to have a range of people and places to go to talk about concerns or difficulties, rather than an indication of stigma attached to NG.

> Well a lot of pupils don't feel comfortable coming into inclusion (NG) and talking about it and there's no way to like, because obviously, like nowadays we've got technology and things but there's nobody you can talk to in school about it. (FG 2)

Sub-theme 3: Holistic approach. This sub-theme arose largely from the staff interviews where there was a sense that the school approach was to invest in the 'whole child.' It appeared the Headteacher led the school in this way, with a strong emphasis on pastoral support for pupils.

> I think its ethos is that inclusive ethos and that's very much the Head's sort of, kind of, stamp that he has put on it since he has been Head. He's very much that it is about all of the students in the school it's not just about fantastic exam results at one end there are lots of other things as well. (Staff 7, Head of lower school)

One staff member talked about links with outside agencies who provided counselling for pupils.

> I mean what they've started to do is have more external people come in and do work up here. We have someone from counselling come up on Friday, we have another person, I don't know the agency he works for but he's up here every Monday and Tuesday and he sees students as well on a counselling level. (Staff 3, Specialist teaching assistant)

There was a sense that pupils across the school were encouraged to engage in extra-curricular activities and that this sat alongside high academic, social and behavioural expectations.

Erm, I think we, I think we, it's a bit of an oxymoron, but I think we comfortably

push our students, we expect a lot of them erm, but in all rounds, not just

academic, like taking part in school socially, behaviourally, like friendship groups

we expect a lot of them and we help them sort of go through that. Erm, I think

we're quite a happy school, I think yeah. (Staff 4, English teacher)

The emphasis on non-academic interests was also acknowledged by some pupils.

There's a lot of like extracurricular groups that you can do. So you can like have

lots of stuff that you can do. (FG 1)

Sub-theme 4: Pupil voice. The final sub-theme under the main theme 'whole

school approach' arose largely from the non-NG pupils within the FGs and in particular,

the older (Year 11) pupils. This sub-theme appeared to arise in response to pupils

considering whether all pupils were listened to. Whilst they seemed to feel that NG

supported some pupils in being heard, there remained a feeling that the voice of older

pupils was perhaps sometimes ignored.

Maybe people who struggled to pay attention or just struggling in general can

come here (to NG) for help and like make, erm, their problems can be listened to

by people here. (FG 1)

Although staff talked about the importance of pupil voice within the school,

"Yeah, so student's voice is really big here" (Staff 3, Specialist teaching assistant), there

was a feeling amongst the older pupils that pupils were not always heard and the school's

priority was to project a certain image rather than to actually respond to its existing pupils.

This seemed to relate to a sense of academic pressure felt by the Year 11 pupils which was

different to that they had experienced lower down the school. It appeared they did not

always feel listened to and believed that the needs of individual pupils were less well catered for during the final year of school.

> The second you get into year 11 there's just a lot of pressure. So you have no time to do anything, because obviously you want to go out with friends, you want to have fun. So, but you can't do that because teachers are always on your back saying "you need to revise, you need to focus". Some people like can't focus because they might have a learning condition but the school doesn't like respect that, they don't think about that they're just like "you need to revise". It's their choice. (FG 2)

> If they actually took the time to listen. So they could know how we feel and actually care. (FG 2)

One pupil in particular expressed a feeling that the school was less focused on individuals and more focused on school image.

> There's a thing, I don't know with this school they're working more to make it look good. Like with the rights thing like that's obviously to just draw more people into the school like "look at us we're rights respecting" and stuff and like improving inclusion and so it's like "we care more about you." But I think they're focusing more on getting people in than focusing on the people that are already in the school. (FG 2)

Another pupil in the same FG also talked about this, but seemed to contradict themselves by suggesting the school had become a 'Right's Respecting School' only to promote the image of the school whilst also saying that the idea to do this had actually come from a pupil of the school.

They would have never done the rights respecting if a kid didn't bring it up. It was a child's idea and then they were just like "oh that would make the school look better let's do that". That's the only reason they've done that. (FG 2)

In summary, the theme 'whole school approach' related to the way in which NG practice and theory appeared to be well understood, valued and accepted by both staff and pupils across the school. The investment from the leadership team appeared to drive this and helped to embed the NG within wider school approaches and policy. For some Year 11 pupils, however, there appeared to be a feeling that outside of NG, the wider school approaches were not always supportive of their needs, with academic targets taking precedence over SEWB.

Theme 2: Relational factors. This theme related to the influence NG had on peer relations and staff-pupil relationships and how this was enabled. Three sub-themes, 'supporting relationships,' 'skill development' and 'NG staff,' were identified which all arose strongly across the three stakeholder groups.

Sub-theme 1: Supporting relationships. There was a sense that NG supported pupils to maintain existing and/or to develop new friendships. The way in which the NG pupils spoke about being in NG suggested that relationships with others, both pupils and staff, were the foundation of NG provision.

It's helped strengthen some friendships… Because like it's helped, I don't know really, like my friends come up here and they get supported as well and we then support each other and then it's built on friendships. Because we're, like most of my friends come up here we're all together, we're all of the time helping each other. (Charlie, Year 9)

Making new friends, making friends, building a good enough friendship with teachers. (Matt, Year 11)

I get along really nicely with them, they're all good friends, then the other ones, like the year 11 tutor group they're really nice. I made some friends there. I know some inclusion champions erm, you kind of, once you've been here once or twice you kind of know everyone, you know your way around it. So it's really nice. (Rowan, Year 7)

There was a sense that NG encouraged supportive peer relations between different year groups, in particular with older pupils looking out for younger pupils.

I think maybe they see, as I said with the idea of empathy. I think maybe they build relationships that they wouldn't normally build because they have that idea of reaching out to somebody else you know that for whatever reason needs to access it's environment. (Staff 9, Assistant headteacher)

Some of the older students in here will look after the younger students in here and they will look out for them. And I think that they might not have that relationship at all if inclusion (NG) wasn't there, they wouldn't know each other at all… I think the main thing that I've noticed is the friendships across the year groups, so I wouldn't see them together afterwards but I think they would look out for each other in the corridors and on the playground and in then, in the dining hall as well because then they've built a relationship here, they know each other.   (Staff 6, Science teacher)

There was also an understanding from non-NG pupils that NG enabled friendships.

Because it can make you more confident so you meet more people and make more friends. (FG 1)

Erm, one of the people, like before we were friends we didn't really talk a lot but I saw him like crying in the corridor and he looked like really stressed and sad. So I took him up here and erm, me, him and Mr xxxx had a conversation about it and now we talk all the time. So like we've developed a bond so we talk about things. (FG 2)

Sub-theme 2: Skill development. This sub-theme reflected the support provided by the NG in developing skills which support positive relationships through an increased ability to self-regulate and recognise feelings and behaviours. The NG appeared to support NG pupils in being able to successfully transfer such skills to situations outside of the NG environment. This enabled NG pupils to be more successful and confident in being able to develop and maintain positive peer and staff relations, which in turn supported reintegration into mainstream lessons.

Because I used to struggle in like socialising with people quite a lot and I came up here and there was other kids like me. And because I spent time, more and more time up here I got to know more of them and I got more confident to start getting involved with like sports and stuff. So it's, it's helpful, it's really helpful to get to know. (John, Year 8)

It's just sort of allowed me to get new perspectives on stuff that before I was a lot more negative about… Like I used to just come into school thinking like the worst of everything and I just feel like I've got to get my head down and just do the best I can. (Jacob, Year 11)

Like it helps me talk to teachers in a different way that I never used to like, in like a nicer way, not like an angry way. Just like when I get in trouble because they just tell me to be calm and not like shout at them. (Matt, Year 11)

They kind, they kind of teach you how to be a good friend. So, like you might just talk to somebody on a regular basis but they tell you like how to grow the relationship and how to communicate with each other outside of school and things like. (FG 2)

During the FGs, the non-NG pupils responded to the question 'How do you think NG might be able to support pupils?' by discussion with each other and recording their ideas on post-its. Ideas were shared and 'post-its' with similar themes were grouped together. The following responses (see Figure 6) reflect a belief that NG supported pupils in feeling more confident as well as supporting them to develop skills which supported their SEWB.

Confidence	Makes people feel more confident	Courage	They can help boost your confidence
Helping children with mental health issues	Especially trained	They can relate to what you're going through so you can easily talk to them	Giving them the support and 'tools' they need to get better
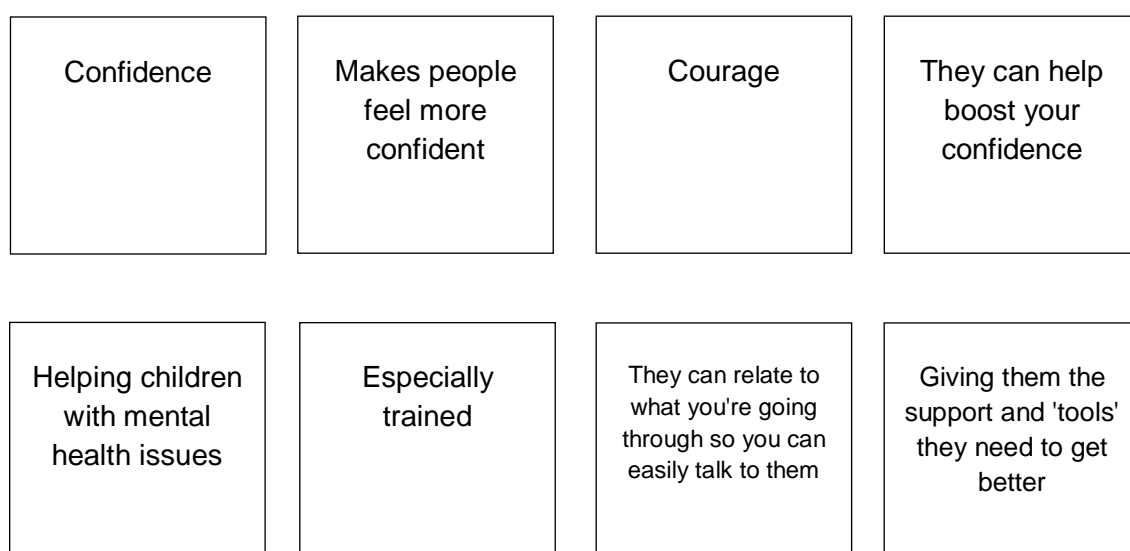
Figure 6. 'Post-it' note responses from FG2.

Some staff members appeared to have a particular understanding of how NG pupils were able to use the skills they had learnt through their time in NG.

> I think it [NG] is very good at building empathy and I think that's a hugely important trait or characteristic to build, we have it [unclear 0:09:07.4] but I think that's really what it comes down to, is that actual ability to see things from a different perspective than yours and to understand what someone else might be going through. (Staff 9, Assistant headteacher)

> I think a lot of the stuff that they learn is as transferable as well, you see quite a lot of students have been up here quite a long time, particularly the older ones, you know they are very much sort of straight in in helping and supporting the younger ones that are coming in. (Staff 7, Head of lower school)

> …if they had nothing they wouldn't be able to manage themselves, but it [NG] also gives you a, a kind of a zone with them because you can say to them like 'think about what you've been doing in inclusion [NG] or, you know, you could just distract them and say like 'oh I saw Miss xxx earlier and she said you did something brilliant up in inclusion, tell me about that.' And so it kind of gives you that conversation to have with them and reminds them of what they've been doing. (Staff 4, English teacher)

One staff member who is involved in running the NG provision reflected an understanding of her role and an intention to support NG pupils in being able to function successfully within mainstream lessons.

> But you know we are not mental health nurses, our aim is to keep them in a mainstream class and so finding ways that makes that possible for that individual

child…So we are giving them strategies and tools and ways that they can manage themselves and manage their strong feelings, manage their anxieties themselves which they may not have to start with so it's about unlocking that within them so they are able to self-manage rather than relying on other people to be able to point that out to them. (Staff 8, Deputy inclusion manager)

Sub-theme 3: NG staff. Once again, this theme was supported by data from across all three stakeholder groups. It related to the sense that NG staff were valued throughout the school, by staff and pupils alike, and were recognised as skilled in their understanding of and approach to working with vulnerable pupils. There seemed to be a strong feeling from the NG pupils that the NG staff were key to the NG provision.

I don't know it's strange how they do it, it's kind of really comforting but I don't know how they do it, it's really nice. (Rowan, Year 7)

Erm… definitely the staff, they make it the way it is. Without them I think, even… yeah it's a nice room and it's a nice school but without them I don't think the school would be the same… Erm, they kind of bring the joy and happiness and just all of the funny stuff into school and they make, definitely for me, school a lot more enjoyable and worth coming in every day. Like most days I'll be like "oh" even though I don't want to go to school and things might be a bit crap at the moment and I don't necessarily feel the best about myself, you know that Mr xxxx and Miss xxxx are going to be in school, so I'm okay. I know that I can talk to them if I need to and that they will probably give a laugh or two. And that's something that I definitely hold onto in the day. (Imogen, Year 10)

'Post-it' notes from the FG task (Figure 7) also suggested the NG staff were considered skilled in their role of supporting vulnerable pupils, always finding a way to help and providing a good level of trust.

They always have a way to support you	Get rid of stress/anxiety	A trusted area where you can talk and relieve any stress/worries	They can help with trust

A listening adult	Especially trained	You can talk about issues you may have that you can't tell your parent
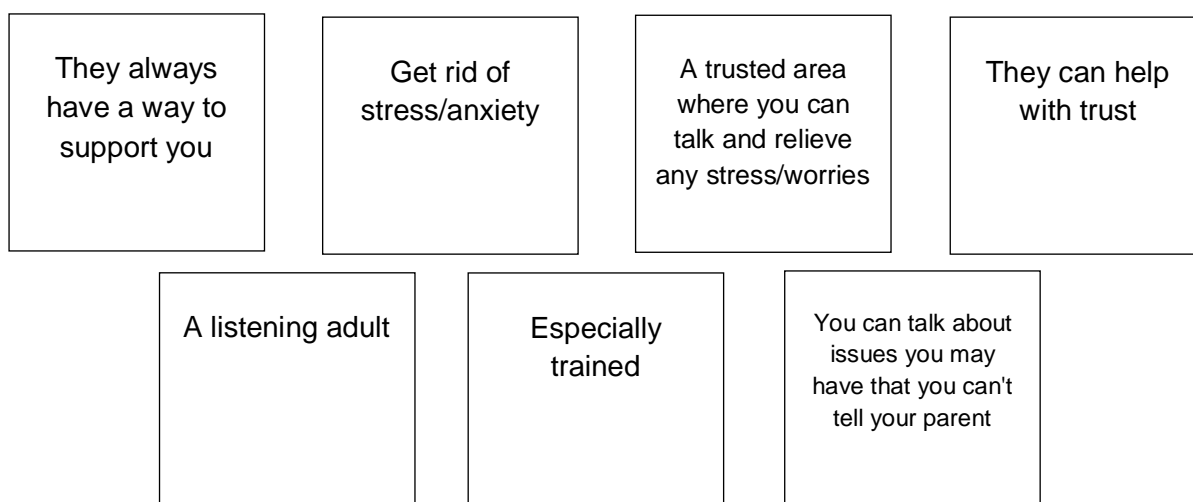
Figure 7. 'Post-it' note responses from FG1.

The non-NG pupils and school staff identified a particular sense of respect and gratitude for the work the NG staff did, which reflected a real and ongoing need for the support they gave.

And like even the teachers I think respect them a bit more because they're a bit like, whenever Mr xxxx like comes in my geography class like Miss, Miss is always like "hi" like and like say someone from xxx's there it's a bit like, I don't know. A bit like more friendlier to everyone up here. (FG 2)

Because I think it's, there is an increasing number of students that need that kind of help, the traditional sort of pastoral system with tutors and just Heads of Year would not be able to deal with the kind of depth that is needed, or the time, and also in setting up the inclusion unit you've got people who are now becoming very specialised in dealing with those situations so yeah, xxxx, xxxx and all the others have done training yeah they've done bereavement training and all sorts of stuff

which would be very difficult to resource in just a conventional pastoral system. (Staff 7, Head of lower school)

Erm, and you know it's, it's really important for us, some of those kids won't be coming to school if it wasn't for the hard work that these guys are doing and they are amazing. (Staff 1, Deputy headteacher)

It's the combination of that real warmth with high expectations of what they can do. I think that's what they manage to do so well. (Staff 9, Assistant headteacher)

Theme 3: School environment. This theme arose in relation to both how the NG environment was organised and how this might link to, support, or fit in with, the wider school environment.

Sub-theme one: NG organisation. There seemed to be a strong sense from the NG pupils that the calm and relaxed atmosphere was experienced as important and supportive of their needs. NG was felt to be a safe place where they would not be judged, were always able to talk to someone and could be themselves.

It's very relaxed and if you've had like a hard day and you want to talk to someone they're very open in the, they won't judge you for what you say. And yeah it's just easy to express yourself to Miss xxxx and Mr xxxxx Mrs xxxxx Mr xxxx. It's just a really nice place to be sometimes. (John, Year 8)

It's quite fun. It's always like a calm place to be. Like there's always somewhere where you can go to talk to someone in here. (Matt, Year 11)

I love inclusion it's like my safe place to go. (Charlie, Year 9)

Its ethos in general is just the very calming, but kind of crazy place. It's a place where you can definitely be yourself, you don't have to hold back and like,

everyone will accept you for who you are. It doesn't matter what your race is or your sexuality is everybody will be welcoming of you and no one will judge you for what your life choices are. (Imogen, Year 10)

Then there is the yeah the regular support up here where students have got a safe place to come, always open and, yeah, we provide, or the unit provides, sort of a lot of the basic things that often those students don't have at home including yeah, breakfast and just a bit of TLC really. (Staff 7, Head of lower school)

Non-NG pupils also thought of NG as a friendly and calm environment (Figure 8).

A place to calm down	Friendly atmosphere
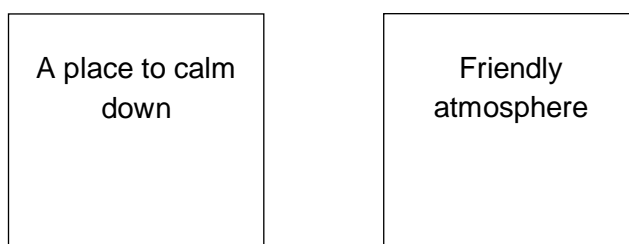
Figure 8. Post-it note responses from FG 2.

Availability, due to the drop-in nature of the NG, appeared to be important to pupils and the fact that it was accessible before and after school was also valued by staff.

Whereas here it's the doors open at half past 8 it doesn't close at all, the students are home, they leave their bags here, they can have, like, a snack here, have their break, their lunch here, their mates come here. It's just, you know it's almost like a social club, but not. And I think that's why it works so well. (Staff 3, Specialist teaching assistant)

It's just sort of whenever I feel like I need it I can come in and talk. (Jacob, Year 11)

If like something happens and somebody dies in their family, or something like that, then they can immediately come up. (FG 1)

Never letting them give up on themselves	Always reliable	Helping young people who may need more support in areas by talking to them about their problems	Constant support e.g. always being there
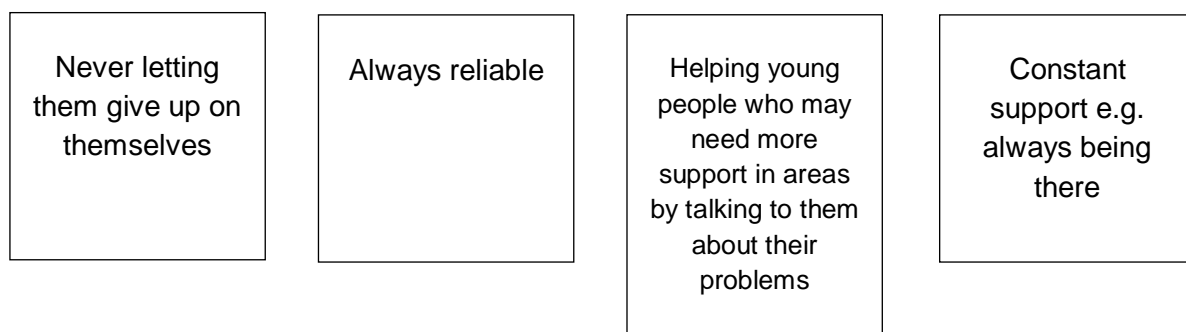
Figure 10. 'Post-it' note responses from FG2.

Sub-theme 2: Beyond NG. Pupils and staff spoke about the buddying system used within the school. Although not directly related to NG, the buddying system appeared to link to the influence NG had on supporting peer relations across year groups, which helps to create a whole school environment within which peer relations are valued. It was therefore included as sub-theme to help build a picture of how the school tried to develop an environment within which all pupils could feel supported.

Non-NG pupils in both FGs talked about the buddying system positively, suggesting it helped to support problems with friendships and with academic work.

The school do have a buddying system to, say if you have an argument with your friends, you can talk to them, they'll try and help sort it out…Yeah they can be

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from year 8 to 11 and they can help with any problems you have like safeguarding

or just friendship arguments or homework's and organising. (FG 1)

One student described how they felt the organisation of the buddying system

supported pupils through a regular system of support.

And erm, like I think that's really nice to give them support of someone that's

been in the school longer than them. So like not just the teacher that's come into

see them, like "oh are you okay?" because it's a bit intimidating talking to a

teacher when you've just come to the school. So I think it's nice that you've set

up a system where an older person is talking to you like once a week and all that

stuff, I think it's nice just to check up on them. (FG 2)

Staff members also talked about the sense of support they felt the school

environment offered to pupils through the pastoral system.

I think that the starting point is the tutor system so you know the students have a

tutor all the way through, the same tutor, so that tutor gets to know them very

well. We have peer group mentoring so older students supporting younger ones.

There is a variety of different versions of that so at the moment year 7's have

mentors from year 8 and year 9 but there are also sixth form mentors for specific

things. (Staff 7, Head of lower school)

I think erm, peer relationships are very strong here and I think a lot of that is, you

know, we have a buddying system and loads of people get involved in that. And

we still have sixth formers that go in and help our in lessons even, we have a really

good relationship with the younger students. And there is that sort of erm, mutual

respect amongst the students. (Staff 1, Deputy headteacher)

One staff member, when asked if she thought there was anything particularly special about the school, responded by talking about a wider sense of connection which she believed was supported throughout the school and reflected the school's inclusive ethos.

> I think the mix of kids we get. Well, the students make the school and the mix we get and how they kind of grow throughout the school and how they all sort of change and how you can, but how you kind of see rapport within the school. I think that's really special actually. (Staff 4, English teacher)

2.3   Discussion

This single case study aimed to explore how a NG might operate successfully within a mainstream secondary school and whether a secondary NG might have a unique role to play in the development of peer relations and a sense of belonging. By seeking the views of non-NG pupils, in addition to NG pupils and staff, this study makes a unique contribution to NG research. The school explored should be viewed as an example of good practice in relation to its implementation of the six nurturing principles and the positive approach it takes to supporting SEWB, led by a SMT who are willing to invest in this. Three main themes were identified through interviews and FGs with NG pupils, non-NG pupils and school staff: whole school approach, relational factors and school environment. The findings suggest the NG is mostly perceived to be well embedded into the whole school system, with pupil and staff understanding of the NG approach highlighted as a key factor. In addition, factors relating to relationships both within and outside of NG were considered key to the success and impact of NG provision. Further factors influencing the success of the NG included how it is set up and run and how it complemented systems from the wider school environment. The findings are discussed below in relation to the themes identified and relevant literature, theory and practice.

Chapter 2

Prior research has identified the need for a whole school approach, particularly with regards to staff awareness and understanding of NG provision, in order to support successful implementation of NGs within secondary schools (Grantham & Primrose, 2017; de Montjoie Rudolf, 2014). The current study provides evidence that, when a NG is embedded into the whole school system (i.e. through support from senior management, the provision of whole staff training and through valuing and embedding NG principles within school policy), then a positive influence on both staff and pupil understanding of NGs can be developed. The six principles of nurture could be seen throughout the case study school, displayed not only within NG, but also, for example, in the school's reception area. Staff were also encouraged to understand and respond to these principles within their own classrooms. A whole school nurturing approach may lessen any potential for stigma and help to create an atmosphere whereby NG support is both viewed and experienced positively. Within the case study school, staff were able to understand and articulate the impact of social and emotional needs on learning and pupils were able to understand and accept the different needs of their peers.

Previous research into secondary NGs (Kourmoulaki, 2013) suggests the increased sense of safety and security experienced within NG limits the generalisability of skills developed to the wider, less predictable nature of the whole school environment. Shared staff responsibility for pastoral care was identified within Scottish education as one factor which may protect against this by promoting inclusion and school improvement (Wright, 2010). Within the current study, the school promoted a sense of understanding around inclusive practice and pastoral care. Analysis of staff interviews revealed a sub-theme of 'staff understanding' in relation to what NGs entail, the theory upon which they are founded and how they are understood to support vulnerable pupils. This concurs with findings from Cooper & Tiknaz (2005), which identified staff understanding as one of the pre-requisites for the success of secondary NGs. In addition, a further sub-theme identified

the holistic approach taken by the school, where the 'whole child' was valued and an array of pastoral support was recognised. One member of staff talked about the investment in pastoral staff roles and another described the way in which she might refer to the support received within NG when teaching pupils in mainstream lessons, helping them to generalise the skills they had learnt. This also suggests that good staff communication within the school (for example, communication between NG staff and mainstream teaching staff) aids the generalisability of skills.

Colley (2012) described relationships as key to successful engagement in education. This current study identified relational factors as a main theme during analysis, with peer relations and staff-pupil relations being supported by NG intervention. The success of pupils being able to transfer their skills to outside of NG contrasts with the finding reported by Cunningham et al., (2019) where a continued feeling of loneliness for primary NG pupils, in areas such as the school playground, was identified. The NG pupils within this case study school seemed to be able to generalise their increased levels of confidence in being able to develop new friendships which existed both within and outside of NG. Pupils talked about mixing with different pupils at break times and reflected that they had been taught new skills which supported them in socialising with others. NG pupils also related this new confidence to being able to, for example, join new extracurricular clubs which again supported new friendships.

NG staff was named as a sub-theme, with NG pupils, non-NG pupils and school staff all identifying the trustworthiness, skill and popularity of the NG staff as significant. This factor appeared to help lessen any potential stigma linked to NG, with pupils acknowledging the popularity of NG staff across the whole school environment. This agrees with prior research which suggests that the credibility of secondary NG staff supports a reduction in stigma (Colley, 2012). For the NG pupils, the emotional support they received through the relationships they built with NG staff appeared central to the

positive impact they experienced through NG provision. Interestingly, for the older non-NG pupils, it seemed there was a gap in school provision for them. They spoke about pupils who, although not needing NG support, might benefit from somewhere they could go to talk about emotional difficulties, as they arose. Kourmoulaki (2013) identified a similar theme, with pupils feeling that, as academic demands increased within higher year groups, emotional needs became less important to school staff. Whilst pupil perceptions here are real, it is likely that alongside this apparent reduction of staff interest in SEWB, there is an increased contextual and time-dependent pressure amongst staff to reach targets and achieve academic results. The consideration of how best to utilise NGs and nurturing principles during the important exam periods of Years 11 and Year 12/13 would be a pertinent area for future research.

It seemed the development of increased social confidence, skills and improved peer relationships was also supported by the complementary whole-school approach of using a buddying system. Viewed positively by both pupils and staff, this appeared to reflect the importance the school placed on developing a sense of community and belonging. The experience of a sense of school community, or belonging, has been shown to impact positively on pupil wellbeing (Prati, Cicognani & Albanesi, 2018) and this further supports the view that it is important for secondary NGs to be developed as part of the whole school community, rather than as an 'add-on' intervention (Colley, 2012). Indeed, a coherent approach which seeks to ensure that different parts of a school organisation communicate and work together, has been shown to promote SEWB (Weare, 2015) and is recognised within government policy (Brooks, 2014; NICE, 2018). In future research, it would also be valuable to consider how NG skills transfer to the wider community and how pupils are supported to develop practical skills which they can apply when they leave the security of school. One pupil discussed this in relation to his experience of NG:

It helps me like build confidence in like outside of life… So like if you're worried

to talk to someone they can help you, they can find ways to help you talk to

someone that you don't, that you never talked to before… And like help you with

job experiences and work experience as well. Some year, some sixth formers

come up here to talk to students. So if you want to be part of that you can just

come up here.   (Matt, Year 11).

Within the theme 'school environment,' a flexible approach to the organisation of

NGs in secondary schools was identified as beneficial to their success. Previous research

has identified the usefulness of secondary NGs in providing open access to vulnerable

pupils who experience the NG base as a 'safe haven' (Garner, Miles & Thomas, 2011). This

'safe haven' can be seen to mirror the 'safe base' provided within securely attached

relationships during early childhood (Bowlby, 2008). NGs, therefore, can provide an

opportunity to respond to the developmental needs of secondary NG pupils, restoring

missed childhood experiences, to support the development of the social and emotional

foundations for learning (Colley, 2012; Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005). Within the case study

school, flexibility of the NG organisation was a key identified theme. In particular, the

pupils viewed the NG as a safe space and referred to the accessibility of the NG room as

key to the support it provided. They felt able to be themselves and talked about not being

judged by anyone in NG. The drop-in nature of the provision, alongside more structured

and timetabled provision, appeared to support pupils in feeling safe within the school

environment. As outlined in attachment theory, the provision of a 'secure base' enables an

individual to feel safe in exploring the world and ultimately in developing greater

independence (Bowlby, 1968). It is possible that pupils felt supported by being able to

'drop into' the NG when no longer accessing timetabled NG support. This may also have

facilitated a more successful reintegration into mainstream lessons through continued

opportunities for connection to NG.

Chapter 2

2.3.1   Implications for schools and EP practice

Upon consideration of the current findings, this study provides an example of how NGs can function effectively within a mainstream secondary school, where support for SEWB is valued and seen as a worthy investment of precious school time and resources. Several recommendations have been identified which would support schools, in particular secondary schools, when considering the development of NG practice:

a) NGs require support and investment from the SMT in order to ensure that NG staff are suitably trained and supported to deliver the approach.

b) The underlying theory and approach of NGs should be shared across the whole school staff (perhaps through in-service training) to aid consistent understanding and to help create joined-up thinking in relation to the SEWB of vulnerable pupils.

c) The NG should be built upon the six principles of nurture. It is beneficial for these to be made part of wider school policy and classroom approaches.

d) Secondary NGs may need to adopt a more flexible approach than the classic primary school model. For example, incorporating a 'drop-in' system as part of NG provision may assist the transferability of skills supported within NG itself.

e) The NG should be developed as part of the whole school community so it is not viewed as an 'add on' provision. This will help to lessen any stigma which may potentially be attached to NG provision. Consideration of how peer relationships are supported within whole school approaches (e.g. through a buddying system) is important and will help to support NG pupils in transferring their skills outside of NG.

f) Secondary schools should consider how they can best support Year 11 pupils through a period of heightened academic pressure and upcoming transition. The use of a carefully attuned approach, for example through a Year 11 tutor group planned upon nurturing principles, may be an effective way to offer this support.

There is a place for EPs to work with secondary schools, supporting them in the development of new NGs. Ideas from implementation science (Peters, Adam, Alonge, Agyepong & Tran, 2013) are relevant here, helping to identify the potential barriers to, and facilitators of, an intervention in order to fully understand need within a current context. Findings from the present research highlight several areas worthy of consideration. EPs are well positioned to support the training of staff on the theory of NGs to develop their understanding of the intervention. Working systemically to help senior management within schools consider and develop a variety of complementary, whole school approaches which support the SEWB of pupils, may also be a good way forward. As part of this, EPs could help schools without NGs to consider the potential benefits of this approach and build a vision as to how such provision could sit within the wider school context and become part of the school culture. The six recommendations outlined above could, perhaps, provide a framework for EP support and discussions in this area.

2.3.2 Strengths, limitations and directions for future research

Previous research into secondary NGs has sought the views of NG pupils, school staff and parents, yet hasn't purposefully tried to understand how a NG is viewed by other pupils within the school. A strength of this study therefore relates to the unique contribution it makes to research into secondary NGs. A further strength is the richness of the data gathered, which should support readers in developing a deep and authentic

understanding of the key interacting factors and causal mechanisms associated with effective NG provision.

Although expanding on the paucity of research on secondary NGs, this study has certain limitations which should be noted when considering the findings and implications. Firstly, being a single school case study, the findings relate to a particular school with a particular demographic and cannot, therefore, be assumed as generalisable to other mainstream secondary schools. It is hoped, however, that the findings will still help to provide some insights for other schools when considering whether a NG approach may be suitable, and responsive, to their own particular needs. Secondly, this study was interested in qualitative data only and, as such, presents the perceptions and experiences of pupils and staff. Although this suited the purpose of the study (to explore how a NG might work within a secondary school), it would have been interesting to include data on the effectiveness of this particular case study NG, by also using quantitative measures. For example, a pre- and post- measure considering the impact of NGs on peer relations would have added to and triangulated the reported findings (e.g. The Interpersonal Competence Scale; Cairns, Leung, Guest & Cairns, 1995). This mixed-methods approach could be something to consider for future research.

A further limitation of employing a qualitative approach to this research relates to the potential for participant responses to lack objectivity. In particular, the NG pupils spoke very positively about their experiences of NG. Although the researcher confirmed participant anonymity before each interview commenced and reminded participants of the exploratory nature of the research (stating there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers), it is still possible that the participants, invested as they were in the school and in the NG, wanted to present the NG in a positive light. There was also a risk of bias within non-NG

FG participants who may have been more able to express views which either agreed or disagreed with others in the group.

A clear direction for future research could be to explore further the experiences of older children (e.g. Years 11-13) to develop a greater understanding of the need for additional emotional support at this crucial time of adolescence. Furthermore, in relation to secondary NG research, it would be interesting to complete a multiple case study of differing NGs (for example, to compare NGs across schools where one has received the nurturing schools award and one hasn't) in order to further understand how secondary NGs may work and to consider more closely the impact of school investment in NG provision and the potential significance of a whole school approach.

2.4   Conclusion

The present study supports existing literature (e.g. Siegel, 2015) which identifies the importance of developing and supporting positive peer relationships during adolescence. One way of achieving this, particularly for more vulnerable pupils, is through secondary NGs. The use of a single case study approach within this research has led to an in-depth understanding of how a NG can be set up and run within a mainstream secondary school. The insights gained from NG pupils, school staff and non-NG pupils has allowed a picture to emerge which suggests NGs are an effective intervention to support the SEWB of vulnerable adolescents. In particular, skills taught within NG which support the development of positive peer relations and pupil-staff relations, can be transferred to the wider school environment when there is a shared understanding of the NG approach developed throughout the whole school. NGs appear to provide significant support for pupils when they exist within a whole school culture where SEWB is prioritised. It is hoped that schools can be supported to develop this understanding, perhaps facilitated by EPs, to maximise the positive impact secondary NGs can have during an important 'second

window' of opportunity for positive prosocial development within the period of

adolescence.

Appendix A   Data Extraction Table

Study: Authors(s)Year Country **Unique Reference**	Participants (Age, Gender), Sample size	Design	Intervention (Type, duration, frequency, delivery)	Outcome Measures	Key findings (linked to review)	Effect size
Paper 1 Jayman, Ohl, Hughes & Fox (2018). **UK**	126 11-14yrs Mean age 12.53 (SD 0.79) – Years 7,8,9, from 8 different schools. Pyramid group – 26 male, 40 female. Comparison group – 26 male and 34 female, matched with Pyramid group on age,	Non-intervention comparison group. Mixed-methods; pre, post and 12 month follow up. Focus groups (conducted in each school) conducted separately with pupils and adults (club leaders, who were school support staff and community volunteers)	10 week programme (typically delivered as an after-school club, once a week). Targets improved socio-emotional competencies.	SDQ – self-report and informant versions to measure socio-emotional wellbeing. Only data which provided pre- and post was used in analysis Thematic analysis (manual) (Braun and Clarke) of focus group data	Significant improvements identified from informant and self-reports in relation to emotional symptoms and peer relationship problems. Increase in pro-social behaviour Qualitative data supported these findings: • Increase in socio-emotional competencies • Increased sense of connectedness • Sense of group identity Responses from pupils and club leaders were highly consistent.	Subscale analysis showed significant changes over time for 3 domains: Large effect sizes for emotional symptoms (d=0.79), peer relationship problems (d=0.82). Effects maintained at 12 month follow-up.

	gender and SES (by free school meals)					
Paper 2 Caleon, King, Tan, Low, Tan & Liem (2017). **Singapore**	103 (46 intervention, 57 wait-list control) 12-14yrs 49 male 54 female	Quasi-experimental. Questionnaire pre and post	2 week Gratitude intervention. Class-based intervention: 4 key activities • Counting everyday blessings • Gratitude card • Mental subtraction of blessings • Gratitude collage	Six item Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6). Sense of relatedness rated to 3 key social partners (parents, teachers and friends). Thematic analysis of students post-intervention written comments.	No statistical significance for levels of gratitude. Small effect sizes found for relationships with parents and peers. A socially oriented gratitude intervention was found to be helpful in relation to improvements in pupil relationships with parents and peers. Qualitative findings included 2 social subthemes: 'forming bonds' and 'opportunity to express gratitude.'	Across groups: Relatedness with peers: $\eta2 = 0.32$ Relatedness with parents $\eta2 = 0.44$ Findings reported to be comparable to effect sizes found in previous gratitude interventions.

Paper 3	358 (215 experimental group, 143 control group) from 4 different secondary schools	Quasi-experimental research design	3 x per week across 8 weeks during lesson time.	Self-report questionnaire designed to measure wellbeing and social relations pre- and post 8 weeks (wellbeing at school, psychological distress, general stress scale and peer problems (SDQ - PP) made up the 5 scales.	Compassion and Attention in Schools (a mindfulness-based programme) seems to be a useful tool for enhancing pupils' effortful control, wellbeing at school and peer relations.	Not reported
Terjestam, Bengtsson & Jansson (2016). **Sweden**		19 classes randomly assigned to either experimental or control group	3 practices: -Breath meditation (recorded practice) -Guided visualisation focussing on compassion (recorded practice) -Mindful reflection on mentalization of areas such as friendship and wellbeing		For peer problems (SDQPP), there was a significant three-way interaction between experimental condition, time of measurement, and grade, $F(2, 303) = 3.24$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.021$. Separate mixed ANOVAs for each grade revealed a significant interaction between experimental condition and time of measurement only in grade 5 (11-12yrs) $F(1,98) = 4.86$ $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.047$.	
	173 female, 185 male 11-15yrs		Control group: listened to recorded content academic	Teachers also completed the Effortful Control subscales of the revised Early Adolescence Temperament Questionnaire (EATO-R) for individual pupils	In this age group, peer problems decreased between T1 and T2 in the experimental group, $t(75) = -4.09$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.41$, but not in the	

			lessons (e.g. an English recording of a novel in English class) lasting for some ten minutes twice a week and reflected on topics related to the novel once a week.	in their classes.	control group, $t(23) = 0.34$, ns. Therefore, training decreased peer problems in 11-12 year age group but not in older age groups.	
Paper 4 Rose, Hawes & Hunt (2014). **Australia**	210 9-14yrs Mean age 12.2 at time point 1. 93 girls 117 boys	Cluster-randomised control trial, 3 conditions including wait-list control group.	PIR – a 9 week intervention, RAP – an 11 week intervention. Class-based. Looked at the effects of using the Peer Interpersonal Relatedness (PIR) programme (friendship-building) as an addition to the Resourceful Adolescent Programme (RAP) (CBT-based) to see if	Reynolds Adolescent Depression Scale—Second Edition (RADS–2). Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) **Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) Clinical Assessment of Interpersonal Relations (CAIR)** Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS). DISCAP	Students who completed PIR reported increased life satisfaction and increased quality of interpersonal peer relationships (relative to those who did not complete PIR). Individuals who completed the RAP–PIR programme showed no change in levels of peer inter-personal relatedness immediately post-intervention but did report significantly higher levels of peer interpersonal relatedness when reassessed 12 months after the intervention. Furthermore, these adolescents reported higher levels of school-related life satisfaction across the follow-up duration.	Effect sizes (Cohen's d) for interpersonal relationship measures (CAIR): Time 1 = -0.1 Time 2 = -0.33 Time 3 = -0.55

			larger effects were produced than when RAP used on its own.			
Paper 5 Mikami, Gregory, Allen, Pianta & Lun (2011) **US**	88 teachers (43 experimental group, 45 control group) and 1423 pupils in their classes. 61% middle school teachers (11-14yrs) 39% high school teachers (15-18yrs) 56 female 32 male	Observations and student self-report of classroom peer interactions collected pre- and post-course	My teaching partner intervention (MTP-S) (targets teacher-student relationships, with a suggested effect on peer relationships). Intervention across the Autumn and Spring Terms. This study was focused on assessing impact on peer relationships.	CLASS coding system of secondary school classroom quality was used to score the presence of positive peer interactions as witnessed on video recordings.	Results indicated that in MTP-S classrooms, students were observed to show improvement in positive peer interactions, although this pattern was not found in self-report data. No change found in student self-reports Results also indicated a decline in positive peer relations for students identified to exhibit high disruptive behaviour at the start of the course.	partial η^2 = .052 indicated a significant link between teacher participation in MTP-S and positive peer relations.
Paper 6 Ellis, Marsh & Craven. (2009). **Australia**	930 students 11-14 yrs across 2yrs Gender information not given.	Experimental and control group. Longitudinal design using SDQ II short version.	Schools trained to adopt peer support programme – Peer leaders (older students) receive 2 day training to equip them to run peer support groups for	SDQ II- Short (self-concept) Review of Personal effectiveness Scale (ROPE) Coping Strategy Indicator, short (CSI-	The results of the quantitative component of the study demonstrated that the programme had a significant immediate impact on students' school self-concept, perceptions of bullying, honesty/ trustworthiness self-concept, **opposite-sex relations** (p < .01), **(but not the same impact for same-sex peer relations)** self-	Not reported

(Part of Peer Support Foundation, 2001) Similar models adopted in UK, Singapore, United States and New Zealand.		Qualitative data from experimental group.	Year 7 pupils across the year. 12 sessions, 1 x per week, each 45 mins Programme manual with clear aims and guidance for each session (Peer Support Foundation 2001)	S) Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI-A) Qualitative (sub-sample of experimental group: 408 year 7, 44 peer support leaders) questionnaire and focus groups to gather personal perspectives	concept, open-thinking, and stress management scores. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that the benefits of the programme in each of these domains were retained over a three-month follow-up period (i.e., from T2 to T3) following the completion of the intervention. The qualitative component of the present investigation provided participants with the opportunity to express their views about the benefits of the programme in their own words. The qualitative results found benefits for the Grade 7 students in a variety of domains: Student connectedness, problem solving ability, sense of self, optimistic thinking, school citizenship, and adjustment to high school.	
Paper 7 Dillon & Swinbourne. (2007). **Australia**	22 schools between 1999 and 2003. Half ran programme x 1, a quarter x 2 and remainder over 3-4 years. Complete data available for 12 schools (results presented in	Social provision scale pre and post. Analysis used schools as unit of measurement (taking the average scores of students – SPS was used to indicate change in perceived supportiveness of the school environment)	Helping Friends programme (workshops) Programme outlined in a manual, with handouts, workbooks and CD Rom. Nominated peer leaders are trained over a 2 day period.	Social Provision Scale (SPS) – to indicate any changes in the perceived supportiveness of the school environment. Filled out by all Year 11 students in each school, pre- and post-programme delivery	The *Helping Friends* programme is associated with statistically significant increases along a measure of perceived social support and has been effective in increasing knowledge of helping behaviour among participants. Significant pre- post increases (p< .05) for: reassurance of worth, attachment and nurturance.	Not reported.

	paper) 15-16 yrs Gender information not provided.					
Paper 8 **Willis, Bland, Manka & Craft. (2012)** **Australia**	57: 34 pupils, 19 parents/ guardians, 4 school staff Gender information not given.	Qualitative – • repeated focus groups with peer mentors and parents (mid and end-of school year) • semi-structured interviews with parents • semi-structured interviews with teachers/ senior management	Mentors – Year 10 – applied for the role. Received 7 x 1 hour modules of training Mentees selected in response to low levels of literacy. Mentors and mentees met for a minimum of 1 hour/week for the duration of the school year.	Inductive thematic analysis	Mentee's perceptions of the effects of the intervention: • Engaging and relationship-building across time • Perceived changes and achievements (literacy) Mentor's perceptions of the effects of the intervention: • Relating to younger students and building relationships • Learning techniques in the mentoring relationship • Perceived changes for mentees and mentors – mentees appeared more confident in relating to older peers and in being at secondary school	N/A

Paper 9	28:	Single school	2 NGs within a	Interviews of NG	NGs in a secondary school carry the	N/A
	12 current and	case study	recently merged	members, NG staff,	benefits of primary NGs with the addition of	
Kourmoulaki,	4 previous NG		school.	wider school staff and	being particularly useful for young people	
A. (2013).	members			parents.	with regard to feelings of safety, belonging,	
	4 NG staff,		Year 7 pupils.		and coping with change and social	
UK	8 school staff				challenges.	
					NG staff are central in fostering these	
	NG pupils 11-				feelings and enabling the members of the	
	12yrs.				groups to apply their developing skills	
					across contexts.	
	Gender					
	information					
	not given.					

Appendix B   Literature Review: Quality Assessment

Quantitative and mixed methods studies

Study Author(s):	Jayman et al.2018 Pyramid Paper 1 Mixed methods	Caleon et al., 2017 Gratitude Paper 2 Mixed methods	Terjestam et al., 2016 Cultivating awareness Paper 3	Rose et al., 2014 Friendship skills Paper 4	Mikami et al., 2011 Professional development intervention Paper 5	Ellis et al., 2009 peer support Paper 6 Mixed methods	Dillon et al., 2007 peer support Paper 7
1. *Is the hypothesis/aim/objective of the study clearly described?*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. *Are the main outcomes to be measured clearly described in the Introduction or Methods section?* If the main outcomes are first mentioned in the Results section, the question should be answered no.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. *Are the characteristics of the participants included in the study clearly described?* In cohort studies and trials, inclusion and/or exclusion criteria should be given. In case-control studies, a case-definition and the source for controls should be given.	Yes matched on age, gender and SES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes Consecutive Year 7 cohorts used	Yes

4. *Are the interventions of interest clearly described?* Treatments and placebo (where relevant) that are to be compared should be clearly described.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
5. *Are the distributions of principal confounders in each group of subjects to be compared clearly described?* A list of principal confounders is provided.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	UTD	No
6. *Are the main findings of the study clearly described?* Simple outcome data (including denominators and numerators) should be reported for all major findings so that the reader can check the major analyses and conclusions. (This question does not cover statistical tests which are considered below).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
7. *Does the study provide estimates of the random variability in the data for the main outcomes?* In non- normally distributed data the inter-quartile range of results should be reported. In normally distributed data the standard error, standard deviation or confidence intervals should be reported. If the distribution of the data is not described, it must be assumed that the estimates used were appropriate and the question should be answered yes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8. *Have all important adverse events that may be a consequence of the intervention been reported?* This should be answered yes if the study demonstrates that there was a comprehensive attempt to measure adverse events. (A list of possible adverse events is provided)	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

9. *Have the characteristics of participants lost to follow-up been described?* This should be answered yes where there were no losses to follow-up or where losses to follow-up were so small that findings would be unaffected by their inclusion. This should be answered no where a study does not report the number of patients lost to follow-up.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
10. *Have actual probability values been reported (e.g. 0.035 rather than <0.05) for the main outcomes except where the probability value is less than 0.001?*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
11. *Were the participants asked to participate in the study representative of the entire population from which they were recruited?* The study must identify the source population for participants and describe how the participants were selected. Participants would be representative if they comprised the entire source population, an unselected sample of consecutive patients, or a random sample. Random sampling is only feasible where a list of all members of the relevant population exists. Where a study does not report the proportion of the source population from which the patients are derived, the question should be answered as unable to determine.	UTD	UTD	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

12. Were those participants who were prepared to participate representative of the entire population from which they were recruited? The proportion of those asked who agreed should be stated. Validation that the sample was representative would include demonstrating that the distribution of the main confounding factors was the same in the study sample and the source population.	Yes	UTD	UTD	No	No	Yes	Yes
13. Were the staff, places, and facilities where the intervention was implemented, representative of the treatment the majority of patients receive? **Change to: Was the intervention implemented in a Secondary school?** For the question to be answered yes the study should demonstrate that the intervention was representative of that in use in the source population. The question should be answered no if, for example, the intervention was undertaken in a specialist centre unrepresentative of the hospitals most of the source population would attend.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
14. Was an attempt made to blind study subjects to the intervention they have received? For studies where the patients would have no way of knowing which intervention they received, this should be answered yes.	No	UTD	No	Yes	Yes	UTD	No
15. Was an attempt made to blind those measuring the main outcomes of the intervention?	No	UTD	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

16. *If any of the results of the study were based on "data dredging", was this made clear?* Any analyses that had not been planned at the outset of the study should be clearly indicated. If no retrospective unplanned subgroup analyses were reported, then answer yes.	Yes – no results based on data dredging presented.	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
17. *In trials and cohort studies, do the analyses adjust for different lengths of follow-up of patients, or in case-control studies, is the time period between the intervention and outcome the same for cases and controls ?* Where follow-up was the same for all study patients the answer should yes. If different lengths of follow-up were adjusted for by, for example, survival analysis the answer should be yes. Studies where differences in follow-up are ignored should be answered no.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
18. *Were the statistical tests used to assess the main outcomes appropriate?* The statistical techniques used must be appropriate to the data. For example non-parametric methods should be used for small sample sizes. Where little statistical analysis has been undertaken but where there is no evidence of bias, the question should be answered yes. If the distribution of the data (normal or not) is not described it must be assumed that the estimates used were appropriate and the question should be answered yes.	Yes	Yes Bonferroni	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (but minimal)
19. *Was there sufficiently rigorous analysis of the qualitative data?*	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A

20. Was the relationship between the researcher and participants appropriately considered?	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	UTD	N/A
21. Was compliance with the intervention/s reliable? Where there was non- compliance with the allocated treatment or where there was contamination of one group, the question should be answered no. For studies where the effect of any misclassification was likely to bias any association to the null, the question should be answered yes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	UTD	UTD	UTD
22. Were the main outcome measures used accurate (valid and reliable)? For studies where the outcome measures are clearly described, the question should be answered yes. For studies which refer to other work or that demonstrates the outcome measures are accurate, the question should be answered as yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
23. Were the participants in different intervention groups (trials and cohort studies) or were the cases and controls (case-control studies) recruited from the same population? For example, patients for all comparison groups should be selected from the same hospital. The question should be answered unable to determine for cohort and case- control studies where there is no information concerning the source of patients included in the study.	No -intervention took place in 4 different schools	Yes	Yes	No -4 different schools	No – 12 different schools	Yes	No

24. Were study subjects in different intervention groups (trials and cohort studies) or were the cases and controls (case-control studies) recruited over the same period of time? For a study which does not specify the time period over which patients were recruited, the question should be answered as unable to determine.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
25. Were study subjects randomised to intervention groups? Studies which state that subjects were randomised should be answered yes except where method of randomisation would not ensure random allocation. For example alternate allocation would score no because it is predictable.	No	No (whole classes randomly allocated)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
26. Was the randomised intervention assignment concealed from both participants and school staff until recruitment was complete and irrevocable? All non-randomised studies should be answered no. If assignment was concealed from patients but not from staff, it should be answered no.	No	UTD	UTD	UTD	Yes	No	No
27. Was there adequate adjustment for confounding variables in the analyses from which the main findings were drawn? This question should be answered no for trials if: the main conclusions of the study were based on analyses of intervention rather than intention to treat; the distribution of known confounders in the different intervention groups was not described; or the distribution of known confounders differed between the intervention groups but was not taken into account in the analyses. In non-	No	No	No	No	UTD	No	No

randomised studies if the effect of the main confounders was not investigated or confounding was demonstrated but no adjustment was made in the final analyses the question should be answered as no.							
28. *Were losses of participants to follow-up taken into account?* If the numbers of patients lost to follow-up are not reported, the question should be answered as unable to determine. If the proportion lost to follow-up was too small to affect the main findings, the question should be answered yes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	UTD	Yes
29. *Did the study have sufficient power to detect a clinically important effect where the probability value for a difference being due to chance is less than 5%?* Sample sizes have been calculated to detect a difference of x% and y%. ***Was a power analysis completed?***	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	UTD	No	No
Score	**21/29** **Good**	**20/29** **Fair**	**19/27** **Fair**	**22/27** **Good**	**19/27** **Fair**	**18/29** **Fair**	**10/27** **Poor**

Yes = 1
No = 0

Unable to determine (UTD) = 0
For scores out of 29: Excellent (27-29); good (21-26); Fair (16-20); Poor (equal to or less than 15)
For scores out of 27: Excellent (26-27); good (20-25); Fair (15-19); Poor (equal to or less than 14)

Assigned levels taken from those presented in Hooper, Jutai, Strong, & Russell-Minda (2008) and adjusted for score out of 29

Qualitative studies

Questions	Willis et al., 2012 Paper 8	Kourmoulaki, 2013 Paper 9
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	YES Our purpose is to outline the social benefits identified by students that stemmed from this programme and to discuss the value of this model for enhancing student social wellbeing in addition to developing literacy skills.	YES Since existing literature on secondary school NGs is limited the primary purpose of the current study is to explore in greater depth the structure, function and impact of NGs within a secondary school in order to contribute to a greater understanding of NGs in secondary school settings.
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	YES Intention to access an 'insider perspective' – a rich description to understand the successes and weaknesses of the programme.	YES To gain pupil perspectives
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	YES Interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders (peer mentors and mentees), questionnaire for peer mentors, telephone interviews with parents/guardians of participating	YES Individual and group interviews of NG members, NG staff, other teaching and management staff. Parent telephone interviews.

	students, semi-structured interviews with teachers/staff members, at 3 timepoints.	
4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	YES	YES
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	YES	YES
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	NO	NO
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	YES	NO
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	NO Insufficient data presented to support findings	YES
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	YES	YES
10. How valuable is the research?	YES Supports peer mentoring as effective in improving peer relationships and pupil engagement with literacy. Potential of peer-mentoring to enhance social inclusion in school environments.	YES Adds to limited amount of research which relates to secondary NGs
Total score	**8/10**	**8/10**

Appendix C   School Recruitment Advert

University of Southampton looking for secondary nurture groups

21 June 2018

The University of Southampton is looking to recruit secondary nurture groups in the south of England for a new research study.

Current literature suggests a positive place for Nurture Groups within secondary schools in supporting young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Questions within research have arisen, however, in relation to the generalisation of the skills developed within the Nurture Group to the wider school environment. With peer relationship experiences being a central context for development during adolescence, the main aim of this research is to **explore the perceptions of young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties who attend Nurture Groups within mainstream secondary schools** to better understand the impact Nurture Group attendance has on their peer relationships and sense of belonging. To help address a secondary research question concerning how Nurture Groups fit into the wider school, this study will also seek the perceptions of young people who do not themselves attend a Nurture Group.

This doctoral research project is looking to recruit secondary schools in the south of England who have existing Nurture Group provision which runs on Nurture Group principles and which is timetabled consistently. This is a qualitative study which will use individual interviews and focus groups to gather the views of young people.

If your school is interested in participating, please get in touch with the researcher, Karen O'Farrell (Trainee Educational Psychologist) via email K.J.O'Farrell@soton.ac.uk or phone 07986 731380. Further details can be sent out.

Appendix C

Appendix D   School Recruitment Letter

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Nurture Group School Recruitment Letter (Version 1, 24/05/18)

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS ON NURTURE GROUP
PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ERGO Study ID number: 40936

RGO reference number:

Date 3.09.18

Dear Headteacher / SENCo

My name is Karen O'Farrell and I am a trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Southampton. As part of my course I am required to complete a piece of research for my thesis. My project is considering the impact of Nurture Group intervention on young people's peer relationships and sense of belonging. As a mainstream secondary school who runs a Nurture Group, I am writing to ask if you would be interested in taking part in my research project.

Background to the study

Nurture Groups are an intervention provided by schools to support children's social, emotional and behavioural development. The majority of research into Nurture Groups has focused on primary schools where they have been found to be an effective intervention. Fewer studies have considered the effectiveness of Nurture Group provision in secondary schools and in particular, few studies have gathered pupil's own perceptions. This study will seek to explore the perceptions of secondary school pupils who do and who do not attend a Nurture group in order to develop an understanding of the impact Nurture Groups may have on peer relationships and sense of belonging and to understand how Nurture groups fit into the wider school set up.

What does the study involve?

Appendix D

Taking part in the project will require some commitments which are listed below. Please consider these carefully before agreeing to take part.

1. Identification and assessment of participants

During the autumn term of this academic year, I will ask schools to identify up to 8 children in Year 7 or 8 who have attended Nurture Group for a length of time since September 2017. Once parental consent has been obtained I will meet with selected participants to share further information about the study and procedure.

To explore young people's perceptions of Nurture Group I will complete individual semi-structured interviews with each young person. (each interview will take no longer than 45 minutes). The interviews will take place in the autumn term.

2. Paperwork

Some support will be required in the distribution of information letters and consent forms, which I will send copies of beforehand for your approval. Printed copies of all letters will be provided.

What happens to the data?

All information collected from your child will remain fully confidential and assigned an anonymous number. All data are kept on a password protected computer at the University of Southampton and only myself and my supervisor Dr. Jana Kreppner will have access. Paper copies of the data and consent forms will be stored securely in the file store at the University of Southampton. The data will be used purely for research purposes, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998 and data storage policy at the University of Southampton, it will be kept for 10 years following completion of the study before being securely destroyed. Once the project has been completed schools will be sent a summary of the final research report. All information gathered will be strictly confidential and no names will be mentioned in the write up of this research.

Has this study been given ethical approval?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Southampton Ethics Committee and has been given independent ethical approval to proceed. I have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and have been given permission to work with children.

What happens if something goes wrong?

Should any concerns arise or you feel the need to make a complaint you may contact the chair of the Ethics Committee, Psychology, University of Southampton, SO17 1BJ, UK. Phone: +44 (0)23 8059 3856, email: fshs-rso@soton.ac.uk

If you are interested in taking part in this project or would like to find out more information, please contact me by email (contact details below).

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my letter and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Karen O'Farrell

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Southampton

Contact details:

Karen O'Farrell   Supervisor: Dr Jana Kreppner

kjof1n15@soton.ac.uk   E: j.kreppner@soton.ac.uk

Appendix E   Parent Information Letters and Consent Forms

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Focus Group Parent Information Sheet (Version 1, 13/04/18)

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS ON NURTURE GROUP
PROVISION ON MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

ERGO Study ID number:

RGO reference number:

School name and address

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Karen O'Farrell and I am a trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Southampton. As part of my course I am required to complete a piece of research for my thesis. My project is exploring the perceptions of pupils on Nurture Group provision within mainstream secondary schools. I will be seeking the perceptions of both children who attend/have attended a Nurture Group and the perceptions of children who have not accessed a Nurture Group.

[NAME OF SENCo] has indicated that your child has not accessed Nurture Group provision at[name of school]. I am therefore writing to ask for your permission to include your child in my study. I hope to provide all the information that you will need about the study in order for you to make an informed decision about whether you would be happy for your child to participate or not. However, if you have any further queries or would like to discuss any aspect of the study, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor, Dr. Jana Kreppner (contact details below).

Background to the study

Appendix E

Nurture Groups are an intervention provided by schools to support children's social, emotional and behavioural development. Previous research into Nurture Groups has found them to be an effective intervention within primary schools. However, there is only a limited amount of research which looks at the impact of Nurture Groups for pupils in secondary schools. In particular, this study is interested in understanding the impact of Nurture Group attendance on peer relationships and sense of belonging. It will seek to gain the perceptions of young people who do and who do not attend Nurture Groups.

What does the study involve?

Your child will be invited to participate in a focus group which will be conducted by myself within the school environment. The focus group will involve discussion around friendships and sense of belonging at school for children with and without social, emotional and behavioural needs. The group will consist of around 8 pupils and will be expected to last for no more than 1 hour. As a thank you for their participation, your child will receive a £5 Amazon gift voucher.

Are there any risks involved in my child's participation?

The researcher has attempted to ensure that any risks involved in your child's participation in this study have been minimised. In the unlikely event that children may feel upset when discussing the school environment, friendships and Nurture groups, I will work with school staff to ensure appropriate support is offered.

What happens to the data?

All information collected from your child will remain fully confidential and assigned an anonymous number. All data are kept on a password protected computer at the University of Southampton and only myself and my supervisor Dr. Jana Kreppner will have access. Paper copies of the data and consent forms will be stored securely in the file store at the University of Southampton. The data will be used purely for research purposes, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998 and data storage policy at the University of Southampton, it will be kept for 10 years following completion of the study before being securely destroyed. Once the project has been completed schools will be sent a summary of the final research report. All information gathered will be strictly confidential and no names will be mentioned in the write up of this research.

Does my child have to participate?

No. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to allow your child to participate. Should you give permission for your child to participate but subsequently change your mind, you may withdraw your child from the study at any point without giving any reason. All children who have been given their parents' permission to participate in this study will be verbally asked if they want to participate before they complete any tasks and asked to sign a consent form. They will also be reminded that they can choose to discontinue at any point.

Has this study been given ethical approval?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Southampton Ethics Committee and has been given independent ethical approval to proceed. I have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and have been given permission to work with

children. [NAME OF HEADTEACHER] has also given permission for this research to be undertaken at [NAME OF SCHOOL].

What happens if something goes wrong?

Should any concerns arise or you feel the need to make a complaint you may contact the chair of the Ethics Committee, Psychology, University of Southampton, SO17 1BJ, UK. Phone: +44 (0)23 8059 3856, email: fshs-rso@soton.ac.uk

If you are happy for your child to take part in this project we would appreciate if you could complete the attached parent consent form and return this to your child's class teacher by [DATE].

Yours faithfully,

Karen O'Farrell

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Southampton

Contact details

Karen O'Farrell   kjof1n15@soton.ac.uk

Supervisor   Dr. Jana Kreppner

                         E: j.kreppner@soton.ac.uk

                         T: 023 80594603

UNIVERSITY OF
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Appendix E

Nurture Group Parent Information Sheet (Version 1, 13/04/18)

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS ON NURTURE GROUP
PROVISION ON MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

ERGO Study ID number:

RGO reference number:

School name and address

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Karen O'Farrell and I am a trainee Educational Psychologist studying
at the University of Southampton. As part of my course I am required to complete a piece
of research for my thesis. My project is exploring the perceptions of pupils on Nurture
Group provision within mainstream secondary schools. I will be seeking the perceptions of
both children who attend/have attended a Nurture Group and the perceptions of children
who have not accessed a Nurture Group.

[NAME OF SENCo] has indicated that your child has accessed Nurture Group
provision at [name of school]. I am therefore writing to ask for your permission to include
your child in my study. I hope to provide all the information that you will need about the
study in order for you to make an informed decision about whether you would be happy for
your child to participate or not. However, if you have any further queries or would like to
discuss any aspect of the study, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my
supervisor, Dr. Jana Kreppner (contact details below).

Background to the study

Nurture Groups are an intervention provided by schools to support children's
social, emotional and behavioural development. Previous research into Nurture Groups
has found them to be an effective intervention within primary schools. However, there is
only a limited amount of research which looks at the impact of Nurture Groups for pupils
in secondary schools. In particular, this study is interested in understanding the impact of
Nurture Group attendance on peer relationships and sense of belonging. It will seek to gain
the perceptions of young people who do and who do not attend Nurture Groups.

What does the study involve?

Your child will be invited to participate in an individual semi-structured interview which will be conducted by myself within the school environment. The interview will involve discussion around nurture group provision, friendships and sense of belonging at school. The interview will last for no more than 30-45 minutes. As a thank you for their participation, your child will receive a £5 Amazon gift voucher.

Are there any risks involved in my child's participation?

The researcher has attempted to ensure that any risks involved in your child's participation in this study have been minimised. In the unlikely event that children may feel upset when discussing the school environment, friendships and Nurture groups, I will work with school staff to ensure appropriate support is offered.

What happens to the data?

All information collected from your child will remain fully confidential and assigned an anonymous number. All data are kept on a password protected computer at the University of Southampton and only myself and my supervisor Dr. Jana Kreppner will have access. Paper copies of the data and consent forms will be stored securely in the file store at the University of Southampton. The data will be used purely for research purposes, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998 and data storage policy at the University of Southampton, it will be kept for 10 years following completion of the study before being securely destroyed. Once the project has been completed schools will be sent a summary of the final research report.   All information gathered will be strictly confidential and no names will be mentioned in the write up of this research.

Does my child have to participate?

No. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to allow your child to participate. Should you give permission for your child to participate but subsequently change your mind, you may withdraw your child from the study at any point without giving any reason. All children who have been given their parents' permission to participate in this study will be verbally asked if they want to participate before they complete any tasks and asked to sign a consent form. They will also be reminded that they can choose to discontinue at any point.

Has this study been given ethical approval?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Southampton Ethics Committee and has been given independent ethical approval to proceed. I have been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau and have been given permission to work with children. [NAME OF HEADTEACHER] has also given permission for this research to be undertaken at [NAME OF SCHOOL].

What happens if something goes wrong?

Should any concerns arise or you feel the need to make a complaint you may contact the chair of the Ethics Committee, Psychology, University of Southampton, SO17 1BJ, UK. Phone: +44 (0)23 8059 3856, email: fshs-rso@soton.ac.uk

Appendix E

If you are happy for your child to take part in this project we would appreciate if you could complete the attached parent consent form and return this to your child's class teacher by [DATE].

Yours faithfully,

Karen O'Farrell

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Southampton

Contact details

Karen O'Farrell   kjof1n15@soton.ac.uk

Supervisor   Dr. Jana Kreppner

                         E: j.kreppner@soton.ac.uk

                         T: 023 80594603

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PARENTAL CONSENT FORM (Version 1, 12/04/18)

Researcher names: Karen O'Farrell

ERGO Study ID number: 40936

RGO reference number:

Please initial the boxes if you agree with the statements:

I have read the parent information letter (Version 1, 12/04/18) and clearly

understand the purpose of the study and I understand that my child's participation in this

study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw him/her at any point during the

study without reason or penalty.

I clearly understand what will be required of my child

I also understand that my child's permission to participate in the study will be

verbally sought and my child can choose to discontinue with the study if they so wish.

I understand that arrangements have been made to ensure my child's

confidentiality and privacy I am aware that I have the right to see what has been written.

The researcher has made clear any risks which may be involved in my child's

participation in this study. I understand that arrangements have been made for the

secure storage of data and for its disposal.

Appendix E

_____

Parent/Guardian's signature   _____

Name   _____

Date   _____

Child's name   _____

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR CHILD'S FORM TUTOR BY (INSERT DATE)

Appendix F   Staff Information Letters and Consent Forms

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

School Staff Information Sheet (Version 2, 23/10/18)

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS AND STAFF ON NURTURE GROUP PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

ERGO Study ID number: 40936

RGO reference number:

School name and address

Date

Dear School Staff Member,

My name is Karen O'Farrell and I am a trainee Educational Psychologist studying at the University of Southampton. As part of my course I am required to complete a piece of research for my thesis. My project is exploring the perceptions of pupils on Nurture Group provision within mainstream secondary schools. I will be seeking the perceptions of both children who attend/have attended a Nurture Group and the perceptions of children who have not accessed a Nurture Group.

Within the study, I am also interested in gaining the perceptions of school staff in order to help develop a rich picture of peer relationships and Nurture Group provision within your school. I am therefore writing to ask if you would be happy to be included within my study. I hope to provide all the information that you will need in order for you to make an informed decision about whether you would be happy to participate or not. However, if you have any further queries or would like to discuss any aspect of the study, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisor, Dr. Jana Kreppner (contact details below).

Appendix F

Background to the study

Nurture Groups are an intervention provided by schools to support children's social, emotional and behavioural development. Previous research into Nurture Groups has found them to be an effective intervention within primary schools. However, there is only a limited amount of research which looks at the impact of Nurture Groups for pupils in secondary schools. In particular, this study is interested in understanding the impact of Nurture Group attendance on peer relationships and sense of belonging. It will seek to gain the perceptions of young people who do and who do not attend Nurture Groups and of school staff.

What does the study involve?

You will be invited to participate in an individual semi-structured interview which will be conducted by myself within the school environment. The interview will involve discussion around school provision relating to friendships and sense of belonging at school for children with and without social, emotional and behavioural needs. The interview will consist of a series of questions and will last for about 30-45 minutes.

What happens to the data?

All information collected from your interview will remain fully confidential and assigned an anonymous number. All data are kept on a password protected computer at the University of Southampton and only myself and my supervisor Dr. Jana Kreppner will have access. Paper copies of the data and consent forms will be stored securely in the file store at the University of Southampton. The data will be used purely for research purposes, and in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation guidance for research and data storage policy at the University of Southampton, it will be kept for 10 years following completion of the study before being securely destroyed. Once the project has been completed schools will be sent a summary of the final research report. All information gathered will be strictly confidential and no names will be mentioned in the write up of this research.

Does I have to participate?

No. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. Should you decide that you would like to participate but subsequently change your mind, you may withdraw from the study at any point without giving any reason.

Has this study been given ethical approval?

This project has been reviewed by the University of Southampton Ethics Committee and has been given independent ethical approval to proceed. I have been checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service and have been given permission to work with children. [NAME OF HEADTEACHER] has also given permission for this research to be undertaken at [NAME OF SCHOOL].

What happens if something goes wrong?

Should any concerns arise or you feel the need to make a complaint you may contact the chair of the Ethics Committee, Psychology, University of Southampton, SO17 1BJ, UK. Phone: +44 (0)23 8059 3856, email: fshs-rso@soton.ac.uk

If you are happy to take part in this project we would appreciate if you could complete the attached consent form and return this to your headteacher.

Yours faithfully,

Karen O'Farrell

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Southampton

Contact details

Karen O'Farrell   kjof1n15@soton.ac.uk

Supervisor   Dr. Jana Kreppner

                             E: j.kreppner@soton.ac.uk

                             T: 023 80594603

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Southampton

Appendix F

CONSENT FORM   Version 2, 23/10/18

Study title: EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS AND STAFF ON NURTURE GROUP PROVISION IN MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Researcher name: Karen O'Farrell

ERGO number: 40936

Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):

I have read and understood the information sheet (Version 1, 11/10/18 and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	
I agree to take part in the interview for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet and understand that this will be recorded using an audio voice recording device.	
I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time and for any reason without my participation rights being affected.	
I understand that I may be quoted directly in reports of the research but that I will not be directly identified (e.g. that my name will not be used).	
I understand that taking part in the study involves audio recording which will be transcribed and then destroyed for the purposes set out in the participation information sheet.	

Name of participant (print name)...

Signature of participant…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Date……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Name of researcher (print name)………………………………………………………………………………

Signature of researcher………………………………………………………………………………

Date………………………………………………………………………………………………

PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR SCHOOL'S HEADTEACHER BY (INSERT DATE)

Appendix F

Appendix G   Ethical Approval

Appendix H   Pupil Assent and Pupil, Parent and Staff

Debrief Forms

ERGO Study ID number:

RGO reference number:

CHILD ASSENT FORM (to be read by children) (Version 1, 17/04/18)

Hello!

My name is Karen and I am a student at Southampton University. As part of my studies, I am completing a research project to find out what pupils think about how school provides for all its pupils and what may influence how young people at school experience friendships. I would be really grateful if you could help me with this by joining a group discussion and sharing your thoughts.

The focus group will last for no more than 1 hour. It is up to you whether you would like to help me out; it's not a problem if you don't want to. If you start the discussion and then change your mind then you can stop at any time, just let me know.

Please ask me if you have any questions or if there is anything you are worried about.

_____

If you are happy to help me, please answer the questions below and write your name.

Please circle the answer you agree with:

Has this project been explained to you?   YES / NO

Do you understand what the project is about?   YES   /   NO

Have any questions you had been answered clearly?   YES / NO

Appendix H

Do you understand it's ok to stop taking part at any time?   YES   /
NO

If you answered **yes** to all the questions, please SIGN your name to show
you are happy to take part:

Name _____

Thank you so much for your help!

ERGO Study ID number:

RGO reference number:

CHILD ASSENT FORM (to be read by children) (Version 1, 17/04/18)

Hello!

My name is Karen and I am a student at Southampton University. As part of my studies, I am completing a research project to find out about what pupils think about Nurture Groups and how they might affect friendships at school. I would be really grateful if you could help me with this by answering some questions to share your thoughts.

The interview will take no more than 45 minutes to complete. It is up to you whether you would like to help me out; it's not a problem if you don't want to. If you start the interview and then change your mind then you can stop at any time, just let me know.

Please ask me if you have any questions or if there is anything you are worried about.

_____

If you are happy to help me, please answer the questions below and write your name.

Please circle the answer you agree with:

Has this project been explained to you?   YES / NO

Do you understand what the project is about?   YES /
NO

Have any questions you had been answered clearly?   YES / NO

Do you understand it's ok to stop taking part at any time?   YES /
NO

If you answered **yes** to all the questions, please SIGN your name to show you are happy to take part:

Appendix H

Name _____

Thank you so much for your help!

ERGO Study ID number: 40936

RGO reference number:

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Nurture Group Debrief Form (Version 2, 24/05/18)

🙂

Hello!

I wanted to say thank you for helping me to carry out my research project. I hope you found it interesting.

I wanted to find out what you thought about how Nurture Groups fit into secondary schools and how they might affect friendships and a sense of belonging. By participating in my research you have helped me to do this.

If you have any further questions about the project please talk to (NAME) Deputy Inclusion Lead. Also, if you have any worries in relation to friendships and your own emotional well-being, the following organisation can provide you with free, safe and anonymous online support and advice: www.kooth.com

Thank you,

Karen

Appendix H

UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

PARENT DEBRIEF FORM (Version 2, 24/05/18)

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS ON NURTURE GROUPS IN
MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

ERGO Study ID number: 40936

RGO reference number:

Dear Parent/ Guardian

Thank you for giving me permission to work with your child as part of my research. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of Nurture Group intervention on peer relationships and sense of belonging. The aim of gathering this information was to see whether Nurture Groups are a beneficial intervention in supporting young people's social and emotional experience of school. If you feel your child has any concerns surrounding what has been discussed during this study, 'kooth' is a free, safe and anonymous online support organisation which your child can contact for advice. Information for parents can be found via the website: www.kooth.com

Following data analysis and completion of the research, a summary of the project will be shared with all schools who took part in the study. This report may include anonymised data of the children who took part in the research. As previously stated, please be reassured that individual children will not be named in any data shared with the schools or with Southampton University.

I do hope that your child enjoyed being a part of this study. Should any concerns arise or you feel the need to make a complaint you may contact the chair of the Ethics Committee, Psychology, University of Southampton, SO17 1BJ, UK. Phone: +44 (0)23 8059 3856, email:

fshs-rso@soton.ac.uk.

Once again, thank you for your co-operation in this study and if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me (details below).

Yours faithfully,

Karen O'Farrell

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Southampton.

Contact details

Karen O'Farrell   kjof1n15@soton.ac.uk

Appendix H

UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

SCHOOL STAFF DEBRIEF FORM (Version 1, 11/10/18)

EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUPILS ON NURTURE GROUPS IN MAINSTREAM SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

ERGO Study ID number: 40936

RGO reference number:

Dear School Staff Member,

Thank you for working with me as part of my research. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of Nurture Group intervention on peer relationships and sense of belonging. The aim of gathering this information was to see whether Nurture Groups are a beneficial intervention in supporting young people's social and emotional experience of school. I very much hope that you enjoyed the opportunity to share your thoughts and knowledge around your school's provision.

Following data analysis and completion of the research, a summary of the project will be shared with your school. This report may include anonymised data of the children and adults who took part in the research. As previously stated, please be reassured that individual children or adults will not be named in any data shared with the schools or with Southampton University.

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Once again, thank you for your co-operation in this study and if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me (details below).

Yours faithfully,

Karen O'Farrell

Trainee Educational Psychologist

University of Southampton.

Contact details

Karen O'Farrell   kjof1n15@soton.ac.uk

Appendix I   Transcription Service Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT – BETWEEN XX TRANSCRIPTION LIMITED (the Contractor) and the CLIENT (the Company)

1. We hereby undertake not, during the term of our agreement to provide consultancy services to the client ('the Company'), or after its termination, for any reason unless expressly authorised by the Company, or required by law, to disclose to any unauthorized person, nor use, any confidential information relating to or received from the Company, its staff, its clients, its intellectual property and any information contained on company systems.

2. Such information includes but is not limited to financial information, information held on databases concerning candidates, clients or information resources, staff, candidate or client personal files and research data. Information is also confidential information if it is clearly marked as such or by its very nature is evidently confidential.

3. We understand that the use and disclosure of all information about identifiable living individuals is governed by the Data Protection Act. We will not use any personal data we acquire during our work for any purpose that is or may be incompatible with the purposes specified in this agreement.

4. We understand that we are required to keep all confidential and personal data securely.

5. We hereby undertake to ensure that all records provided or created for the purposes of this agreement, including any back-up records, are passed back to the Company contact or deleted as directed, once we have received confirmation that the contract has been satisfactorily completed and all the required information has been provided in accordance with the Company's wishes.

6. We understand that the Company reserves the right to take legal action against any breach of confidence, and will proceed with upmost speed to protect its' interests in the event of any such breach.

Signed

Name

On behalf of XX Transcription Limited

Dated: 29.11.2018

Appendix I

Appendix J   Nurture Group Pupil Interview Script

There will be a **preliminary activity** which involves linking feeling cards to different areas of the school environment (e.g. nurture group, tutor group, playground areas, canteen, assembly, classrooms) which will be represented by photographs.

1. How would you describe your school to someone else?

2. Tell me about school – what is it like?

3. Tell me about NG *(or its name)* – what is it like?

    a.   How long have you been attending NG?

    b.   What sort of things do you do in NG?

    c.   How would you describe NG to others?

    5. What can you tell me about whether being in the NG helps/ has helped you at school?

    o Tell me about a time when NG has/hasn't helped? Tell me about it (further prompt – tell me more about it…)

    6. Tell me about the other people in your NG.

How do you get along with other young people in NG?

And how do you get along with the staff in NG?

o What else can you tell me about this?

    7. How do you get along with other young people outside of NG?

Appendix J

o Tell me about a time when you talked with (hung out with/socialized with/played with/worked with….?) What was it like? What happened?

o Tell me about your friendships at school. Who are your friends? What are they like? What sort of things do you do with your friends?

8. What do you like about NG? What is the best thing about NG?

o Tell me about a time when …

9. What do you not like so much about NG? What doesn't work so well?

o   Tell me about a time when….

10. How has being in NG helped you in other areas?

o   Tell me about a time when…

11. What are your views about how NG could be improved?

A positive mood activity will be completed.

The young person will be thanked for their time and asked if there is anything they would like to ask or add.

Appendix K Staff Interview Script

The researcher will build rapport with the interviewee using small talk – thanking them for meeting with them today, asking how their day is going etc

The researcher will remind the interviewee about the purpose of the interview and the fact that they are free to withdraw from the process at any time.

The researcher will check the interviewee is happy to proceed (verbal consent).

1. Tell me about your role at school.

   - How long have you worked here?

2. How would you describe this school to colleagues at other schools?
   - What is it like?
   - What are the pupils who come here like?
   - What are your colleagues like?
   - How would you describe the leadership team?
3. Is there anything you consider to be particularly 'special' about this school?
4. Do you think the school has a particular ethos?
   - How would you describe that?
5. What do you know about pupil relationships within the school?
   - Are you able to comment on the quality of those relationships?
   - How do you think this compares to other schools?
6. Can you tell me about whether this school supports pupil relationships?
   - How?
     o Can you tell me about school policies which relate to bullying/peer conflict
     o Are these effective?
7. What can you tell me about how the school supports pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs?
   - Do you think this approach/these approaches are well-embedded into the school?
   - Why might that be?
   - Do you think all/most staff feel informed about support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs within the school?
8. What can you tell me about the Nurture Group?
   - Which children might attend Nurture Group?
   - Are you able to describe what you think the aims of the Nurture Group are?
   - Do you think Nurture Group is a useful intervention for pupils?
   o If so, why, or how?

Appendix K

- Do you think Nurture Group has an impact on peer relationships?
  o If yes, why or how?
  o Can you tell me more about this?
9. If the school did not have a Nurture Group, what other support systems or interventions might be needed/ would you like to see?
10. Is there anything you think should be changed or improved about Nurture Group?
  - Can you say more?

Thank you for your time. Is there any other information you would like to share about school? Are there any questions you would like to ask?

Appendix L   Warm-up Activity for Individual Pupil Interviews (examples)

NG Pupils were given a selection of photographs representing different areas within a secondary school:

1. Canteen
2. Tutor group
3. Outdoor meet-up area
4. Assembly
5. Library
6. Nurture Group room
7. Field area
8. Classroom

They were asked to sort each photograph by matching them with an emoji (sad, happy, calm, worried or lonely) which best described how they felt when they were in that area. Some of the pupils asked to add '

Appendix L

Appendix M   Focus Group Discussion Schedule

Introduction to the Focus Group.

o Purpose and topic
o Reminder – anyone is free to leave/recording of discussion
o Rules: one person speaks at a time (use of talking stick)
o Confidentiality and mutual respect within the group

Round-Robin to introduce names (aids audio recording for transcription purposes).

Warm-up metaphor activity: Pupils are presented with a visual of a cake and all its' separate ingredients (eggs, flour, butter, sugar, baking powder). They are told that the cake represents a school which provides a supportive environment for pupils and facilitates the development and maintenance of positive peer relationships. Through discussion and the sharing of ideas, pupils then identify what the different ingredients would represent.

The group is asked to sort the ingredients into a 'Diamond 5', so identifying the most important, least important and ingredients of mid-importance.

Finally, the question "What if some delicious icing and sprinkles were added to the cake? What might these represent?

Focus Group Discussion Questions

1. Tell me about your school. What is school like?
    a.   How would you describe what your school is like to others?
2. Tell me about the young people at your school.
    o   What are they like?
    o   How do they all get on with one another?
    o   Why do you think that is?
3. What about friendships at your school, what are they like? (Why?)
    o   How, does your school support friendships and positive relationships between pupils?
    o   Give me an example of when the school supported good positive relationships/friendships. (What did you think about this?)
    o   What effect does this have?
4. What areas do you have where you can meet up with friends at school? - **generate a list**

- o Tell me about these areas. What are they like? And what is it like to be there?
- o Do you think all students enjoy these social areas? Why?

5. What do you know about how your school provides for children with particular/extra needs? - **talk in pairs and feed back**
   - o Can you tell me more about this?
   - o What examples can you give me?

6. What do you know about the NG (name) at your school?
   - a. Tell me about NGs (name).
   - b. Do you know anyone who goes to NG?
   - c. Have you ever been into the NG room?
   - d. What do you think it is like to be part of your NG (name)?

7. How do you think NG helps pupils who attend NG? – **talk in pairs and feed back**
   - o What examples can you give me? – **post-it recording activity**

8. How do you think NG affects friendships?

9. What else do you think your school could do for its pupils?
   - a. What could you do?

Finishing activity – how do you think it would feel to be a student who found friendships difficult at school? – **talk in pairs and feedback** (try to develop empathy).

Complete positive mood activity.

Reminder re. confidentiality at the end and a thank you for cooperation and participation.

Appendix N   Metaphor Activity for Focus Group (example)

The pupils were asked what the ingredients might represent if the whole cake was a secondary school which successfully supported friendships pupil relationships. All pupils shared ideas to identify what they thought each ingredient would be.

The photograph represents their final agreement. As can be seen when they were asked to order the ingredients from most to least important, they decided that all the ingredients were necessary for a successful whole.
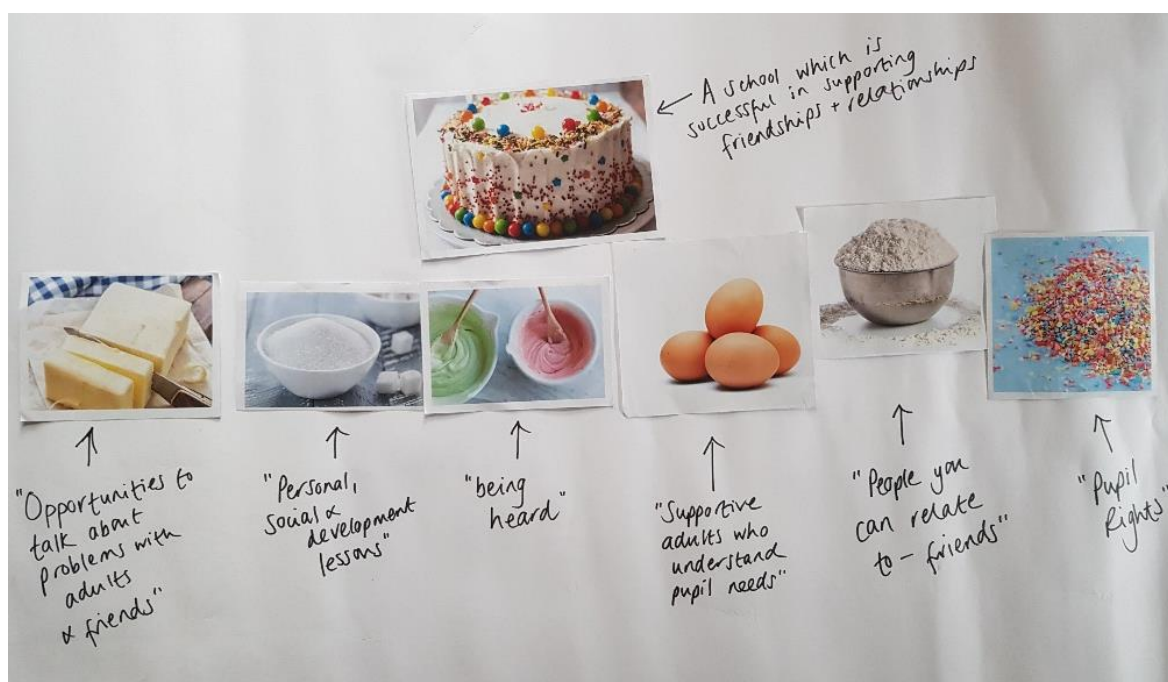
Appendix O   Post-it Note Activity for Focus Groups

(examples of responses)
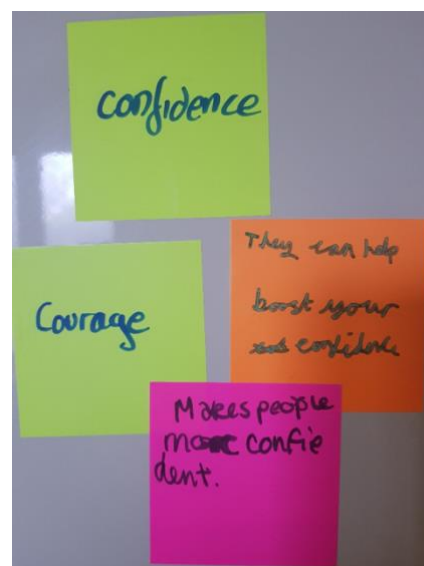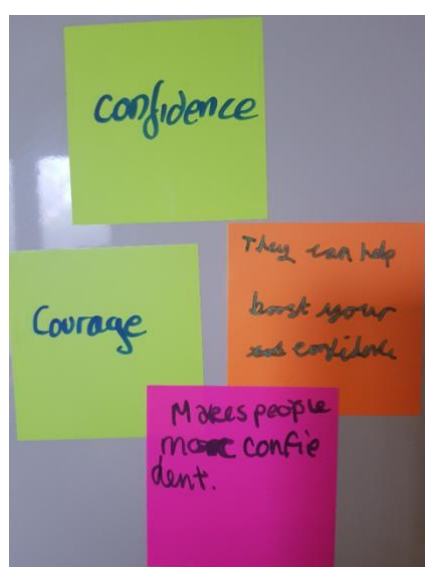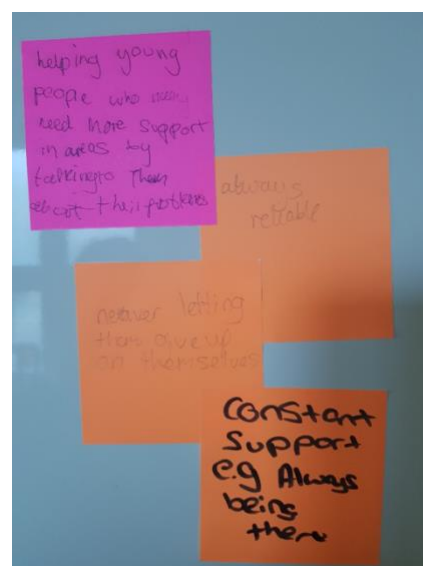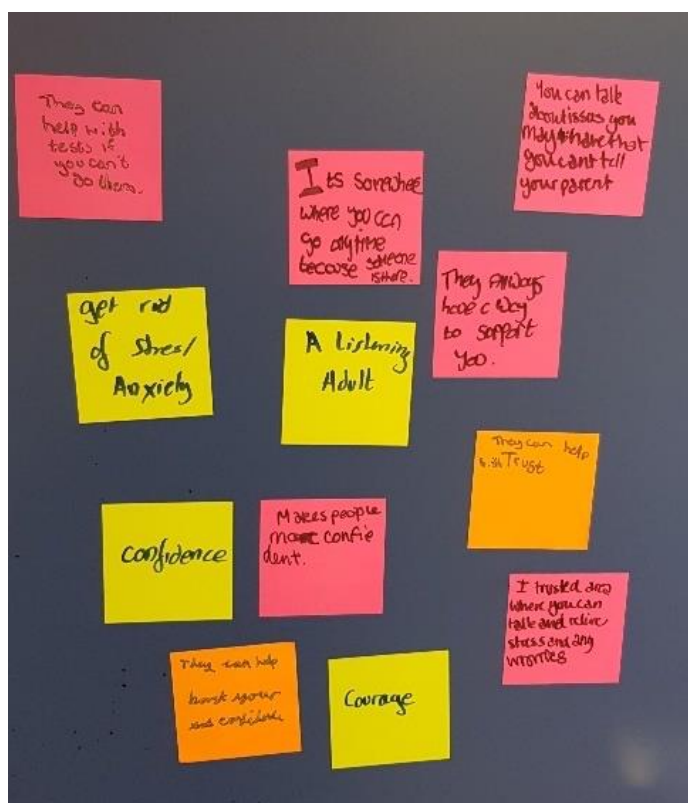
Appendix P   Example of transcript with initial coding

Appendix P

32   RES: It's very relaxed and if you've had like a hard day and you want to talk to someone they're very
33   open in the, they won't judge you for what you say. And yeah it's just easy to express yourself to
34   Miss Xxxx and Mr Xxxx, Mrs Rigby, Mr Rigby. It's just a really nice place to be sometimes.

35   INT: **Okay, excellent okay. So how long have you been, so you've been at the school for a year**
36   **and a bit. How long have you been coming up to the nurture group area?**

37   RES: Probably since the start of year 7.

38   INT: **Since the start of year 7, okay and what sort of things do you do when you're up here?**

39   RES: Well erm, we come up here, I only come up here for cover lessons or I get a slip to, by Mr Xxxx to
40   ask he comes and, we come talk about my day and how I'm feeling.

41   INT: **And is that, does that happen regularly?**

42   RES: Yeah it happens every day?

43   INT: **Okay yeah. So once a day you'll, you get a set time and is that helpful?**

44   RES: Yeah it's really helpful.

45   INT: **Yeah. How? Can you tell me a bit more about that?**

46   RES: So about why I come up here?

47   INT: **About how it's helpful when you have that conversation, when you're called up.**

Microsoft Office User
NG as a relaxed space

Microsoft Office User
NG as non-judgemental

Microsoft Office User
NG staff easy to talk to

Microsoft Office User
NG used when pupils have cover teachers

Microsoft Office User
Talk about how feeling

Microsoft Office User
Daily support

48 RES: Because some, I've had, I've had problems at home and like I wasn't really, didn't really want to
49   talk to my mum about it and erm, it was about my dad. And then I was talking to Mr Xxxx about it
50   and I found it a lot easier to express myself and then he can talk to my mum about it.

NG staff easy to talk to.
Can enable communication with parents.

51 INT: **Brilliant.**

52 RES: And then I didn't have a really awkward conversation with her.

53 INT: **Okay that does sound helpful.**

54 RES: Yeah it is.

55 INT: **So if you had to describe the nurture provision, the nurture group here to other people who**
56   **didn't know anything about it how would you describe it?**

57 RES: In, yeah like I said before a relaxed place. Sometimes it can get a bit hyper in here with some of
58   the year 7's but there's always people around that you can talk to. And if you come in here you're
59   going to get told positive things. Like there's lots of kids who sit in, work on computers who will
60   always make you laugh. They're year 9's and like they can be really silly, they can make mature
61   jokes and like really fun up here.

Always someone to talk to in NG

Positive support/communication

62 INT: **Okay. It sounds, that sounds good, okay. So how, can you tell me a bit more about whether**
63   **being in the nurture provision and accessing that has helped you at school and if so how**
64   **that's kind of helped you.**

65 RES: Because I used to struggle in like socialising with people quite a lot and I came up here and there
66   was other kids like me. And because I spent time, more and more time up here I got to know more
67   of them and I got more confident to start getting involved with like sports and stuff. So it's, it's
68   helpful, it's really helpful to get to know.

Being with other pupils who have difficulties

NG helping to increase confidence and involvement in other clubs

Appendix P

69   INT: So what sports are you involved with now?

70   RES: Erm, I do football, cricket, I do, I do outside, out of school, not sports clubs but I do, I don't know if
71   you do [unclear 00:04:33]

72   INT: Okay yeah.

73   RES: Yeah I do that sometimes.

74   INT: Brilliant okay. So it sounds like it's kind of given you a bit of confidence has it?

75   RES: It gives you a lot of confidence.

76   INT: Okay and how do you think it manages to that then?

77   RES: It's just cause you get used to the people who are up here and Mr Xxxx he like, he'll get, I've never   **Microsoft Office User**
78   been in one but sometimes there's group activities where kids will come up here and they will all   NG group activities – playing Uno, socialising
79   play like Uno or something and they all socialise.

80   INT: Yeah, do you think it helps with social skills?

81   RES: Yeah.

82   INT: And being at ease with other people is that what you mean?   **Microsoft Office User**
                                                                                                                          Developing confidence
83   RES: Yeah like they build your confidence in here. Like put your trust in them to talk to you about…   **Microsoft Office User**
                                                                                                                          Sense of trust
84   INT: Okay. Is there a time when nurture group might not have helped? Where it hasn't been
85   helpful?

86 RES: I think the only time is probably when we've gone over things that have happened in the past
87   sometimes. Sometimes when you're talking in like a meeting they bring it back up and sometimes
88   it doesn't really help just getting reminded of that.

Microsoft Office User
Sometimes being reminded of past difficulties isn't helpful

89 **INT: Okay that's interesting. Can you think of a specific example of that?**

90 RES: Erm, not really.

91 **INT: Not really but you just have a sense that occasionally that's brought back, you've moved on**
92   **from that is that what you're saying and it's not going to help to talk about it.**

93 RES: Yeah.

94 **INT: Okay. Erm, so does that mean then that you think that nurture groups very much about**
95   **what's going on in the here and now in lots of ways?**

96 RES: Erm, it can be in some occasions. Like if I had an argument with a teacher I would come up here
97   and we would talk about it and then we'll go, like go to the teachers and I'll apologise or we will sort
98   something out that have been in the lesson. Kind of yeah.

Microsoft Office User
NG supporting pupil-teacher relationships

99   **INT: Okay, brilliant. Right so tell me about the other people in the nurture provision tell me about**
100   **how do you get along with the other young people up here? You've already mentioned a**
101   **bit.**

102 RES: Yes it' normally Uno because we have a lot of fun because sometimes we will play in teams and if
103   you like put down, I don't know you give them like put a plus 2 down so they have to pick 2 up cards
104   up that they can get annoyed with you. But then you will find it funny and everyone else will. So
105   you will get along. Uno helps socialise. And other games like on the computers you can play with
106   your friends and stuff like that.

Microsoft Office User
Getting along with others. Support of social skills.

Appendix P

107   INT: Okay and what about erm, getting along with the staff up here?

108   RES: The staff are really nice up here. They're really supportive as well. They try and encourage you
109   with activities like to get involved. Sometimes, in year 7 I wasn't very confident with doing after
110   school clubs, now I sort of, I prefer doing after school clubs because they actually can be fun
111   because I wasn't, I had a couple of friends but not many. But then after I've done the after clubs I
112   know a lot of people and a lot of people know me and I like a lot of people.

113   INT: Okay so you think it's enabled you make more friends, okay. Okay so thinking about friends
114   then how do you get along outside of nurture group provision?

115   RES: Like in corridors?

116   INT: Yeah in general, how do you get along with other young people?

117   RES: We like probably normally playing games outside we like, lots of us enjoy playing a game called
118   manhunt.

119   INT: I know it yeah.

120   RES: Yeah we play that and there's, I met another, a new person who came, I don't, I can't remember
121   his name now he left though but we were playing manhunt and he really enjoyed manhunt too and
122   lots of us like really liked him. Because there wasn't many people who liked playing manhunt and
123   then when new people play it's just fun and it's, I guess it can be harder to play.

124   INT: So when you play, when you're hanging out and playing things like manhunt is that with
125   people that you engage with up here or is a separate group of friends or is a mixture of
126   both?

Microsoft Office User
NG staff viewed as supportive and encouraging.

Microsoft Office User
Influencing a sense of Belonging

127   RES: It's like a mixture of both.

Microsoft Office User
Mixed friendship groups

128   **INT: And how does that work is that comfortable, does that work well?**

129   RES: Yeah it works like really well.

130   **INT: Yeah so there's no, no..**

131   RES: Because some people don't, some people come up here for like personal reasons, some people
132   come up here for like support and other people don't need that but I still get along with like let's say
133   some of my other friends who don't come up here as well, like equally as I come, as all my other
134   friends who, who come up here.

Microsoft Office User
Mixed group of friends

135   **INT: Do you think they have an understanding of that's just something that works for you or…**

136   RES: Yeah.

137   **INT: How do they see it?**

Microsoft Office User
Lack of stigma

138   RES: They don't really judge you about anything like that. That's like, it's quite a nice environment to be
139   with your friends because they don't really judge. Because I go, because I'm in lessons with quite
140   a few of my friends and they don't really judge me when I get slips to come up here. They just don't
141   think anything other than "oh Charlie, he's going to talk to Mr Xxxx". Because Mr Xxxx is like really
142   well known because he's really nice and Mrs Xxxx is too.

Microsoft Office User
NG staff known and liked by pupils throughout the school.

143   **INT: Yeah absolutely. Okay.**

Microsoft Office User
NG seen as a good place to be – break and lunchtime drop-in

144   RES: Some people can be quite jealous because I come up here. Like I've got a friend who didn't
145   originally come up here but then he start coming up here for break and lunch and he started

Page **8** of **13**

Appendix Q   Emerging Codes

Colours indicate initial thoughts around codes with similar themes

Codes from NG pupil interviews:

School as a confusing environment sometimes

NG supporting transition into lessons

NG as a safe place

NG supporting new friendships

Caring nature of NG staff

NG staff having time for pupils

Lunchtimes ok in school

Friendship groups including NG and non NG friends

NG as a place to talk about difficulties from outside of schoo

Difficulty making friends in school sometimes

NG as a relaxed environment to be in

NG staff are easy to talk to

NG as a non-judgemental place to be

NG support when pupils have cover teachers

NG as a place to talk about feelings

Daily support in NG

NG staff enabling communication with home

NG staff always available

NG as a positive space

NG as an environment to be with other pupils who also have struggles

NG helping to increase confidence

NG as a social space, supporting development of social skills

Sense of trust with NG staff

NG supporting pupil-teacher relationships through open communication

NG group supporting a wider sense of school belonging

Lack of stigma attached to NG provision

Popularity of NG staff throughout the wider school

NG seen as a 'cool' place to be

Skills of NG staff in supporting pupils to feel calm and supported

Generalisation of skills to the wider school

NG as a place to talk (to staff and other pupils)

Positive impact of mixing with different year groups

NG as a drop in

Possibility of stigma attached to NG amongst some pupils (but able to ignore because pupil knows it helps them)

Feeling included in NG

NG supporting to develop new perspectives/being more positive

NG supporting peer relationships/friendships

Kindness of NG staff

Family feel of NG

Impact on motivation/ long term goals

Codes from Staff interviews:

Good links to families

Community links

Headteacher influence – considers the whole child

Influence of local catchment

Inclusive nature of school

Investment in pastoral side of school

Availability of staff for pupils to talk to (links with counsellors through NG)

Response to cuts of other services – school invested in supporting vulnerable pupils

Holistic approach of school

Celebrating pupil achievements

Buddy system supporting pupil relationships

Restorative approach

NG principles being embedded into school policy

Peer mentoring and rights respecting school

Skills of NG staff in their approach to vulnerable pupils

Pupil ambassadors to support positive pupil relationships

NG supporting pupils in subject lessons

NG supporting pupils to self-regulate

School policy supporting staff-pupil relationships

School investment in staff to support SEMH needs

NG impacting positively on attendance

Staff communication around SEMH needs – a work in progress

NG supporting Y7 transition

School staff understanding NG support and links to difficulties at home

NG as a safe space

NG successfully preventing exclusion

Positive impact of NG on behaviour

Huge impact on Y11 pupils

Dedication of NG staff

NG environment understood and valued by other staff

Accessibility of NG as a drop-in lessens stigma

NG valued

Importance of pupil and staff wellbeing recognised by SMT

Support amongst NG staff

NG students supportive of one another

Positive outlook of NG staff

Working within NG rewarding for staff

Pupil voice valued throughout school

Pastoral team supporting pupil relationships

ELSA support with friendship

Appendix Q

Staff not always fully informed of pupil SEMH needs - too much information/ no time for staff to read

ELSA sharing information directly with other teaching staff

Staff understanding of attachment needs – pupil lack of security at home

Support for pupils to generalise and maintain skills learnt in NG

NG staff modelling positive relationships

Preventative work within school (specialist staff)

NG helps pupils to consider the perspective of others

School sense of community

Responsiveness of subject teachers to advice for supporting pupils with additional needs

Staff involvement in change/new initiatives

Joined up approach of staff

Child-centred approach of school

Restorative practice

NG as accessible/a check-in

School communication system re pupil needs is good

NG supporting pupils at times of crisis

NG helping to embed supportive strategies

Importance of peer modelling within NG

Staff understanding of how NG supports

NG links to other agencies e.g. counselling

Possibility of NG linking more closely with SEN?

Supportive colleagues throughout school

Low staff turnover

Pupils central to school identity

Other staff visiting NG to aid understanding of pupil needs

Close bonds formed between pupils within NG

NG staff modelling values

Behaviour expectations within NG supporting peer relations

Codes from Focus groups:

Support and understanding of school staff

Availability of extracurricular groups

Procedure for times when difficulties occur within school e.g. fights between students

Buddying system supporting friendships

Easy to make new friends at school

Mixing with different year groups (buddy system extending friendship opportunities)

Social spaces within school – different places accessible

NG viewed as accessible

NG as a place to come and talk to people

Pupil awareness of the needs experienced by some pupils who access NG

NG as a place to be listened to

Some awareness of what might happen within NG

Understanding that NG supports pupils with difficulties at home

Not really knowing what NG does

NG supporting pupils through traumatic experiences e.g. bereavements

NG supporting with academic needs e.g. a space to work in for pupils who experience test anxiety

NG helping pupils to build confidence/to make new friends

School timetable (split) may limit friendship opportunities

Training/skill of staff considered important by pupils

Opportunities for pupils to be able to talk about problems to staff seen as important

Staff understanding of particular needs

Support from peers

Equality valued

Pupil voice related to supportive school

Older year groups questioning true intention of school policy/action – is it just about trying to attract more pupils/being seen to do the right thing or is it really about supporting current pupils?

School acting on pupil voice (not always followed through)

Appendix Q

Inequality of pupil voice (more vulnerable pupils not always heard)

School wanting to project a certain image

More opportunities for all students to be heard/listened to (not all pupils would feel comfortable accessing NG)

Pupils experiencing a hierarchy of pupils – some pupils more able academically and in sports etc

Pressure experienced by pupils in Year 11

Lack of sensitivity by staff to pressure felt by Year 11's (pressure on staff to produce results)

Some pupils feeling isolated within and outside of lessons (also impacted by school timetabling/setting)

More able pupils feeling less understood/less able to talk to staff about their feelings

Some stigma attached to NG – links to the hierarchy of 'popular' students

NG viewed as supportive

Positive view of NG staff – pupils are able to talk to them

Older pupils feeling there is a lack of social space within school

Pressures related to group identity/belonging

Social pressures for older pupils impacting on accessing social spaces/friendships

Buddying supporting a sense of belonging

NG not accessible to everyone who might need support

Understanding of how NG has helped particular pupils

NG always available

NG supporting pupils to cope with difficult feelings

NG respected by pupils

Popularity of NG staff amongst pupils

NG as a safe space

Restorative approach of NG (supporting pupil relationships)

NG supporting positive relationships

NG supporting new friendships

NG supporting communication skills

Some stigma attached to NG (for a few pupils only)

School not always following expected policy e.g. detention given instead of restorative opportunity

Wider access to NG could be useful for some pupils

Sometimes there is a lack of communication within school which leads to frustration for pupils

# Appendix R   Thematic Maps for each Stakeholder

Group

Emerging themes from NG pupil interviews:

Appendix R

Emerging themes from FGs:

Emerging themes from staff interviews:

Appendix S   Coding Manual

Main Theme	Sub-theme	*Description*/codes included	Quotes taken from transcripts: *Staff, Nurture Group pupils, Focus Group Pupils*
Whole School Approach	Staff understanding	***School staff appear to have an understanding of NGs (the approach taken and theory and principles underlying NGs) which is developed through whole staff training and the embedding of the principles of NGs into school policy.*** Staff understanding of how NG supports NG principles being embedded into school policy School staff understanding NG support and links to difficulties at home NG environment understood and valued by other staff	*So it is a successful intervention because it's, it's, there's providing a safe place for those students to come and they will do very important work on the nurture principals and it will socialise them and enable them to erm, perhaps access mainstream where they might disappear from mainstream. With the role, with the aim that they go and then they get through and they get to year 11 and they produce some good results for them. And this place is very good at making those students, make progress over that time on their social and mental health. But also actually the, the day to day basis of just organising yourself because these students come from quite haphazard backgrounds sometimes. **Staff 1*** *But the work they do with vulnerable students who erm, you know people who are around and about today is fantastic and the nurture principles have been part, a really important part of that and the kids know them as well. Erm, and that's been really, really important erm, and they've managed to successfully get the staff trained up in the nurture principles and put that into policy where it never appeared before. **Staff 1*** *The nurture team here do a really fantastic job and all the staff have bought into it and there's no cynicism at all. **Staff 1*** *Basically students that haven't been nurtured themselves. I mean before I*

Appendix S

		Accessibility of NG as a drop-in lessens stigma	*worked here I worked in a preschool erm, and it's like they've missed out on that stage in life, some of them. Even, well not necessarily going to preschool but even at home. No and before I worked here 13 years ago I didn't realise, I thought everyone was normal, every child, you know it has opened my eyes actually quite a lot.* **Staff 2**
		NG valued	
			I think it's critical. I think that there needs to be places in schools where children can go when everything's not okay and it's a normal thing in life that things are not okay. You know you could be going through anything that's going on in your life you need to have a place where you can just relax. And if children aren't in the right place to learn then what's the point in them being in the classroom? They might as well be somewhere where they can speak through it in a way where they feel safe, in a way, in a language that they do it in, with people who understand them. **Staff 3**
			I would say it's quite a range of students because we've got students obviously who have had bereavement issues or there are students with massive family issues going on. Erm, and I would, it tends to be, I would say it tends to be more students who are erm, sort of have had maybe quite big things gone on their lives and it's affecting them at that time and, or it's stuff that's happened to them in the past and they've got gaps and those gaps need filling. **Staff 4**
			So it's just, it's just like their safe place and if they haven't got that at home, if something's lacking then it can be made up here. Because before they can learn anything you've got to meet their basic needs and if their basic needs aren't being met they're not going to learn anything. And this is a way of doing

			that. **Staff 6** *Xxxx has done a lot of really, really effective and good inset about nurturing and how that, why we are doing that and how it works at the school but the thing that has stuck with me the most is that what he has addressed and what they are trying to address is areas of trauma in children's lives* **Staff 9**
	Pupil understanding	***Pupils throughout the school have some knowledge of the approach taken in NG, which is viewed positively by most pupils.*** Lack of stigma attached to NG provision NG seen as a 'cool' place to be Pupil awareness of the needs experienced by some pupils who access NG Some awareness of what might happen within NG Understanding that NG supports pupils with difficulties at home	*I don't know it's just a really warm and good environment up here. Like it's different, completely different to the rest of the school which is good.* **Pupil 5** *Some people can be quite jealous because I come up here. Like I've got a friend who didn't originally come up here but then he start coming up here for break and lunch and he started enjoying it and he started to get slips because he opened up to one of the staff members here and yeah* **Pupil 7** *It's a fun energetic place, always, they're always in a happy mood, like a fun place to be when you're feeling like annoyed or annoyed or angry because they can help you calm down. Pupil 4* *If like something happens and somebody dies in their family or something like that then they can immediately come up.* **FG1** *I think maybe because like the parents, you know issues at home and stuff so that they can come up and talk to them about, erm, this,* **FG1** *So the people in here can teach them how to calm down and help them repair*

		NG respected by pupils Wider access to NG could be useful for some pupils	*their relationship and things like that.* **FG2** *Yeah, I knew that it was there but I don't really know what they do***. FG1** *I think the students feel more safe because they know what they're doing and they find it more easy to understand the lessons. Instead of not having any idea what to do.* **FG1** *I'd say erm, inclusion is like more respected by students… Like I'd say, just from what I've heard there's less jokes about inclusion than xxxx. That's what I've heard because…* **FG2** *Yeah sometimes like they just get stressed or angry in lessons so like use that exit card and come up here so they can just breathe.* FG2
	Holistic approach	***School staff believe that the school invests in the 'whole child' and that this is the approach taken by senior management.*** Training/skill of staff considered important by pupils Headteacher influence –	*There's a lot of like extracurricular groups that you can do. So you can like have lots of stuff that you can do.* FG1 *So it's a caring school where the staff know their kids, they know their families, they know the parents of the, of the previous students. You know we have grandchildren coming through, we have teachers that actually taught their grandparents. You know it's that sort of school.* **Staff 1** *We've got a lot of, a lot of staff dedicated to erm, student services, pastorally.*

		considers the whole child Inclusive nature of school Investment in pastoral side of school Response to cuts of other services – school invested in supporting vulnerable pupils Holistic approach of school Celebrating pupil achievements School investment in staff to support SEMH needs Importance of pupil and staff wellbeing recognised by SMT Child-centred approach of school	*More perhaps as a percentage of the school than many others. So we have our inclusion team you met today and then you have 3 Heads of School and then you've got Pastoral Assistants, we have a schools counsellor, we have 2 erm, youth workers that work up here. So we actually have very large exposure to the people that will listen to them that aren't just about the daily basis of going off and doing their teaching* **Staff 1** *Yeah I think the ethos of this school really is about erm, the whole child doing the best that you can but not just in your lessons but it's also about erm, pursuing your interest outside of school and getting recognised for that outside of school. We have something called the edge that enables them to do that, it's a rewards programme.* **Staff 1** *I mean what they've started to do is have more external people come in and do work up here. We have someone from counselling come up on Friday, we have another person, I don't know the agency he works for but he's up here every Monday and Tuesday and he sees students as well on a counselling level* **Staff 3** *Erm, I think we, I think we, it's a bit of an oxymoron but I think we comfortably push our students, we expect a lot of them erm, but in all rounds, not just academic, like taking part in school socially, behaviourally, like friendship groups we expect a lot of them and we help them sort of go through that. Erm, I think we're quite a happy school, I think yeah.* **Staff 4** *I think its ethos is that inclusive ethos and that's very much the Heads sort of kind of stamp that he has put on it since he has been Head. He's very much that it is about all of the students in the school it's not just about fantastic exam*

			*results at one end there are lots of other things as well **Staff 7***
	Pupil voice	***Staff talk about the importance of pupil voice although older pupils, particularly Year 11 pupils, appear to feel that they are not always listened to.***	*Maybe people who struggled to pay attention or just struggling in general can come here for help and like make, erm, their problems can be listened to by people here. FG 1*
		Pupil voice related to supportive school	*There's a thing, I don't know with this school they're working more to make it look good. Like with the rights thing like that's obviously to just draw more people into the school like "look at us we're rights respecting and stuff and like improving inclusion" and so it's like "we care more about you". But I think they're focusing more on getting people in than focusing on the people that are already in the school. **FG2***
		Pupil voice valued throughout school	
		More opportunities for all students to be heard/listened to needed (not all pupils would feel comfortable accessing NG	*They would have never done the rights respecting if a kid didn't bring it up. it was a child's idea and then they were just like "oh that would make the school look better let's do that". That's the only reason they've done that. FG2*
		More able pupils feeling less understood/less able to talk to staff about their feelings	*Well a lot of students don't feel comfortable like coming into inclusion and talking about it and there's no way to like because obviously like nowadays we've got technology and things but there's nobody you can talk to in school about it. **FG2***
		A sense that pupil voice isn't always heard	*Erm, I think erm, they, they're always going "yeah we care about your opinion" but they never give us anywhere to express our opinion. FG2*
			The second you get into year 11 there's just a lot of pressure. So you have no time to do anything because obviously you want to go out with friends, you

			want to have fun. So, but you can't do that because teachers are always on your back saying "you need to revise, you need to focus". Some people like can't focus because they might have a learning condition but the school doesn't like respect that, they don't think about that they're just like "you need to revise". It's their choice. **FG2** *If they actually took the time to listen. So they could know how we feel and actually care.* **FG2** Yeah kind of. So if you do things for the school it's almost like they reward you and they actually listen to you. Whereas say if you can't do anything for the school like you find it hard to get good grades or to be good at sport then they won't listen to you as much. **FG2** *So we actually have very large exposure to the people that will listen to them that aren't just about the daily basis of going off and doing their teaching* **Staff 1** *Yeah so students voice is really big here.* **Staff 3**
Relational Factors	Supporting relationships	***New and existing friendships are supported within NG. Positive relationships appear to be what the NG provision is built upon.*** NG supporting new friendships	Well we're all, like most of us are close in here because we always play like games like Uno… Yeah and I'm close with some of them outside because some of them live near me. Yeah and… Yeah I still talk to them and I like to say hello to them when I walk past in the corridor. **Pupil 4** Making new friends, making friends, building a good enough friendship with teachers. **Pupil 4**

			Friendship groups including NG and non NG friends	It's helped strengthen some friendships… Because like it's helped, I don't know really, like my friends come up here and they get supported as well and we then support each other and then it's built on friendships. Because we're, like most of my friends come up here we're all together, we're all of the time helping each other. **Pupil 5**
			NG supporting pupil-teacher relationships through open communication	
			Restorative approach of NG (supporting pupil relationships)	I get along really nicely with them, they're all good friends, then the other ones, like the year 11 tutor group they're really nice. I made some friends there. I know some inclusion champions erm, you kind of, once you've been here once or twice you kind of know everyone, you know your way around it. So it's really nice. **Pupil 8.**
			Close bonds formed between pupils within NG	
			NG supporting positive relationships	I don't know really it's just kind of a place where you can just like play games or something with your friends like at break time and lunch time or you can have spare time in a lesson… I'd say it's a really good place because like I said before you can speak to people if you're worried and you can like make new friends or something when you see people in here playing games and you're probably ask like "oh can I play?" and you make friends with them. **Pupil 11**
			NG supporting new friendships	
				Because it can make you more confident so you meet more people and make more friends. **FG1**
				Inclusion (NG). That's the best place in the school for like talking to people because they're really supportive. **FG2**
				Erm, one of the people, like before we were friends we didn't really talk a lot but I saw him like crying in the corridor and he looked like really stressed and

| | | | | sad. So I took him up here and erm, me, him and Mr xxxx had a conversation about it and now we talk all the time. So like we've developed a bond so we talk about things. **FG2**

I think it helps maintain and develop those friendships and relationships rather than them potentially falling apart and imploding. **Staff 4**

Some of the older students in here will look after the younger students in here and they will look out for them. And I think that they might not have that relationship at all if inclusion wasn't there, they wouldn't know each other at all… I think the main thing that I've noticed is the friendships across the year groups so I wouldn't see them together afterwards but I think they would look out for each other in the corridors and on the playground and in then, in the dining hall as well because then they've built a relationship here, they know each other. **Staff 6**

I think maybe they meet people they wouldn't normally have met. I think maybe they see, as I said with the idea of empathy. I think maybe they build relationships that they wouldn't normally build because they have that idea of reaching out to somebody else you know that for whatever reason needs to access it's environment. So again these boys in year 11 they have sort of taken him under their wing again, I know a lad in year 7 who has had a bereavement, his mum, he lost his mum last Summer so incredibly difficult circumstances and they really have taken him, they look out for him, they walk with him to lessons and they walk with him to lunch and it's lovely seeing that you know and that is, they wouldn't know who he was normally but because they have this shared environment they do. **Staff 9** |

Appendix S

	Skill development	**NG supports pupils to feel more confident in talking with others (pupils and staff) and in being able to better understand and self-regulate their feelings and behaviour. NG pupils are able to transfer these skills to outside of NG.**	Since being in the group I've just got a lot more sociable and less nervous to talk to people. **Pupil 3** It like, not sure because like if there's something you need to say to your friend that you don't want to say then they can like help you to like find ways to tell them **Pupil 4** Because I used to struggle in like socialising with people quite a lot and I came up here and there was other kids like me. And because I spent time, more and more time up here I got to know more of them and I got more confident to start getting involved with like sports and stuff. So it's, it's helpful, it's really helpful to get to know. **Pupil 2**
		NG as a social space, supporting development of social skills	It's just sort of allowed me to get new perspectives on stuff that before I was a lot more negative about… Like I used to just come into school thinking like the worst of everything and I just feel like I've got to get my head down and just do the best I can. **Pupil 3**
		NG helping pupils to build confidence/to make new friends	
		NG supporting transition into lessons	It helps me like build confidence in like outside of life… So like if you're worried to talk to someone they can help you, they can find ways to help you talk to someone that you don't, that you never talked to before… And like help you with job experiences and work experience as well. Some year, some sixth formers come up here to talk to students. So if you want to be part of that you can just come up here. **Pupil 4**
		NG helping to increase confidence	
		Generalisation of skills to the wider school	Like it helps me talk to teachers in a different way that I never used to like, in like a nicer way not like an angry way just like when I get in trouble because they just tell me to be calm and not like shout at them. **Pupil 4**
		NG supporting to develop	

		new perspectives/being more positive	It's made me realise that I need to calm down in lessons to get anywhere in life, I would rather be in inclusion than be outside of school doing nothing well for myself and it's just basically helped me get on with homework a lot more like things that I wouldn't ever do outside of school I do in here to make sure that they are just completed, it's just made me a better student all round I reckon. **Pupil 9**
		Impact on motivation/ long term goals	
		NG supporting pupils to cope with difficult feelings	Before, when I started going through that rough patch, I quit my rugby team, I just wasn't really doing anything to do with school I wasn't doing any of my homework I was just at the skate park doing what I would like to do but when I started coming here I started to get back into doing the things that made me happy before so I took up boxing and I do a lot of my homework now and I usually just crack on with the day and don't really think about the rough patches in my life when I'm sad**. Pupil 9**
		NG supporting communication skills	
		Support for pupils to generalise and maintain skills learnt in NG	I think it's pretty nice because I know xxx comes up here and he's actually xxx's friend and I went to primary school with him and like in primary school it was quite bad. He like would, we'd have to get support in our classroom because he would like flip tables and that stuff. And now I look at him now and he's a completely different person. So I think like it is definitely a very supportive system otherwise he couldn't have just done that by himself because that would have been a very dramatic change that he has taken. So I believe yeah. **FG2**
			Because it can make you more confident so you meet more people and make more friends. **FG1**

				Maybe being confident about talking to other people about how you feel and like so you're not all bottling it up.FG1
				They kind, they kind of teach you how to be a good friend. So like you might just talk to somebody on a regular basis but they tell you like how to grow the relationship and how to communicate with each other outside of school and things like. **FG2**
				Yeah, I think it does and I think a lot of the stuff that they learn is as transferrable as well, you see quite a lot of students have been up here quite a long time, particularly the older ones, you know they are very much sort of straight in in helping and supporting the younger ones that are coming in so particularly a couple of lads we got who've had recent bereavements, lost their mothers, the older ones are fantastic, they know exactly what the situation is, they have read through watching xxx and watching xxx they know exactly what sort of approach to take. **Staff 7**
				We use a lot of our older students to be examples to our younger students so we have buddies, we have sort of peer to peer mentoring, in here we expect our older students to look out for our younger students and actually it's got to the point now where we don't even have to point it out, it just happens automatically. We have restorative conversations so if there has been a falling out then a member of staff may get together and talk it through so we are there as a support but there is a lot of teaching for young people how to do it for themselves. **Staff 8**
				But you know we are not mental health nurses, our aim is to keep them in a mainstream class and so finding ways that makes that possible for that

| | | | individual child… So we are giving them strategies and tools and ways that they can manage themselves and manage their strong feelings, manage their anxieties themselves which they may not have to start with so it's about unlocking that within them so they are able to self-manage rather than relying on other people to be able to point that out to them. **Staff 8**

I think for them it's probably quite hard, I mean it is as an adult isn't it? Like you can be told to count to 10 when you're angry and it's really difficult but I think it, it gives them something to build on and work on. From when, if they had nothing they wouldn't be able to manage themselves but it also gives you a, a kind of a zone with them because you can say to them like "think about what you've been doing in inclusion" or you know and you could just distract them and say like "oh I saw Ms xxx earlier and she said you did something brilliant up in inclusion tell me about that". And so it kind of gives you that conversation to have with them and reminds them of what they've been doing. **Staff 4**

I think it (NG) is very good at building empathy and I think that's a hugely important trait or characteristic to build, we have it [unclear 0:09:07.4] but I think that's really what it comes down to is that actual ability to see things from a different perspective than yours and to understand what someone else might be going through **Staff 9** |
| | Nurture Group staff | *NG staff are well-liked and seen as skilled and supportive – they are respected throughout the* | Yeah, I feel like they are trying to give something towards us so you want to give something towards them, you want to like be a better student, be better people for them as well. **Pupil 9** |

		school.	Like when we come in they just sort of treat everyone like family it's like easy to talk to and stuff. **Pupil 3**
		Caring nature of NG staff NG staff having time for pupils	
			They're like able to calm, like I've come up here when I'm really angry and they've calmed me down where other teachers try to do that and it just, it don't work. I don't know what they do but… **Pupil 7**
		NG staff are easy to talk to	
		NG as a non-judgemental place to be	I don't know it's strange how they do it, it's kind of really comforting but I don't know how they do it, it's really nice. **Pupil 8**
		NG staff enabling communication with home	So it's amazing to be honest because they always listen, they are always there really to help anyone, not just the people who usually come here so anyone if they actually need help and they show that they need help they will get it. **P**upil 9
		NG staff always available Sense of trust with NG staff	
		Popularity of NG staff throughout the wider school	Erm… definitely the staff, they make it the way it is. Without them I think, even… yeah it's a nice room and it's a nice school but without them I don't think the school would be the same… Erm, they kind of bring the joy and happiness and just all of the funny stuff into school and they make, definitely for me, school a lot more enjoyable and worth coming in every day. Like most days I'll be like "oh" even though I don't want to go to school and things might be a bit crap at the moment and I don't necessarily feel the best about myself, you know what Mr xxxx and Miss xxxx are going to be in school, so I'm okay I know that I can talk to them if I need to and that they will probably give a laugh or two. And that's something that I definitely hold onto in the day. **Pupil 10**
		Skills of NG staff in supporting pupils to feel calm and supported	
		Staff understanding of particular needs Positive view of NG staff – pupils are able to talk to them	
		Popularity of NG staff	And like even the teachers I think respect them a bit more because they're a

		amongst pupils	bit like, whenever Mr xxxx like comes in my geography class like Miss, Miss is always like "hi" like and like say someone from xxx's there it's a bit like, I don't know. A bit like more friendlier to everyone up here. **FG2**
		Skills of NG staff in their approach to vulnerable pupils	
			Erm, somebody you can relate to, because it's no good talking to somebody if they're not going to understand what you're saying FG2
		Availability of staff for pupils to talk to (links with counsellors through NG)	
			Because I think it's, there is an increasing number of students that need that kind of help, the traditional sort of pastoral system with tutors and just Heads of Year would not be able to deal with that kind of depth that is needed or the time and also in setting up the inclusion unit you got people who are now becoming very specialised in dealing with those situations so yeah, xxxx, xxxx and all the others have done training yeah they've done bereavement training and all sorts of stuff which would be very difficult to resource in just a conventional pastoral system. **Staff 7**
		Dedication of NG staff Support amongst NG staff	
			Erm, and you know it's, it's really important for us, some of those kids won't be coming to school if it wasn't for the hard work that these guys are doing and they are amazing. Erm, and the anxiety that a lot of students have they manage really, really well up here but it's becoming an increasing problem and there's absolutely no doubt there's no, the waiting list for CAMHS or whatever just, it's so extreme. **Staff 1**
			it's the combination of that real warmth with high expectations of what they can do, I think that's what they manage to do so well. **Staff 9**
School Environment	Nurture Group organisation	*The NG room is set up as an open and largely available and accessible*	It's very relaxed and if you've had like a hard day and you want to talk to someone they're very open in the, they won't judge you for what you say. And yeah it's just easy to express yourself to Miss xxxx and Mr xxxxx Mrs xxxxx Mr

		space. This supports pupils in feeling safe and secure at school.	xxxx. It's just a really nice place to be sometimes. **Pupil 2**
			Erm, sometimes I find it like really difficult to be in like big groups of people or in my lessons and so it helps me to be able to do my work in a safer place. **Pupil 1**
		NG as a safe place	
		NG as a place to talk about difficulties from outside of school	It's just sort of whenever I feel like I need it I can come in and talk. **Pupil 3**
		NG as a relaxed environment to be in	I think just because like mainly it gives me something that I can use if it ever does get too much but also like they just they are really reassuring about stuff. **Pupil 3**
		NG as a place to talk about feelings	It's quite fun. It's always like a calm place to be. Like there's always somewhere where you can go to talk to someone in here. **Pupil 4**
		Daily support in NG	
		NG as a positive space	I love inclusion it's like my safe place to go. **Pupil 5**
		NG as an environment to be with other pupils who also have struggles	It's a really special place. **Pupil 5**
		NG as a place to talk (to staff and other pupils)	Erm, well nurture group is a very, I don't know, the best way I can explain it it's a fantastic place. It's erm, a place for you to go if you feel strongly about anything even if it's a happy emotion and you want to express it something there's always someone to talk to. If you're feeling a bit down and there's something wrong there's someone to talk to. It's not just having someone to talk to it's the fact that you know they're always be there even if you're wrong they will always be there to support you and like help you through things. And it's just a great place in general. **Pupil 10**
		NG as a drop in	
		Family feel of NG	

			NG always available
			It's ethos in general is just the very calming but kind of crazy place. It's a place where you can definitely be yourself, you don't have to hold back and like everyone will accept you for who you are. It doesn't matter what your race is or your sexuality is everybody will be welcoming of you and no one will judge you for what your life choices are. **Pupil 10**
			I'm not sure but I've heard it's quite nice like they get a hot chocolate, they get to sit down and they get to talk to people so yeah. **FG1**
			Maybe being confident about talking to other people about how you feel and like so you're not all bottling it up. **FG1**
			If like something happens and somebody dies in their family or something like that then they can immediately come up. **FG1**
			Inclusion (NG) that's the best place in the school for like talking to people because they're really supportive. **FG2**
			Whereas here it's the doors open at half past 8 it doesn't close at all, the students are home, they leave their bags here, they can have like a snack here, have their break, their lunch here, their mates come here. It's just, you know it's almost like a social club but not. And I think that's why it works so well. **Staff 3**
			It's more of a safe quiet space that they can use instead of going outside where it's hustle and bustle. But we actually get a lot of, well a few year 11's that come up here actually because it's more of a get away from everything.

			But across all year groups we probably, there's probably about 50 or 60 people that use it consistently every day even just to drop their bags off. We get the students that check in after every lesson "hi sir, are you okay?" and then go again almost just to have that connection with someone as they go. But it's really wide and diverse, you can't really put it down to one sort of group of students. **Staff 3**
			then there is the yeah the regular support up here where students have got a safe place to come always open and yeah we provide or the unit provides sort of a lot of the basic things that often those students don't have at home including yeah, breakfast and just a bit of TLC really **Staff 7**
			I think in our room we are the way that we engage with the students the way that we engage with each other, it's an unwritten expectation that when you're in inclusion this is your safe place, you can be who you need to be in here, you can scream and shout and stamp your feet if you need to. You can sob on the sofa under a blanket if you need to, no one is judging anybody nobody is laughing at anybody and more often than not if there is comforting that is needed, comforting is given by whoever is in there. Staff, students, whichever years groups, anything so there is a real sort of respect for each other and a respect for… there are boundaries but the boundaries probably are slightly different to the boundaries that are further out into the school. **Staff 8**
			I think the use of inclusion as a centre for the nurture is incredibly important because it just provides that stability and it provides an environment the students know is always available to them. We have moved some tutor groups into the inclusion centre so it is a year 11 group this year which is particularly important because of the level of, not necessarily trauma but the

			vulnerable nature of those students, the attendance records etc **Staff 9**
	Beyond Nurture Group	*The school environment supports the development of positive peer relationships beyond NG, including mixing with different age groups (particularly through a buddying system).* Mixing with different year groups (buddy system extending friendship opportunities) Buddying supporting a sense of belonging Opportunities to mix with different year groups.	The school do have a buddying system to say if you have an argument with your friends you can talk to them, they'll try and help sort it out… Yeah they can be from year 8 to 11 and they can help with any problems you have like safe guarding or just friendship arguments or homework's and organising. **FG1** There's another thing erm, I just remembered that I forgot to do it this morning because I had an exam but erm, there's the buddying system. It kind of seems a bit like when you look at it for the outside it's a bit like oh no buddying. But erm, I'm actually doing it with our year 7 that's come up and she's really lovely and I think it's actually really supportive that they can do that because you can do it in just year 7 or 8 or whatever. And erm, like I think that's really nice to give them support of someone that's been in the school longer than them. So like not just the teacher that's come into see them, like "oh are you okay?" because it's a bit intimidating talking to a teacher when you've just come to the school. So I think it's nice that you've set up a system where an older person is talking to you like once a week and all that stuff, I think it's nice just to check up on them. **FG2** My buddy's like, he buddied me when I was year 7, I'm really close with him now, they're not in sixth form. Whenever I see him in the corridors I go and have a chat. **FG2** My buddy I had was someone that went to my primary school that I used to

			communicate with…So it's nice to know them more again. **FG 1**
			I think erm, peer relationships are very strong here and I think a lot of that is you know we have a buddying system and loads of people get involved in that. And we still have sixth formers that go in and help our in lessons even, we have a really good relationship with the younger students. And there is that sort of erm, mutual respect amongst the students. **Staff 1**
			So I think erm, I think their friendships and relationships are quite strong actually and erm, there are so many students who do so many different things here, that they're all able to find erm, they're all able to find a friendship group that will sort of take them in and look after them. And erm, like I said those, they cross the year groups. Erm, there's a group in my, who use my classroom at the moment to play Dungeons and Dragons. And it's quite a lot of year 9's but year 7's have started to join erm, a year 10's joined in and its gone from this little pocket of 4 to sort of you go in my room now there's like 10 of them. **Staff 4**
			It allows them to kind of, well really important it allows them to explore themselves and what they're going through and what they might be feeling in a safe place and actually if they express themselves in slightly the wrong way they know that actually it's not the end of the world and then they can go out and help themselves, manage within the classroom space. **Staff 4**
			We have peer group mentoring so older students supporting younger ones. There is a variety of different versions of that so at the moment year 7's have mentors from year 8 and year 9 but there are also sixth form mentors for

			specific things. **Staff 7** Some of our more challenging students actually act as buddies. **Staff 9**

Appendix T Voluntary Research Assistant Coding Manual

Participant quotes which directly match researcher's coding manual are highlighted in yellow.

Main Theme	Sub-theme	Description/codes included	Quotes taken from transcripts: *Staff, Nurture Group pupils, Focus Group Pupils*
Whole School System	Staff understanding	Staff understanding of how NG supports NG principles being embedded into school policy School staff understanding NG support and links to difficulties at home NG environment understood and valued by other staff Accessibility of NG as a drop-in lessens stigma	S4 - we have the nurture principles S4 - encouraged us to be the really inclusive school we are S4 - up here which because you get such a mix of children up here as well that sort of helps them to develop friendships and, so students who were struggling socially might end up here and actually you end up a really lovely bunch of kids up here at lunch time and they feel genuinely supported and erm, a lot of all the extracurricular stuff that goes on S4 - So all of these things there and the staff do know that they can always erm, speak to inclusion or the SEN or the Heads of Year and just say "can you tell me a little bit more that's going on if you can? And what more can I do to help?". ==S4 - I would say it's quite a range of students because we've got students obviously who have had bereavement issues or there are students with massive family issues going on. Erm, and I would, it tends to be, I would say it tends to be more students who are erm, sort of have had maybe quite big==

		NG valued	<mark>things gone on their lives and it's affecting them at that time and, or it's stuff that's happened to them in the past and they've got gaps and those gaps need filling.</mark> **S4 - I should come up here more really like**…. **when you do come up here you kind of go "oh my god, wow!** S4 - Absolutely I think it really gives them that boost of confidence and self-esteem. It gives them erm, that safe space and I always, I always know when, I can always pick put when someone's come back from inclusion or come back from nurture group because they're in such a better place than maybe when you saw them the previous day. <mark>S4 - it allows them to kind of, well really important it allows them to explore themselves and what they're going through and what they might be feeling in a safe place and actually if they express themselves in slightly the wrong way they know that actually it's not the end of the world and then they can go out and help themselves, manage within the classroom space.</mark> **S4 -** This is seen as a quite cool place. It's not seen as an it's kind of like it's an exclusion zone where the weirdos go S4 - It's not kind of an exclusive just for these troubled youths or anything like that. S4 - Staff should come up here more

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			S9 - what they are trying to address is areas of trauma in children's life's .

S9 - the Nurture programme works on that principle of identifying and then working to support and remediate I guess the trauma that they've had

S9 - it provides an environment the students know is always available to them.

S9 - it's the combination of that real warmth with high expectations of what they can do

S9 - they are very much imbedded into the routines of the school and there is no stigma from the students about using inclusion

S9 - 140 odd students, that's a sixth of the population of the school I just don't think it's kind of a thing which is a stigma

S1 - So it is a successful intervention because it's, it's, there's providing a safe place for those students to come and they will do very important work on the nurture principals and it will socialise them and enable them to erm, perhaps access mainstream where they might disappear from mainstream

S1 - So it performs that function as well which is really, really important |

			<mark>S1 - But the work they do with vulnerable students who erm, you know people who are around and about today is fantastic and the nurture principals have been part, a really important part of that and the kids know them as well.</mark> S1 - So everything about the area's really good and it's very welcoming and they make you a cup of tea now for breakfast if you're from a disadvantaged background or anything like that. S1 - They're not stigmatised as I thought they might be erm, S1 - I can't even imagine a world where that wouldn't exist to be quite frank <mark>S1 - the nurture team here do a really fantastic job and all the staff have bought into it and there's no cynicism at all.</mark> S3 - inclusions so good because it gives access for that for students they don't know where to go. They know that this is a safe place straight off the back. S3 - Whereas here it's the doors open at half past 8 it doesn't close at all S3 - I think the aims to support students who are having difficult time be that presently or ongoing or if there's stuff upcoming

			S3 - I think it's more about embedding sustainable strategies as well as social and emotional stuff because the social stuff you know, so many of the children that use this space get it wrong socially, they get it wrong either by saying inappropriate things, by being a little bit physical. S3 - . I think that there needs to be places in schools where children can go when everything's not okay and it's a normal thing in life that things are not okay.
	Pupil understanding	Lack of stigma attached to NG provision NG seen as a 'cool' place to be Pupil awareness of the needs experienced by some pupils who access NG Some awareness of what might happen within NG Understanding that NG supports pupils with	FG1: the school do have this like SEN for people who need extra help with their learning and it can go from year 7 to 10 and in year 11 but, it mainly stops for year 7 to 8 and then maybe if you need help with a lesson you'll get to go there. Miss at least half an hour of whatever lesson you're in and then catch up. FG!: I think the students feel more safe because they know what they're doing and they find it more easy to understand the lessons. Instead of not having any idea what to do. FG!: Inclusion, you can just come up and talk to people. Me and my friends have come up and you can just talk and it makes you feel a lot better about stuff. FG1: It's like you can just come in anytime at break and lunch. FG!: I think maybe because like the parents, you know issues at

		difficulties at home	
		NG respected by pupils	FG2: Well a lot of students don't feel comfortable like coming into inclusion and talking about it and there's no way to like because obviously like nowadays we've got technology and things but there's nobody you can talk to in school about it.
		Wider access to NG could be useful for some pupils	
			FG1: Yeah I knew that it was there but I don't really know what they do.
			FG2: So they can't focus and they can't work and so they can't get that good grade. So the fact that they can come in here today it is, I think is a really good idea.
			FG2: Last year I was going through a really tough home life erm, so I was coming up here once a week erm, so that they could just look out for me and I found it was a really positive experience. Because they listened and if you had any problems they'd give you sensible advice and they were really able to talk to you and you always, I always felt comfortable talking to them. But some, like, sometimes I feel more comfortable talking to them than I do with my friends. So that was positive.
			FG2: Erm, because I'm like the top sets and because he will be like jumping about I wouldn't say there's a support system or you work or you just get kicked in to the lower sets.

| | | | FG2: Well if you have a problem and you need someone to talk to then you can come in here but the bad thing about it is they give you an appointment but you might need to talk to somebody, like you might need to talk to somebody then and there. But if it's like in a few days' time you might have overcome it anyway. So it doesn't really give you a chance and you have to like go through it on your own sometimes

FG2: Yeah if you're in here regularly then it's quite easy because you can just like come in here or out there and you instantly have someone to talk to. But if you're not, if you don't come up here regularly then it's hard.

FG2: Erm, I, some people get like an exit card which means that if they're just struggling on a day they can just show the teacher and then go to inclusion or SEN sometimes

FG2: I think it's pretty nice because I know Will comes up here and he's actually Harry's friend and I went to primary school with him and like in primary school it was quite bad. He like would, we'd have to get support in our classroom because he would like flip tables and that stuff. And now I look at him now and he's a completely different person. So I think like it is definitely a very supportive system otherwise he couldn't have just done that by himself because that would have been a very dramatic change that he has taken. So I believe yeah. |
|---|---|---|---|

			  P1 - I mean I know that like if anything happens outside of school I can come in and talk about it. **P5 -** I've not had any other support other than inclusion….. But I've reported it to like senior lead staff but nothing's happened really. **P5 -** Some people might and say that it's a bit silly but it's not, it helps a lot more than people I think. P5 - I don't know it's just a really warm and good environment up here. Like it's different, completely different to the rest of the school which is good. P5 - It's always managed to help no matter what they do, they always help. P4 - It's quite fun. It's always like a calm place to be. Like there's always somewhere where you can go to talk to someone in here.

			P4 - It's a fun energetic place, always, they're always in a happy mood, like a fun place to be when you're feeling like annoyed or annoyed or angry because they can just help you calm down.
	Holistic approach	Training/skill of staff considered important by pupils Headteacher influence – considers the whole child Inclusive nature of	FG2: There's a thing, I don't know with this school they're working more to make it look good. Like with the rights thing like that's obviously to just draw more people into the school like "look at us we're rights respecting and stuff and like improving inclusion" and so it's like "we care more about you". But I don't think they're focusing on more getting people in than focusing on the people that are already in the school. FG2: I think the SEN department's more to do with learning.

		school	
		Investment in pastoral side of school	
		Response to cuts of other services – school invested in supporting vulnerable pupils	
		Holistic approach of school	
		Celebrating pupil achievements	
		School investment in staff to support SEMH needs	
		Importance of pupil and staff wellbeing recognised by SMT	
		Child-centred approach of school	

	Pupil voice	Pupil voice related to supportive school	FG1: Maybe people who struggled to pay attention or just struggling in general can come here for help and like make erm, their problems can be listened to by people here.
		Pupil voice valued throughout school	FG2: Because otherwise erm, people don't like being like pushed around at the stage, that will probably lead to rule breaking if the teachers are just forcing stuff on us constantly.
		More opportunities for all students to be heard/listened to needed (not all pupils would feel comfortable accessing NG)	FG2: Erm, I think erm, they, they're always going "yeah we care about your opinion" but they never give us anywhere to express our opinion. Like they'll go "oh yeah you can talk to this that and the next person" and then you go to their room and you realise that they're not there. And it sort of defeats the purpose of being more important because you have to go to the staffroom to find them. So it sort of defeats the purpose.
		More able pupils feeling less understood/less able to talk to staff about their feelings	FG2: If they actually took the time to listen. So they could know how we feel and actually care.
		A sense that pupil voice isn't always heard	FG2: Because some people can't control anger so if they, like a couple of my friends if they get angry they don't know how to control it. So they might like lash out at somebody else. Like whether it's a student or a teacher and then a teacher will give them a detention either way and that isn't the way to solve it

			because that's just going to make them more angry. So I feel like they should, instead of giving a detention, breaking the rules they should bring them either up here or in SEN. So the people in here can teach them how to calm down and help them repair their relationship and things like that.
			S3 - Yeah so students voice is really big here
Relational Factors	Supporting relationships	NG supporting new friendships Friendship groups including NG and non NG friends NG supporting pupil-teacher relationships through open communication	FG1: One of your friends have come here and they've said it's really good and they help you perhaps it would spread around to your other friends that would come up here. But sometimes if, say your best friend came up here you wouldn't really know to go there FG1: Because it can make you more confident so you meet more people and make more friends FG1: I'm not sure what they could do but I feel like friendships, friendships are kind of divided because there's L and R and erm… FG2: Inclusion. That's the best place in the school for like

| | | Restorative approach of NG (supporting pupil relationships)

Close bonds formed between pupils within NG

NG supporting positive relationships

NG supporting new friendships | | talking to people because they're really supportive.

FG2: Yeah I've been up here once because I like had a bit of a fall out with basically my whole year. So erm, I spent the whole day up here, I got like hot chocolates and stuff so that was pretty good. I do like it up here.

FG2: I think it really helps if like you've had a big fall out and then you come up here because you're really upset and then you tell them what's happened, they can really help you work out why that's happened, who's in the wrong.

FG2: Erm, one of the people, like before we were friends we didn't really talk a lot but I saw him like crying in the corridor and he looked like really stressed and sad. So I took him up here and erm, me, him and Mr Preston had a conversation about it and now we talk all the time. So like we've developed a bond so we talk about things.

S4 - I think it helps maintain and develop those friendships and relationships rather than them potentially falling apart and imploding

S9 - I think it is very good at building empathy …….. They know how to behave here and therefore when they come here they know everyone is going to behave in a sort of a safe way and therefore it becomes somewhere they feel comfortable |

			accessing.
			S9 - <mark>I think maybe they meet people they wouldn't normally have met</mark>
			S3 - I think that there's a core group of children in here that come in all the time and their friendship seems to be sustainable and seems to be pretty much even because they're using this space and it's sort of mirroring behaviour that they witness.
			<mark>P5 - It's helped strengthen some friendships….. don't know really like my friends come up here and they get supported as well and we then support each other and then it's built on friendships. Because we're, like most of my friends come up here we're all together, we're all of the time helping each other</mark>.
			<mark>P4 - Making new friends, making friends, building a good enough friendship with teachers</mark>
			P4 - Like it helps me talk to teachers in a different way that I never used to like, in like a nicer way not like an angry way just like when I get in trouble because they just tell me to be calm and not like shout at them.

	Skill development	NG as a social space, supporting development of social skills NG helping pupils to build confidence/to make new friends NG supporting transition into lessons NG helping to increase confidence Generalisation of skills to the wider school NG supporting to	P4 - And like help you with job experiences and work experience as well. Some year, some sixth formers come up here to talk to students. So if you want to be part of that you can just come up here. FG1: Some of my friends they come up here because they help with you things outside of school that aren't sometimes to do with school. And they will just talk you through what you'd like to do about it. FG1: Maybe being confident about talking to other people about how you feel and like so you're not all bottling it up. Some people have it hard if they have a test and they can't work with people and so they ask to come up here and the teachers let them. FG2: Like because it's not just like talking that can help you like. They might need like as I said a, like one of the pens to help them read and like may give you supplies, they might need to read and write and supportive things like that.

| | | develop new perspectives/being more positive

Impact on motivation/ long term goals

NG supporting pupils to cope with difficult feelings

NG supporting communication skills

Support for pupils to generalise and maintain skills learnt in NG | **S9 - ……** the inclusion champions, so they are recognised across the school for their work and obviously within inclusion they are recognised as well.

P4 - Just come up here for like cover lessons. I normally do revision when I have my free lessons. Erm, I sometimes talk to Mr Xxxx and Miss Xxxx about stuff. Yeah and that's it.

P4 - It helps me like build confidence in like outside of life |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Nurture Group staff | Caring nature of NG staff
NG staff having time for pupils

NG staff are easy to talk to

NG as a non- | FG2: A set of adults that are trained to help people through any difficulties they have in lessons or outside of lessons.

FG2: Erm, someone you can like relate to because it's no good talking to somebody if they're not going to understand what you're saying.

S3 - "where's that safe place I was told I need to go to if something goes wrong?" and I said, "I think you mean inclusion" and she was like "no, no it's called something else". We walked to the door and she was |

		judgemental place to be	like "this is it, this is the safe place".
		NG staff enabling communication with home	P1 - they're always like putting a lot of time into everyone and making sure everything is like okay.
		NG staff always available	
		Sense of trust with NG staff	
		Popularity of NG staff throughout the wider school	
		Skills of NG staff in supporting pupils to feel calm and supported	
		Staff understanding of particular needs	
		Positive view of NG staff – pupils are able to talk to them	
		Popularity of NG staff amongst pupils	

		Skills of NG staff in their approach to vulnerable pupils	
		Availability of staff for pupils to talk to (links with counsellors through NG)	
		Dedication of NG staff Support amongst NG staff	
School Environment	Nurture Group organisation	NG as a safe place	P1 - Well it's nice to be in here
		NG as a place to talk about difficulties from outside of school	P1 - I usually just go up and do my work or just stay here for 5 to 15 minutes at the beginning of my lesson.
		NG as a relaxed environment to be in	P1 = sometimes I find it like really difficult to be in like big groups of people or in my lessons and so it helps me to be able to do my work in a safer place.
		NG as a place to talk about feelings	P1 - it helps me get into my lessons sometimes. Like I find it difficult

			Daily support in NG	P1 - just kind of sit and chat. Sometimes we do like some work together If we need help
			NG as a positive space	
			NG as an environment to be with other pupils who also have struggles	P1 - Probably being a safe place for me to work.
				P5 - I love inclusion it's like my safe place to go.
			NG as a place to talk (to staff and other pupils)	P5 - Because like he speaks to me about problems that I've had outside of school and in school. And he sometimes tries to help if he can with problems that have happened
			NG as a drop in	
				P5 - I would say it's a fun place to come and the staff are really nice.
			Family feel of NG	
			NG always available	
		Beyond Nurture Group	Mixing with different year groups (buddy system extending friendship opportunities)	FG1 The school do have a buddying system to say if you have an argument with your friends you can talk to them, they'll try and help sort it out
				FG1 We make friends in school because of it. So you meet older people and then you can like…
			Buddying supporting a sense of belonging	FG1 The buddy I had was, she was my sisters friend So I knew her quite well and I could trust her and then I got put with another one and I didn't feel safe like I could trust them at the start

			FG2: Yeah I got buddied in year 7 and I buddied someone else. FG2: My buddies from like, he buddied me when I was year 7, I'm really close with him now, they're not in sixth from. Whenever I see him in the corridors I go and have a chat. S4 - we have a team of buddies within each house and every year 7 gets seen, the sort of aim is in within the first month or so erm, and they just go and talk to them or they might see them in groups or they might see them individually. And the aim of that is they, they are actually really good at identifying who, who is struggling and who isn't actually S9 - a buddy programme which definitely kind of goes to the heart of the nurture programme S9 - some of our more challenging students actually act as buddies S1 - peer relationships are very strong here and I think a lot of that is you know we have a buddying system and loads of people get involved in that

Appendix U   Extracts from Reflective Journal

Pupil interview   21.12.19

- Very open during interview – expressed how 'pleased she was' to be taking part.
- Spoke very passionately about NG, in particular the relationships w. staff.
  → is leaving the school (moving home soon) & she talked about how she would always remember the NG staff.
- Currently accesses NG just as a 'check-in'
- Reflected on how much she felt she had changed & how this was enabled by the NG staff – in particular the support when she first started at the school.
- Found it hard to consider how NG might be improved.

25.1.19
Staff interview, 1pm.

- Spoke about the needs of pupils within school in relation to SEMH. Was positive about NG provision & made links to pastoral approach within school.

- Still concerned re. academic results – spoke about the pressure to hit certain targets.
  - Seemed to describe a mismatch with what he knew some pupils needed (eg. time out of mainstream lessons for SEMH support) and how this impacted on their academic results.

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