



# NATIONAL NURTURING SCHOOL AWARD

## CASE STUDY

### INTRODUCTION

In November 2018 Beechfield began the National Nurturing Schools Programme - a two year journey of development to achieve a National Nurture Award by embedding the 6 Principles of Nurture across our school. These nurture principles underpin everything we do here at Beechfield, including our school promise to, 'Be kind, Work Hard and Love Learning, so we are confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens'.



### THE PROGRAMME

When we started the project, we thought really carefully about the importance and benefits of nurturing relationships between children, parents and staff. We all recognise that positive relationships are key to a child's success, both academically and in terms of their well-being, and have worked very hard to develop these.

Over the lifetime of the project we have invested time and resources into ensuring that our school evolved into a more nurturing environment, not only for our children, but also for the families and the extended community. We created a Pastoral Centre – the Beechfield Bungalow. We also employed a full time Pastoral Leader to join our Senior Leadership Team and a Pastoral Support Worker to carry out therapeutic interventions with children across the school.

We know positive relationships are vital between the adults too and we are very proud that at our school we strive to support not only the child, but the whole family. We enhanced parent partnerships by holding weekly parent coffee mornings, half termly Parent Voice meetings and being highly visible around the school at the start and end of the day. We have an open door policy and parents are able to talk to us about anything and everything!

### WATFORD SALVATION ARMY

Beechfield has developed a brilliant relationship with the Watford Salvation Army over the last 18 months, which has benefitted our whole school community. Through this partnership, we have been able to support our families with housing, household goods and food parcels. We have also provided Christmas and Easter gifts for those in need. We have developed community relationships with Watford Women's Centre, who help our parents learn English as well as a whole range of other learning opportunities. We have also been able to host Protective Behaviour sessions for parents, run by Families Feeling Safe.





## PROMOTING POSITIVE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

We all understand that if a child is to succeed academically they need to be nurtured and have positive mental health and well-being. We reviewed our provision for children with additional needs. This was, and continues to be, a priority across the school and any child requiring support for their social and emotional development is assessed and then supported with a range of strategies. We have a Mental Health Lead and many of our staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid. We also work extensively with outside agencies such as our local Education Support Centre, CAHMS and our Developing Specialist Provision Locally Team. We recognise that partnership with parents is vital.



We follow a de-escalation approach to behaviour and ensure that the child is separated from the behaviour. We define behaviours as difficult or dangerous but not challenging or naughty. All staff take an active role in the management of the behaviour of all of our children. Building and maintaining relationships with the child and their family is key to interpreting and understanding the behaviour of the child because often they are unable to articulate why they do what they do. Staff make time to listen and to understand all of the children and their needs. We then support the child to understand and learn to manage their actions so they do not impact on their learning or well-being, or that of others. We have seen a dramatic improvement in behaviour across the school.



PSHE lessons are taught in the morning at Beechfield as we believe that good personal and social skills, and the ability to empathise and recognise feelings, are vital for emotional well-being. We know these skills will benefit the children throughout their life as well as enabling them to learn effectively. We have introduced Zones of Regulation across the school to help the children recognise how they are feeling, and to provide them with strategies to support themselves with self-regulation- a key life-skill. Each classroom has an interactive 'Zones of Regulation' display where children are encouraged to recognise and talk about how they are feeling, and to find ways to help them move on from more negative feelings to a place of calm and readiness to learn.



Protective Behaviours are taught so that the children can recognise their 'uh oh' feelings and ensures they know they have the right to feel safe all of the time. It also helps them identify their own support network of people who they can talk to about feelings or worries, no matter how big or small.

We provide an environment where all children feel safe to talk to any staff in school. They can also raise their concerns through our Children's Parliament. This is where the children meet regularly to discuss a range of issues, their discussions influence real and sustained change across the school.

## STAFF WELL-BEING

Staff well-being is also a priority for us. We try our best to reduce staff workload as much as we can and only ask staff to complete tasks that have a direct, positive impact on the pupils. A Staff Council group meet together half termly, where staff are able to talk about what they would like to improve and come up with ideas and solutions for the Senior Leadership Team to consider. We have a staff well-being board in the staff room with advice and support leaflets as well as little treats! We also pay into a support service so that the staff can access counselling and health advice.



## SUMMARY

We are so proud and thrilled that our wonderful school has been awarded the National Nurturing Schools Award. We want our school to be at the heart of our community and we have worked tirelessly to achieve this. "I am absolutely thrilled that Beechfield has achieved the National Nurturing Schools Award. It is amazing recognition for the brilliant and transformational work that our whole school community has put into developing relationships and sense of community at Beechfield." said Mrs Jackson, Headteacher.

Beechfield Pastoral & Mental Health Lead, Mrs Hayward said "I am immensely proud of our whole school community for achieving this prestigious National Award. This 2 year project has been a wonderful opportunity to ensure our school is at the very heart of our Community. We have seen first hand what a nurturing environment can achieve, not only for our children but also for our families and the whole school community. We have seen the power of partnerships which are able to grow and adapt to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Our school has flourished and continues to do so. I have no doubt that our wonderful school will go from strength to strength as we continue our journey together. "

"It was an absolute pleasure to spend the day with your staff, children, parents, governors and members of the community as part of the assessment, and it was lovely to hear all the wonderful contributions to the Award. Very well done and huge congratulations to everyone at Beechfield".

Wendy Roden, National Training development and Innovation Manager for Nurture UK



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