A multiple case study to explore the implementation and effects of Nurture Groups as an intervention for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) in secondary schools

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology in the Faculty of Humanities

2014

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School of Environment, Education and Development
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CROSS CASE SYNTHESIS

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<td>Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>BESD</td>
<td>Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPYP</td>
<td>Boxall Profile for Young People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSM-IV</td>
<td>Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders – fourth edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBD</td>
<td>Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>Educational Psychologist</td>
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<td>EPS</td>
<td>Educational Psychology Service</td>
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<td>KS3</td>
<td>Key Stage 3</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
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<td>NG</td>
<td>Nurture Group</td>
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<td>NGN</td>
<td>Nurture Group Network</td>
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<td>PRU</td>
<td>Pupil Referral Unit</td>
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<td>Quality Mark Award</td>
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<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
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<td>SENCo</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Coordinator</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
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<td>SoE</td>
<td>School of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>UoA</td>
<td>Unit of Analysis</td>
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<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
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The University of Manchester: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology

May 2014

Joanne Hilton

Abstract

Background: Pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) are a cause for concern in education and although Nurture Groups (NGs) have been found to be an effective form of intervention for pupils displaying SEBD in primary schools, limited research exists regarding NGs in secondary schools. A key piece of research suggests that the implementation of a classic NG in a secondary school may be difficult. This study aims to investigate how classic NGs are delivered and how the implementation has been possible. Furthermore, it explores the effects of NG attendance for pupils.

Participants: Two secondary schools housing classic NGs were identified through the Nurture Group Network (NGN). For each school, participants included a NG facilitator, a member of Senior Management and a professional from an external agency. Pupils were also recruited (6 from school 1 and 4 from school 2).

Methods: A multiple case study design with embedded units of analysis was conducted (Yin, 2009). Various data streams were used including an initial questionnaire, observations, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and Boxall Profile for Young People (BPYP) data (Bennathan, Boxall & Colley, 2010).

Analysis/Findings: Observational and questionnaire data were analysed using content analysis and interview/focus group data were thematically analysed following full transcription (Braun and Clarke, 2006). BPYP data were analysed using descriptive statistics.

Conclusion/Implications: Findings reveal that classic NGs can be implemented into a secondary school. Whilst numerous barriers exist to implementation (including understanding, arrangements, engagement with others and having the necessary tools) numerous facilitators also existed, the majority of which could be matched to barriers (including engaging with others, having knowledge and skills that are respected, a supportive environment and supporting pupil attendance by altering perceptions). Benefits of the NG for individual pupils and the wider school were also found, some of which include improved emotional well-being and positive inclusion into mainstream with a sense of belonging. Negative effects to NG attendance were also found and are discussed.
Declaration

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank the school staff involved in this research. Thank you for your dedication and for giving me the opportunity to witness some of the inspiring work that you do with young people in schools. Moreover, thank you to all the pupils involved in the research, for making me feel welcome when observing sessions and for the openness and honesty during the focus groups.

I would also like to thank the tutor team for their continuous support during the three years and in particular Kath Tyldesley and Kevin Woods for their guidance and support. I would also like to thank my TEP colleagues who have helped to keep me motivated, dedicated and confident to complete this journey.

Finally I would like to thank friends and family for being patient, comforting and supportive. In particular, I would like to thank Craige for helping to manage my stress levels, spurring me on and having the understanding, acceptance and patience to allow me to keep going.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction to my interest and involvement in the research area

This research study was conducted to fulfil the requirements of the University of Manchester Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology. When deciding on a topic to research for this requirement I reflected on my own interests and practice as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP). As a TEP on placement in an Educational Psychology Service (EPS) within a Local Authority (LA) in the North-West of England an interest in Nurture Groups (NGs) as an intervention was developed. Through various conversations about NGs with members of the EPS, it became apparent that there had once been a ‘Nurture Group Board’ and funding existed for Nurture Group training. Unfortunately this funding ceased to be available and consequently a number of NGs stopped running. For schools that run NGs currently, or may be considering developing their own NG provision, some may see this as a financial risk. This conversation created formative direction and, after looking at the literature within this area, it was felt important to investigate the possible facilitators and barriers of running a successful NG, particularly in secondary schools and how barriers have been overcome.

Alongside this interest, provision and inclusion for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) within the authority has also been of some interest throughout various pieces of casework. At present a number of children with SEBD currently attend the pupil referral units (PRUs), following a breakdown in their placement within their mainstream school. At these short stay PRUs, messages are frequently conveyed to the pupils that this is their chance to "prove themselves". In such an environment, for a number of pupils, this has often been difficult and, during assessments with various pupils, it appears that positive relationships with peers with similar difficulties are often difficult to develop and maintain. This seems to have created possible further difficulties in the transition back to their mainstream school and, for some, has resulted in placement in a Specialist Provision for pupils with SEBD. This, therefore, further instigated an interest in researching interventions, particularly, NG provision for pupils with SEBD within mainstream secondary schools. Specifically, the model of nurture; how implementation has occurred and potential benefits were of interest.

When discussing SEBD pupils, the current author acknowledges that a range of terms are often used within the literature (e.g., EBD, BESD and SEBD). The term SEBD will be used consistently throughout this document.
1.2. Introduction to the study

The literature review chapter provides an overview and definition of SEBD before outlining concerns that exist in relation to the education of pupils with SEBD. In the UK, pupils with SEBD, run the risk of being formally excluded from school due to their difficulties (Cooper, 2003) and despite a striving for inclusion from the UK Government, the inclusion for some pupils still appears to be difficult. Cooper (2004) discusses that children with SEBD in the UK are just as likely to be placed in exclusionary provisions as they were 30 years ago and have been described as the hardest group to ‘include’ (Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003). Moreover, Evans & Lunt (2002) describe them as the most difficult to manage in mainstream schools.

A number of obstacles to inclusion exists for these pupils with research finding such obstacles to include: tensions being raised between raising standards and inclusion (Burton, Bartlett, & Anderson De Cuevas, 2009); professional attitudes/teacher perceptions of pupils with SEBD (Hamill and Boyd, 2001); problematic relationships with teachers (Hamill & Boyd, 2001) lack of teacher training (Goodman & Burton, 2010); unsatisfactory multi-agency working (Goodman & Burton, 2010) and inconsistencies and lack of clarity within policies (Burton et al., 2009). Contradictory statements also exist, with Head Teachers’ powers continuing to include the ability to exclude pupils (DCSF, 2008) despite there being a strives for inclusion.

A number of concerns exists with regard to the education of pupils categorised as experiencing SEBD and Farrell and Humphrey (2009) outline concerns existing in five main areas (inclusion of children with SEBD, early intervention and prevention, working with families, educational attainments of pupils with SEBD and transitions from school into college/work). A range of intervention styles is presented including ones that focus on behaviour and NGs are presented as a possible beneficial intervention for pupils displaying SEBD. Research is presented regarding NGs in primary schools before discussing the potential usefulness of NGs in secondary schools whilst highlighting the queries (presented for example by Colley, 2009) as to whether a classic NG can be implemented into a secondary school with success. Cooke, Yeomans and Parkes (2008) and Garner and Thomas (2011) present positive effects to NG attendance for pupils in secondary schools.

The current research aimed to replicate findings from Cooke et al., (2008) and Garner and Thomas (2011) by further exploring the benefits of secondary NGs with different people’s perspectives being collected. It also aimed to add to the research by Colley (2009) by further describing the variations of NGs that are run in secondary schools, distinguishing between the variations outlined by (Cooper, Arnold, & Boyd, 2001). The current research also, however, aimed to add new information by exploring barriers and facilitators to
implementation given the suggestions that the implementation of a classic NG in a secondary school may be quite difficult (Colley, 2009). To fill the gaps and add to existing NG literature, the following RQs aimed to be answered:

1) How are NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG?
2) How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?
3) How does NG attendance affect pupils?

To answer these RQs a multiple embedded case study design was chosen (Yin, 2009) with four embedded units of analysis. Two NGs with the Quality Mark Award (QMA) (The Nurture Group Network, 2012a) in secondary schools were chosen. Within each case three members of staff were chosen (the NG Facilitator, a member of the Senior Management Team and a Key Worker from an external agency) and between four to six NG pupils. Staff were interviewed through semi-structured interviews and pupils took part in a focus group. Data were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In addition a short questionnaire developed by the researcher was completed and observations were undertaken. Data from these sources were analysed using content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Time 1 and time 2 Boxall Profile for Young People (BPYP) (Bennathan, Boxall, & Colley, 2010) scores were also gathered and analysed using descriptive statistics.

In the findings chapter, findings are drawn together and thematic networks are presented for each case and each RQ. Thematic networks developed through cross case synthesis of findings are also presented and additional data is presented before findings are triangulated and drawn together.

In the discussion chapter cross case findings are discussed and linked to the broader NG literature and, where appropriate the SEBD literature. Findings are also pattern matched across cases and to the initial theoretical propositions. Rival explanations are also presented and implications for practice are discussed. Finally, reflections of the researcher are outlined and potential areas for future research are discussed.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Outline of the literature review

The literature review will start with an overview and definition of SEBD and will then outline main concerns that exist relating to the education of pupils with SEBD. The main concerns appear to be: working with families; educational attainments of pupils with SEBD; the inclusion of children with SEBD; transitions from school into college/work and early intervention and prevention (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009). Whilst very interesting topics individually, the literature review will discuss these fairly briefly before moving on to focus on current interventions for pupils with SEBD in school settings. These interventions are then discussed within four key areas (interventions that focus on behaviour management; interventions that focus on emotional well-being with a therapeutic focus; interventions that focus on communication and interventions that focus on establishing peer, parent and teacher relationships).

NGs as an intervention will then be discussed and linked, where possible, to the key concerns and current strands of intervention. A description of NGs will initially be outlined before presenting the current evidence base for NGs in primary schools. Research into NGs in secondary schools will then be outlined, discussing potential barriers to the implementation and outlining gaps within the NG literature. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 provide a visual representation of the literature review structure.

Figure 2.1: Visual representation outlining the structure of the SEBD literature

An outline of how SEBD may be defined

A presentation of current concerns relating to the education of pupils with SEBD

Focus of interventions for pupils with SEBD

NGs as an intervention
By narrowing the focus as shown above, allows specific gaps to be presented leading on to the focus of the current research and methodological approaches adopted.

2.2. Review strategy used

Initially the SEBD literature was searched with a focus on the inclusion and exclusion of pupils with SEBD. Throughout this search, a number of papers were discovered that related to other issues and so these were also included in the literature review. When defining SEBD as a label, the current author also reflected on the fact that other concerns (as opposed to exclusion discretely) would also be pertinent and would involve a range of pupils as opposed to pupils only exhibiting externalising behaviour. Within this area of literature reviewing the search terms were “emotional difficulties and inclusion”; “SEBD and inclusion” and “school exclusion”. PsycInfo, ERIC, ASSIA and Zetoc were used with the aim of establishing knowledge within this area from a range of sources.

Following reflections made by the author, the SEBD and intervention literature was searched, more broadly, to capture interventions delivered for children defined as SEBD without there being such a heavy focus on the externalisation “type” of SEBD. Search terms used within this literature review were “SEBD and intervention” and “emotional difficulties and intervention and school”. Again, these search terms were used across the four databases outlined above.
As databases were searched using a number of search terms, the literature review was systematic in a sense. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were however fairly broad for this part of the review and papers were deemed to be relevant if they had a focus on school aged children/young people in a school setting. These broad inclusion criteria were used to allow an overview of SEBD as a topic to be gained.

The NG literature was then searched (although some NG papers were also found through the “SEBD and intervention” search). Search terms used for this strand of the literature review were “nurture group and schools” and “nurture groups”. PsycInfo, ERIC and ASSIA were searched to allow for a broad search of a number of peer reviewed journal articles. After the databases were searched, Google Scholar was then used to determine if all relevant articles had been found. During a search of Google Scholar, one more article was found resulting in the researcher using another database (Zetoc) to attempt to broaden the search further. This one paper was found during this final search and it was concluded that relevant articles had therefore been accessed. Inclusion criteria for this area of the literature review included:

- papers that discussed NGs that followed the main principles of nurture;
- papers that included school-aged children;
- papers that had a descriptive focus and papers that involved research;
- papers that discussed NGs with children in both primary and secondary settings.

Exclusion criteria involved:

- papers that described “nurture” in a general sense with little emphasis on a NG;
- papers that involved children younger than school age;
- documents within the ‘grey literature’.

When narrowing the focus of the research to outline gaps in the knowledge base, finer detail and attention were paid to those papers that focussed on NGs in secondary schools. This yielded a total of four papers which will be discussed in greater detail.

2.3. Evaluation of the literature found

A number of relevant papers were found during the current searches and, through the use of the databases, papers from peer reviewed journals were selected. It could be argued then that the quality of the papers has therefore been scrutinised through the process of publication. It has been noted that the majority of the papers found in relation to NGs were mainly small scale research projects although a large scale review paper was also found by Cooper and Whitebread (2007). The majority of the NG research found is also relatively
recent with the majority of papers published through the 2000s. Further evaluations and limitations of adopted methodological approaches will be discussed throughout the research summary when appropriate.

As stated in section 2.1, the following referenced summary of the literature will begin by defining SEBD, discussing main concerns relating to pupils with SEBD in schools before moving on to discussing interventions implemented in schools. NGs will then be discussed as an intervention for SEBD, within primary schools and then secondary schools.

2.4. Referenced summary of the literature review: SEBD

2.4.1. What is SEBD?

In the UK, SEBD is an important but problematic umbrella construct which falls under the remit of Special Educational Needs (Armstrong & Hallett, 2012) and across the literature a variety of terms are used (including SEBD, BESD, EBD). This results in there being a lack of an international definition to classify a child as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Armstrong & Hallett, 2012). Enormous elements of subjectivity surround the conceptualisation of SEBD (Fovet, 2011) and a lack of criteria, agreement and confusion surrounds the use of the label (Rees, Farrell, & Rees, 2003). Problems in the recognition, assessment and prevention of SEBD are associated with the absence of an absolute definition (Rees et al., 2003) and due to this lack of consensus, subjective complaints and behavioural descriptors are used (Wassef, Ingham, Lassiter-Collins, & Mason, 1995).

Despite this lack of clarity, however, pupils do exist who experience difficulties with their emotions and behaviour (Rees et al., 2003) and The Code of Practice (DfES., 2001) made it clear that EPs have a key role to play in the assessment of SEBD. The Code of Practice (DfES., 2001) does not, however, advise which factors may be relevant to a student’s difficulties or which assessment methods should be used (Rees et al., 2003). This may allow for further subjectivity around the identification depending on how EPs psychologically formulate a child’s difficulties and needs and hypotheses of SEBD may follow either a medical model or a sociological basis (Fovet, 2011).

Although it is very difficult to objectively define labels that are commonly used to define children with special needs (Farrell & Tsakalidou, 1999), pupils with SEBD may be described as having behaviours that present a barrier to learning, whilst possibly being withdrawn, disruptive, hyperactive or lacking in concentration whilst having immature social skills (DfES, 2005). Furthermore, Fovet (2011) outlines that, as a result of these factors, additional resources are required to meet their social and behavioural needs. Observations of such factors are therefore subjective and context dependant (Fovet, 2011). Teachers often
disagree about what constitutes unacceptable behaviour (Fovet, 2011) and increasing concerns about behaviour problems in schools often creates a debate about the nature and causes of these difficulties (Camilleri, Cefai, & Cooper, 2011).

Emotional and behavioural disorders are outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) and this determines whether a child or adult has an emotional disorder based upon specific behavioural characteristics (PACER Center, 2006). The identification may have come about due to difficulties establishing relationships with peers and school-based adults (Fovet, 2011) but, as previously stated, behavioural characteristics observed will ultimately be subjective and context dependant (Fovet, 2011). PACER (2006) also explain that a number of examples of emotional disorders are outlined in the DSM-IV, including anxiety disorder, conduct disorder and Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD). A fifth edition has since been published (DSM-5) which continues to include these examples of emotional disorders (American Psychiatric Publishing, 2013). The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10) (World Health Organization, 2010) also describes a number of behavioural and emotional disorders (within the “Mental and behavioural disorders” chapter) with onset usually occurring in childhood. This, again, outlines a number of different disorders including hyperkinetic disorder, conduct disorder and emotional disorders such as social anxiety.

Moreover, Fovet (2011) presents a definition provided by the DfES (2005): “SEBD does not encompass pathological disorders and psychiatric issues; it covers a spectrum ranging from unacceptable behaviour to mental illness, serious mental illness being excluded from the definition” (p. 250). Boys are three times more likely than girls to be categorised and six times more likely in the first year of secondary school (Hamill & Boyd, 2001). Furthermore, Farrell and Polat (2003) suggest that pupils with SEBD often have presenting behaviour that creates difficulties to manage both at home and school and these difficulties will have persisted for some time, with problems also existing in lasting and close relationships with adults and children. Typically children with SEBD come from economically and socially disadvantaged families (Farrell & Polat, 2003).

As stated previously the use of SEBD as a label has attracted criticism and it has also been suggested that the use of the label “SEBD” may prevent schools from being inclusive as “packaging this difficulty as a problem with the child” (Thomas & Loxley, 2007, p. 63) causes educational settings to be diverted away from looking at ways that schools can become more inclusive (Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Thomas and Loxley (2007) also state that “attention should be paid not only to the analysis and treatment of a child’s behaviour but also to the operations and systems in the school that may cause or aggravate such behaviour” (p.48).
2.4.2. Educators’ and policy-makers’ concerns for pupils with SEBD.

Armstrong and Hallett (2012) conclude that children presenting with SEBD constitute some of the most vulnerable individuals within the education system in the UK and suggest that:

the behaviours of children or young people in educational settings are a major cause for concern in the UK and internationally. Children or young people classified as ‘having’ SEBD (Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties) are a group whose welfare has elicited particular concern amongst educational psychologists (EPs), educators and policy-makers. (p.77)

Farrell and Humphrey (2009) also state that concerns have existed for many years relating to the education of pupils with SEBD. They go on to outline concerns into five main areas:

- Working with families
- Educational attainments of pupils with SEBD
- Transitions from school into college/work
- Early intervention and prevention
- The inclusion of children with SEBD

Whilst each of these topics would be interesting to discuss in depth individually, some will be discussed fairly briefly. The issue of inclusion was, however, raised as a concern across most papers discussing pupils with SEBD. This topic will, therefore, be discussed in more detail.

2.4.2.1. Working with families.

Farrell and Humphrey (2009) outline that research into the positive benefits of relationships between professionals and parents of children with SEBD is hard to find and difficulties exist in professionals’ engagement with parents. A number of reasons for this are presented, with one being that such parents had a negative experience of school themselves (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009). Moreover, they suggest that it is vitally important for professionals to understand how vulnerable families may be feeling.

During the evaluation of a multi-disciplinary, multi-level early intervention programme Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) found that when full engagement of the family, the child and the school occurred; more positive results, relating to inclusion and reintegration to the education system were witnessed, highlighting the importance of such relationships.
2.4.2.2. The educational attainments of pupils with SEBD.

Given that SEBD students are far less likely to achieve government curriculum targets, challenges for schools to include them effectively exist (Burton & Goodman, 2011). Farrell and Humphrey (2009) present a number of studies finding a correlation, particularly between low reading abilities and children with SEBD, allowing conclusions to be drawn that a number of pupils categorised as SEBD may also have undetected learning difficulties. Whilst a question of causation is presented, Farrell and Humphrey (2009) outline that it is vitally important for school to help children get off to a good start but question “should the [intervention] approach emphasise therapy or education or both?” (p.68).

2.4.2.3. Transition from school to college/work.

Schools may be viewed as successful if long-term outcomes indicate that pupils are fully included in society and indications of successes as an adult are witnessed (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009). Although limited UK research exists, Farrell and Humphrey (2009) summarise research that has found that SEBD pupils are more likely to be involved in substance abuse; criminal activity and have the lowest employment rates. Furthermore, Farrell and Polat (2003) found that pupils who had attended a SEBD specialist provision lacked ambition in regard to future prospects and naming such a school on pupils’ CVs when attempting to secure employment was described as the “kiss of death” (p. 286).

2.4.2.4. Early intervention and prevention of SEBD.

Farrell and Humphrey (2009) suggest that successful early intervention programmes could have a dramatic impact on improving the quality of life for vulnerable children and families but often provision may only be implemented when children are aged nine years or above. Panayiotopoulos and Kerfoot (2007) also suggest that LA resources are so stretched due to a statutory duty to provide education out of school, that there is little prevention. Early intervention is described as being necessary, however, so that incidents of permanent exclusion and long waiting lists to access services will be reduced (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007). Prevention at an early stage is also thought to make the problem more approachable, preventing further deterioration (Panayiotopoulos & Kerfoot, 2007).

Farrell and Humphrey (2009) outline some interventions (including NGs and the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum) that could be described as preventative. SEAL is a whole-school approach aimed at promoting the social and emotional skills that are thought to underpin effective learning, positive behaviour, regular attendance and emotional wellbeing (DfEE, 2005). During a study assessing the impact of small group work within the delivery of SEAL (at a Wave 3 level) statistically significant evidence was collected implying
that SEAL small group work has a positive impact, although the average effect size was described as small (Humphrey et al., 2008).

Moreover, Wassef et al. (1995) outline that prevention and early intervention programmes should be school-based as "adolescents are already affiliated with the school system and are willing to receive services there if confidentiality is guaranteed" (p. 534).

2.4.2.5. The inclusion of children with SEBD.

Perhaps one of the most discussed concerns across the SEBD literature is that of the inclusion of pupils with SEBD. The majority of studies that have been carried out reinforce the general view that the inclusion of pupils with SEBD poses a major challenge for schools; local authorities and the government (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009).

The history of inclusion began with the Warnock report (DES, 1978) and the 1981 Education Act, which promoted a shift in attitudes regarding the education of children with special educational needs (SEN). The Green Paper (Excellence for All Children) (DfEE, 1997) also supported inclusion and stated that all children with SEN, where ever possible, should be included in mainstream schools. This followed The 1996 Education Act which outlined that schools should use their best endeavours to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil who has SEN. More recent legislation encouraged a greater commitment to quality, inclusive opportunities within mainstream settings (DfEE, 2001) and the Removing Barriers to Achievement document (DfES, 2004) stated that barriers should be removed for achievement with every teacher expecting to teach children with SEN, whilst being equipped with the skills to do so effectively. Publications also began to refer to inclusion as a human rights issue (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004) and the UK Labour Government promised to prioritise equality (Goodman & Burton, 2010). The UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child also spells out the right of disabled children to be educated in the mainstream and reminds politicians that a child with a disability should not be discriminated against or excluded, being educated in a way that allows the child to achieve individual development with the fullest possible social integration (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004).

The UK Government from 1997 to 2010 “identified inclusion into mainstream schools as the key to educating students with BESD and other special educational needs (SEN)” (Burton & Goodman, 2011, p.134). Inclusive education differs from the notion of integration and, rather than children with SEN being ready to be integrated into mainstream, it is more about the school’s duty to accept a child, restructuring practices in school to maximise the participation of all learners (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004; Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Furthermore, Follows (2003) adds that if the school as a whole has an ethos that promotes acceptance, with a policy that accommodates the needs of children with SEN, the risk of
exclusion is reduced and barriers should be removed, enabling the child to fully participate (Follows, 2003). Research tells us that pupils with SEBD do best in schools that have strong values based on a commitment to valuing all pupils as a member of their school community (Cooper, 2008).

Despite Excellence For All Children (DfEE, 1997) creating excitement and optimism amongst educators in favour of inclusion, contradictory statements were, however, made such as the continuation of special needs schools along with the fact that head teachers continue to have the power to exclude pupils (DCSF, 2008). This resulted in a change toward greater inclusion for some with segregation being bound to occur for others (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). The Reasons Against Segregated Schooling document (CSIE, 2003) also stated that the powers to run separate special schools should be removed along with the main constraints to access to mainstream.

Despite a striving for inclusion from the UK Government, the inclusion for some pupils still appears to be difficult and Cooper (2004) discusses that children with SEBD in the UK are just as likely to be placed in exclusionary provisions as they were 30 years ago. They have also been described as the hardest group to ‘include’ (Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003) and have been described as the most difficult to manage in mainstream schools (Evans & Lunt, 2002). The successful inclusion of young people who become disengaged or ‘disaffected’ proves to be more of a challenge for EPs and schools (Atkinson & Woods, 2003).

Despite there being a government stipulation that all teachers should be trained to appropriately identify and meet students’ special educational needs (DfES, 2004; Goodman & Burton, 2010; Gray & Panter, 2000) a lack of training and feelings of competency appear to be common themes across the literature. Avramidis et al. (2000) gained teacher perceptions about inclusion and, whilst there were positive views regarding the overall concept of inclusion, over half of respondents said that teachers needed further training to be able to manage and meet the needs of children deemed to experience SEBD. Teachers interviewed by Hamill and Boyd (2001), however, expressed concerns regarding a perceived lack of opportunity for training. Moreover, as there is no mandatory specialist training for working with students who have SEBD (Goodman & Burton, 2010) general SEN training is unlikely to be sufficient in preparing teachers to cater effectively for all types of SEN (Goodman & Burton, 2010). Armstrong & Hallett (2012) therefore conclude that educators in the UK appear to be under-equipped, conceptually and emotionally to support children with SEBD.

These lack of training and feelings of self-efficacy have also affected the perceptions of teachers toward pupils with SEBD with research indicating that practitioners’ negativity
toward children and young people with SEBD is borne through lack of theoretical understanding of the function of behaviour (Armstrong & Hallett, 2012). Furthermore, teachers’ behaviours and perceptions are predicted based on their belief that the behaviour is “within-child” and innate within the child’s personality, rather than to do with interactions within the environment with others (Armstrong & Hallett, 2012). Farrell & Polat (2003) also summarise that reviews of teachers’ attitudes have suggested that teachers may be unlikely to have positive attitudes toward children with SEBD due to having negative perceptions of problem behaviours and, as a whole, mainstream schools can be hostile toward the inclusion of children with SEBD.

The implication that such perceptions can have on the important teacher-pupil relationship for pupils with SEBD (Goodman & Burton, 2010; Cooper, 2008) has also been well documented and teachers’ attitudes (both positive and negative) toward pupils were discussed frequently throughout pupil interviews (Hamill & Boyd, 2001). Through observations, Hamill and Boyd (2001) also found that pupil behaviour was more influenced by attitude, approach and expectation of the teacher and less so than other factors such as the time of day or the nature of the subject.

Another main problem conveyed throughout the literature is that of pressures from schools to meet curriculum targets (Evans & Lunt, 2002; Farrell & Polat, 2003) and current policies and practices in education result in excellence being measured solely on academic performance. This leads to schools being increasingly reluctant to cater for pupils who may be disruptive, with the inclusion of pupils with SEBD appearing bleak (Farrell & Polat, 2003). Schools may also compete for children creating reluctance to cater for pupils with SEBD (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009).

Given that teachers are under increasing pressures to meet curriculum targets (which do not take into account the impact of the presence of students with SEN) there is a fear that teachers may be inclined to pay closer attention to students who have clear capacities to achieve standards (Burton & Goodman, 2011). Teachers may be fearful of accommodating children with SEBD in the mainstream classroom over fears of jeopardising the achievement of others. This may overshadow attempts to address the educational and other developmental needs of disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEBD (Burton et al., 2009).

Due to some of these barriers to inclusion, more pupils may be likely to be referred to alternative provision with mainstream schools being reluctant to take them back (Farrell & Tsakalidou, 1999). This creates a challenge for professionals working with such pupils (Farrell & Polat, 2003) and although exclusion rates have dropped (DfE, 2011a) and have done since the 1990s, (for example Jull (2008) outlines a 24% decrease in permanent
exclusion rates between 1997/1998 and 2002/2003) it appears that increased numbers of placements in pupil referral units has, instead, been noted (Jull, 2008).

2.4.2.6. The ‘exclusion’ of pupils with SEBD.

Although rates of excluded pupils have reportedly dropped over the past two years (DfE, 2011a) throughout the late 1990’s rates reached a peak (Fletcher-Campbell, 2001) and concerns grew about the link between exclusion from school and from society in general (Fletcher-Campbell & Wilkin, 2003). Throughout 2009 and 2010 children on free school meals were four times more likely than their peers to be permanently excluded and the main reason for permanent exclusions was disruptive behaviour (DfE, 2011a). Pupils with a statement of SEN were still eight times more likely than children without to receive a permanent exclusion (Follows, 2003) and the rate for boys was six times higher than that for girls. As stated earlier, Cooper (2004) discusses that children with SEBD in the UK are just as likely to be placed in exclusionary provisions as they were 30 years ago going against the message of inclusion (Jull, 2008).

In the UK, pupils with SEBD, run the risk of being formally excluded from school due to their difficulties (Cooper, 2003) whilst being at a greater risk of social rejection and exclusion than most other people due to individual characteristics or a set of social circumstances (Cooper, 2004). Evidence suggests that such students, who could be described as the most socially and emotionally vulnerable, are likely to have the least satisfactory experience of school (Cooper, 2008) and despite the UK Government’s move to encourage inclusive education for all pupils, this still remains a problem for pupils with SEBD (Farrell & Tsakalidou, 1999).

Longstanding obstacles appear to remain that have yet to be addressed (Goodman & Burton, 2010) with research finding such obstacles to include: tensions being raised between raising standards and inclusion (Burton et al., 2009); professional attitudes/teacher perceptions of pupils with SEBD (Hamill and Boyd, 2001); problematic relationships with teachers (Hamill & Boyd, 2001) lack of teacher training (Goodman & Burton, 2010); unsatisfactory multi-agency working (Goodman & Burton, 2010) and inconsistencies and lack of clarity within policies (Burton et al., 2009). Although such obstacles make the inclusion of pupils with SEBD difficult, Jull (2008) states that “assuming a positive school effect on the academic and social development, reducing and/or interrupting the continuity of attendance via sanctions such as exclusion may exacerbate negative socio–behavioural developmental patterns” (p. 13).

Pupils may also feel not wanted (Fletcher-Campbell, 2001) and exclusion from school may be the most explicit form of rejection by a school towards its pupils (Munn & Lloyd, 2005) highlighting the need to include these pupils whenever and wherever possible. Moreover,
pupils excluded from school can become more vulnerable whilst exclusion of children from school can be expensive (Fitzherbert, 1997). Gray and Panter (2000) also discussed a developing view that educational and social exclusion can only lead to negative outcomes, not just for the pupils but for society as a whole. Furthermore, SEBD is perhaps the only SEN that increases the risk of exclusion as a function of the SEN requiring specialist provision in the first instance (Jull, 2008) and with no other educational problem is it accepted that exclusions or legally sanctioned punishments be applied (Cooper, 2008).

2.4.3. Interventions for pupils with SEBD.

Concerns have existed for many years regarding the most effective ways to educate pupils with SEBD (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009) and questions have been raised regarding whether intervention approached should emphasise therapy, education or both (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009). Cooper (2006) acknowledges that the range and scope of SEBD are almost limitless and so too are the ranges of interventions from which one may select to implement.

Due to the range of interventions available, these will be presented in order of themes: interventions that focus on behaviour management; interventions that focus on emotional well-being with a therapeutic focus; interventions that focus on communication and interventions that focus on establishing relationships (peer, parent and teacher). Whilst the current author acknowledges that interventions often overlap in terms of the focus in which they take (e.g., even though an intervention may be defined as targeting peer relationship so too will it have an impact on emotional well-being), literature has been presented in this way to summarise the range of interventions coherently.

2.4.3.1. Interventions that focus on behaviour.

Ultimately it could be argued that interventions that focus on the behaviour of pupils with SEBD in schools are delivered to prevent school exclusions. When developing a whole-school approach to promote inclusion Jones and Smith (2004) developed two new systems. One was based on an assertive discipline approach (the “Discipline for Learning” system) and another involved a merit reward system based on a behaviourist external motivation of behaviour. Both school staff and pupils supported most aspects of the new systems but some minor inconsistencies were witnessed in terms of staff administration. Whilst there was a reduction in minor misbehaviours, improvements in attendance and a significant reduction in fixed-term exclusions, there was a small group of pupils that did not benefit from either behaviour systems. These pupils were instead in need of additional pastoral support and the adoption of “eco-systemic” approaches.

The fact that such behavioural interventions did not benefit all pupils and the need for such interventions to be delivered consistently may outline a potential weakness for a behavioural
intervention alone to be implemented for pupils with SEBD. Current behaviour systems in school aim to control behaviour problems and may be less suited for dealing with emotional and non-disruptive problems (Wassef et al., 1995).

Cooper (2005) argues that children and young people cannot be "compelled or coerced" into behaving in ways in which school desire and instead humanistic and therapeutic approaches may be used to support, guide and engage young people to help them to find ways of behaving in a more functional way (Cooper, 2005). Although interventions used by schools often originate from a behavioural perspective (Bishop, 2008) it is argued that these approaches will instead deal with 'symptoms rather than underlying problems' (Bishop, 2008. p.5). Cooper (2008) suggests that no strategy can be more important than talking through issues in a calm and sympathetic way with pupils with possible or actual SEBD and, especially when such young people may have a underdeveloped sense of self or limited communication and social skills. They may also benefit from a more intimate setting that can focus on providing emotional security. Cooper (2008) suggests that settings that may have these qualities are NGs and Bishop (2008) suggests that there is a need for this different approach. A developmental approach may therefore be required instead and when discussing the implementation of a play-skills intervention, Woolf (2008) outlines that “providing child-centred play opportunities and re-creating early attachment experiences facilitates a child’s social and emotional development” (p. 49).

2.4.3.2. Interventions that focus on emotional well-being with a therapeutic focus.

Research into interventions in the literature that focus on emotional well-being are done so from a range of psychological paradigms. A range of these are outlined below.

Some interventions found to have benefits involved the use of relaxation, yoga and mindfulness. For example Cullen-Powell and Barlow (2005) found that children engaging with a self-discovery programme (which involved relaxation activities, peer massage and sessions focussing on becoming aware of their body, thoughts, behaviour and emotions) became calmer and more confident. The sample size was, however small and the study involved only one group in one school. Later research (with a larger sample size) showed the positive impact of the same programme on pupils’ self-confidence, social confidence and communication (Powell, Gilchrist, & Stapley, 2008). Similar to this approach was one delivered by Mendelson et al. (2010) which included yoga-based physical activity, breathing techniques and guided mindfulness practices. Findings reported that young people in the intervention group showed a reduction in problematic patterns of responses to stress (which may include rumination, intrusive thoughts, and emotional arousal).
Other interventions have adopted a cognitive behavioural approach. Cognitive behavioural interventions have historically been used to ameliorate symptoms of anxiety with success and a number of school based “packages” have been developed, such as the FRIENDS programme (Barrett, Webster, Turner, & May, 2003). Some research found, reported using cognitive behavioural therapy to reduce anger (Humphrey & Brooks, 2006) and disruptive behaviour (such as difficulties following class routines, difficulties interacting with peers) (Ruttledge & Petrides, 2011). Whilst positive effects were witnessed, Humphrey and Brooks (2006) found that at follow-up benefits had not been sustained, possibly due to the short-term nature. They also mentioned the difficulty in ensuring client readiness for change. When following the “Tools For Getting Along” intervention (which is based on cognitive behavioural concepts), Daunic et al. (2012) also found that emotional self-regulation could be increased and more pro-social choices were made.

The use of NGs has also been categorised as an ‘emotional intervention’ by Cooper (2006) as they provide an environment that allows pupils to feel emotionally safe and secure. NGs will be discussed in greater detail at a later stage.

2.4.3.3. Interventions that focus on communication.

One feature for many children with SEBD is that of relatively poor communication skills and a variety of possible explanations exist, such as language delay proceeding behaviour difficulties or exasperating difficulties in the classroom and at home (Law, Plunkett, & Stringer, 2012). An alternative neuropsychological hypothesis explains however that developmental delay may underlie both (Law et al., 2012). Although the relationship between behaviour and communication is recognised in the literature, Law & Sivyer (2003) mention that this association may not be widely known in practice. The only way of unpacking causal relationships is to use interventions to explore the links. During a systematic literature review of interventions with a focus on communication, Law et al. (2012) found that all studies included in the review reported positive effects on both communication and behavioural outcomes. Limitations existed, however, and the majority of the studies involved different interventions and various foci on behavioural outcomes.

During a study Law & Sivyer (2003) recruited children in Year 5 and 6 who were already excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from mainstream school and were identified as having language and communication difficulties and emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. A holistic approach to intervention was taken (during which sessions focussed on specific language and social communication skills; behaviour management; issues of self-esteem and general well-being). Findings indicated improved language skills (including social communication skills and semantic skills); higher levels of self-esteem (as measured by a self-rating scale); perceived levels of improvement in measures of emotional and
behavioural status (although this was not statistically significant when looking at Strength and Difficulties (SDQ) scores). Although perceived behaviour improvements were made, differences between groups did not reach statistical significance and conclusions could therefore not be made that language and communication skills necessarily led to modified behaviour. Teacher’s perceptions of the pupils were affected however once an alternative view, one that described language and communication difficulties, was provided which in turn could create a more positive schooling experience.

2.4.3.4. Interventions that focus on establishing positive relationships.

A number of research studies were found that focussed on the improvement of relationships. Some of these had the focus of relationships with parents, other had a focus of peer relationship and others focussed on pupils relationships with school staff. Each will be outlined briefly below.

Relationships with peers.

Impacts of peer influence in the classroom can be both positive and negative and Cooper and Jacobs (2011) summarise research that highlight both. For example they discuss research that shows how disruptive behaviours in classrooms promote negative behaviours (which has the potential to undermine interventions designed to alleviate behavioural difficulties). They go on, however, to highlight examples of positive impacts of peer influence, particularly on learning through, for example peer-tutoring or peer assisted learning. Wassef et al. (1995) also outline that adolescents seem to favour using friends and trusted adults when needed (as opposed to mental health professionals) and tend to “reach out” to peers for support. This is assuming, of course, that the individual requiring support has a peer group from whom they can access support or the social skills to do so. With this in mind, an important factor that could promote resilience in young people is through the development of peer relationships and social skills.

When investigating the impact of a social skills programme on participant’s pro-social behaviour and problem behaviours Chen and Bullock (2004) found that the majority of pupils (66.7%) showed a decrease in problem behaviours and an increase in pro-social behaviours. Although this was not the case for all pupils involved, it does perhaps indicate the impact of social skills on disruptive behaviour. An important point is, however, made by Desbiens and Royer (2003). Following an evaluation of another social skills programme (during which changes only occurred in peer perceptions of their own social skills and a potential lack of generalisability of skills learnt through a small group intervention to the classroom) they suggest that a collaboration between school and home should also occur to support the development of new skills.
Relationships with parents.

As stated earlier, difficulties in working with families of pupils with SEBD is a major concern (Farrell & Humphrey, 2009) and tensions between school and home can act as a major barrier to solutions to SEBD (Panayiotopoulos, 2004).

Adolescent adjustment is impacted by parent-child relationships and parenting practices (Stallman & Ralph, 2007) and parenting interventions (as evaluated by Stallman & Ralph, 2007 for example) can impact on a parent’s use of over-reactive parenting strategies. Moreover, the relationship between parental stress and conduct difficulties has been found to be linked and, when parental stress levels reduced so did perceived levels of conduct disorders (Broadhead, Chilton, & Crichton, 2009). Furthermore, the distress levels measured in parents and parent–child dysfunctional interactions decreased following engagement with a parenting intervention (‘Scallywags’), highlighting the impact of parental stress on the parent-child relationship. Interventions directed at parents may, therefore, impact on their child’s behaviour.

Relationships with school staff

As stated earlier, teacher perceptions and teacher training are key factors that may affect the successful inclusion of pupils with SEBD and educators are frequently cited as a key agent, a significant other (Humphrey, 2004) conveying the importance of school staff-pupil relationships. When discussing children who display patterns of response that may be identified as resistant/ambivalent pattern of insecure attachment behaviour, Geddes (2003) suggests that the teacher can help the child to focus on engagement with tasks when they have an understanding of the meaning of behaviour displayed induced by challenging tasks.

Approaches that focus on relationships rather than behaviour also have benefits (Armstrong & Hallett, 2012) and support staff and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo) conveyed the importance of a nurturing environment where children can feel safe and secure (Burton & Goodman, 2011) stating that “children need to be educated in an environment with caring adults not just ‘crowd controllers’” (p. 141). Furthermore, Cooper (2008) adds that positive-adult pupil relationships often act as protective and remedial factors in the lives of young people with SEBD and Teaching Assistant (TA) support has also been found to be beneficial, especially when one-to-one support can be offered with an “open-door policy” being adopted (Burton & Goodman, 2011). One SENCo reflected on the fact that their job was to do more than educate but to be more and more like a parent, stating a commitment toward improving general well-being as well as educational achievements (Burton & Goodman, 2011).
When investigating pupils’ preferences for emotional well-being support in high school, Kendal, Keeley and Callery (2011) found that advice was viewed more positively when delivered in a friendly way. Trust and privacy was also a key component, with teachers potentially being seen as untrustworthy, lacking in empathy and focussed on problem solving.

Fovet (2009) also found that SEBD pupils were receptive to the use of humour by teachers and hypothesise that teachers who successfully use humour do so to establish reciprocity with pupils. Receptivity emphasised the need for what these children framed as genuine relationships with teachers, and, although not sufficient on its own, could work as platform on which to shape productive teacher-student relationships.

2.4.3.5. Interventions implemented systemically.

Interventions that are also routinely implemented (and could be conceptualised to be applied at a more systemic level) include provisions such as special schools, PRUs, and “bases” on mainstream school sites.

For many years the most effective way to educate pupils with SEBD have raised concerns (Farrell & Polat, 2003, Farrell & Tsakalidou, 1999) and an “inclusion debate” around such pupils appears to exist in terms of a preference for mainstream vs. integration into alternative provision. Cooper (2004) conveys though, that pupils should be placed in a setting where they have access to and support for maximum social and academic engagement and recent government legislation states that a bias towards the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream must be ended (DfE, 2011b). Furthermore, Goodman and Burton (2010) do, however, raise concerns related to the extent to which students with SEBD are really being “included” in mainstream schooling due to reliance on alternative provisions and learning support units. Cooper (2004), however, suggests that inclusion means more than a child remaining in mainstream provision and states that if the circumstances do not support and promote the individual’s social, emotional and cognitive engagement, then the setting is not providing an inclusive experience. Cooper (2004) also states that forms of provision and placements should be based on each individual’s needs and capabilities whilst taking into account the options available to this individual meaning that “no one type of provision should be favoured over any other” (p.222). Farrell and Tsakalidou (1999) also add that, although pupils have a right to a good education for some pupils, this basic right could only be met in special school and pupils who remain in mainstream may be more isolated, surrounded by unsympathetic peers and teachers (Farrell & Tsakalidou, 1999).
When reviewing the literature within this area advantages and disadvantages do appear to exist. Hamill and Boyd (2001) for example, found that pupil support bases attracted support from parents, school staff and the pupils, particularly in ensuring that pupils were not permanently excluded, and pupils saw the pupil support bases as supportive. Farrell and Polat, (2003) also found that a residential school setting was one of the only places that pupils had felt listened to, supported and cared for.

Government inspections of special schools for pupils with SEBD have, however, found that many are failing to provide a good education for pupils (Farrell & Polat, 2003) although the quality of alternative provision has been seen to have improved in recent years (Burton et al., 2009). Concerns exist, however, with regard to the fact that PRUs may positively reinforce disruptive behaviour due to such settings being seen as a reward (Goodman & Burton, 2010). Furthermore, Farrell and Polat (2003) suggest that the integration into special needs provision can be tarred with negative stereotypes, stigma and isolation from the young person’s community and effects on employment prospect. Where ever possible such segregation should include a time limit or plan for inclusion (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004) but the reintegration of pupils from alternative provision into mainstream education has been found to be widely perceived as problematic (Burton et al., 2009).

Farrell and Tsakalidou (1999) found that few pupils referred to SEBD provision are reintegrated back into mainstream schools (less than 5%) and if they are, this is rarely to their previous school. Barriers to this reintegration have been found to be the length of time that pupils have been within SEBD provision (Farrell and Tsakalidou, 1999; Gray and Panter, 2000) and a school ethos, attitudes and expectations that are not truly inclusive (Lawrence, 2011). Concerns, therefore exist that pupils in these settings may therefore be put on a “downward spiral of social exclusion” (Follows, 2003, p. 310).

If such pupils are rarely being included back into their mainstream setting how is segregation and exclusion being avoided? And if this is not possible, what changes are mainstream schools making to their policies, curricula, cultures and practices to maximise the participation of such learners which Thomas & Vaughan (2004) suggest is needed to ensure inclusive education? The Reasons Against Segregated Schooling (CSIE, 2003) goes further than this and states the powers to run separate special schools should be removed along with the main constraints to access to mainstream.

2.5. Referenced summary of the literature review: NGs as an intervention

2.5.1. Overview of NGs.

NGs are an “inclusive provision in mainstream schools for children vulnerable to SEBD” (Boxall & Lucas, 2010, p.7) and have been found to facilitate improvements in pupils’ social,
emotional and behavioural development (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005). Ordinarily they are provided as an intervention for children whose learning needs cannot be met in the mainstream class (Boxall & Lucas, 2010). They are an educational, in-school resource for mainly primary school children, although increasingly, aspects of the nurture approach are being used with some success in both the early years and secondary phases (Bennathan & Rose, 2012).

NGs originated in the 1960s in an area of East London (Boxall & Lucas, 2010; Bennathan, 2001) as a response to the pressures on primary schools within this area, which at the time, was in a state of massive upheaval. This was due to the arrival of a multicultural immigrant population and migrants from other parts of the UK moving into the area (Boxall & Lucas, 2010). Large numbers of children were facing school exclusions (Boxall and Lucas, 2010) and schools in this area were finding it increasingly difficult to manage the perceived rise in SEBD among children entering the primary schools (Colley, 2009). Many of the children came from families of hardship and stress with relationships within these families often being strained (Bennathan, 2001) which were believed to had impaired nurturing experiences in the early years (Boxall and Lucas, 2010). This meant that upon entry to school, these children were faced with a mismatch between them and school and the aims of the nurture groups were, therefore, to restore early nurturing experiences within the children’s schools, build in the basic and essential learning experiences normally gained in the first three years of life (Boxall and Lucas, 2010; Bennathan, 2001; Bennathan & Boxhall, 2000) whilst aiming to help young people to develop trust, grow in confidence and self-esteem, developing communication skills (Colley, 2009). In addition NGs aimed to offer a bridge, educationally, to full-time mainstream classes for young people who may be most at risk of exclusion or educational failure (Colley, 2009; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007).

When NGs were developed, Bennathan (2001) describes that they were held in a room in an infant or primary school, often one central to the school to avoid the perception of exclusion. The NGs consisted of a teacher and helper working with 10 to 12 children all of whom could not respond in a ‘normal’ classroom whilst being at risk of exclusion (Bennathan, 2001). The classroom should be comfortable and welcoming, containing and protected by being furnished to be both home and school (Boxall and Lucas, 2010).

Whether a group can be classified as a “nurture group” depends on how closely they adhere to the underlying principles (Boxall and Lucas, 2010) and Cooper et al. (2001) outline characteristics of NGs (See Appendix A). In addition ‘classic’ NGs should incorporate the six NG principles (see Appendix A) outlined in the curriculum guidelines (The Nurture Group Network, 2012b) and current NGs can apply for accreditation for excellence in nurture following criteria for nurture practice set out by the Boxall Quality Mark Award (QMA) (The Nurture Group Network, 2012a). A national survey undertaken by Cooper et al. (2001) found
that there were actually four variations of nurture groups, but only the first two variations can be seen as “true” NGs. The four variations were found to be the classic Boxall NGs; new variant NGs; groups informed by NG principles and aberrant nurture groups.

**The classic Boxall NG**

These groups composed of between 10 and 12 pupils and follow the model originally developed by Marjorie Boxall. They are run in a setting designed to meet developmental needs and promote educational progress with the pupils who attend for temporary and part-time placements, usually for nine out of the ten half day sessions per week. The pupils remain on roll at their mainstream school (to provide a sense of belonging) and remain in the mainstream class for registration and for one afternoon a week. The pupils will ordinarily remain in the NG for between two to four terms with the aim of integrating back into mainstream lessons full time. Placement, target setting and progress is monitored through the Boxall profile and the group is run with two adults.

The NG also incorporates the National Curriculum with a curriculum designed to address social, emotional and behavioural factors and each day follows a regular and predictable pattern including curricular activities, free play and social activities. The room will also include homely features, such as soft furnishings and play materials.

**New variant NGs**

These are based on the same principles that underlie the classic variant but differ organisationally and structurally. For example the amount of time the pupil spends in the NG may differ or the age of the pupils attending may vary (where as classic NGs may cater for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children, this variation may cater for Key Stage 3 pupils). The NG may also serve a cluster of schools. Despite these differences, however, the core features remain (e.g., a small group size, two adults facilitating the group and adherence to the core principles).

**Groups informed by NG principles**

These groups are sometimes referred to as NGs but organisationally differ radically from those outlined above. The activities undertaken in these groups may have a focus on social and developmental issues without constituting an academic emphasis. They will be run by only one member of staff and can be accessed by pupils at different times (e.g., at lunch-time or break-times) or may also have a “drop in” structure.
Aberrant NGs

These are groups that are referred to as a NG but actually undermine or distort the key principles of the classic NG. They will focus on control and containment rather than holding an educational or developmental emphasis.

The following sections will discuss NGs in more detail and refer to what Cooper et al. (2001) and Cooper and Whitebread (2007) would describe as “true” NGs.

2.5.2. The basis of nurture work.

NGs are based mainly on Bowlby’s attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) (Bennathan, 2009; Boxall & Lucas, 2010; Colwell & O’Connor, 2003) which states that the mother provides a secure base from which the developing child can explore the world and return to the secure base for safety (Harris & Butterworth, 2004). They are also based on the assumption that all children are born ready to relate, with a need to attach themselves to carers (Bennathan & Rose, 2012). If children have lacked adequate care, however, they may not see the world as safe and will not have learned that adults can be trusted (Bennathan & Rose, 2012). NGs are about children’s learning and the process and content of early emotional experiences, social and cognitive development and the relationships and experiences that support this (Boxall and Lucas, 2010). NGs recognise that something has gone wrong in the early nurturing care of some children and there is now an opportunity to “re-parent” (Bishop, 2008, p. 5) and allow the school to work flexibly with the children. The children no longer have to fit with the demands of mainstream classes within which they experience stress, anxiety, confusion and failure.

The structures of the NG are based on the context of these early childhood experiences and aim to recreate these situations (e.g., as babies are emotionally and physically attached from the beginning whilst being physically dependant and have a need for protection, within the nurture group, close proximity is maintained in the home area facilitating emotional and physical attachment) (Boxall & Lucas, 2010). The NG is made appropriate for the developmental level and basic experiences and attachments are consolidated (Boxall & Lucas, 2010). The context is supportive and through their relationships with adults they gain: trust and security; awareness of their own feelings and those of others; increasing awareness of their own bodies in space; communication and language skills among others (Boxall and Lucas, 2010).

Another psychological theory underpinning NGs to do the above, however, is Vygotsky’s theory of Sociocultural Learning (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Central to this theory is the idea of The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) which is defined as what
a child can achieve unaided and what can be achieved with the help of an adult (Harris & Butterworth, 2004). Vygotsky’s important contribution was to point out that the child’s own knowledge develops through adults guiding the child toward a more sophisticated solution to a task through scaffolding (Harris & Butterworth, 2004). The helper also acts as a model for learning behaviours (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Work within NGs is based on the idea that both adults work together in partnership to relate to the children’s attachment needs whilst drawing on an understanding of child development (Boxall & Lucas, 2010).

Maslow’s theory of motivation (Maslow, 1943) has also been cited by researchers in relation to NGs (Cooper and Whitebread, 2007; Cooper et al., 2001). Within this theory a hierarchy of needs is presented and, for higher order needs to be met (e.g., self-esteem), other needs such as physiological needs and feelings of safety need to be met first. These are found throughout the NGs practices through, for example, the core element of breakfast (to meet physiological needs such as hunger) and the implementation of routines (for safety).

2.5.3. Effectiveness of NGs in Primary Schools.

There has been a development of a commitment to NGs among UK schools since the late 1990s and the number of schools providing NG support for children has somewhat increased over the last decade (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). NGs were also cited by the government as being a promising form of early intervention for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (DfEE, 1997) although they have not become part of Government policy and often depend on either local or national funding (Taylor & Gulliford, 2011).

In addition to this, research has shown the effectiveness of NGs in primary schools but it is acknowledged that there is a limited number of large scale controlled research projects undertaken, with the majority of evidence coming from case studies (Taylor & Gulliford, 2011). Potentially one of the largest, and most robust, was carried out by Cooper and Whitebread (2007). Evidence from this national study, investigated the impact of NGs on pupils with SEBD. This study involved 546 children (359 had attended a NG and the rest providing comparison group data) and concluded that NGs add significantly to positive work with SEBD pupils within mainstream primary schools (Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Another study involving a large number of pupils was also undertaken by Iszatt and Wasilewska (1997). Their research involved 308 children in NGs and found that NGs had helped children to return and stay in mainstream classes when revisited.

Through interviews Bishop & Swain (2000) also found that children had been re-integrated into mainstream who would have otherwise been excluded and parents also supported the set-up of a NG in their child’s school as a way of preventing their child entering special school (Bishop & Swain, 2006). Bennathan (1997) also report that, since the inception of
Nurture Groups in the 1980s, 86.7% of 308 children were able, after nurture group placement, to manage in the normal class, 82.8 % without further help.

Research has also found that NGs have affected relationships between the school and parents. Bishop and Swain (2000), found that relationships with parents had changed through the NG being placed in the school (which add to similar findings by Cooper and Lovey, 1999). Billington's (2012) more recent study with NG staff also found that perceived positive relationships with parents had been formed. In addition, Taylor and Gulliford (2011) found that there was a perceived improvement between child and parent relationships (often due to children feeding back to parents events that had occurred through the day). Parental engagement did not, however, occur as much as was hoped, possibly due to the part-time nature of the NG and potential reluctance for TAs to arrange formal meetings. Moreover, Cooper and Ticknaz (2005) found that NG staff often found differences in attitudes between home and school a challenge when running NGs.

NGs have also been shown to reduce emotional and behavioural difficulties and improvement in academic gains and a readiness to learn. O'Connor and Colwell, (2002) found that NG pupils showed a reduction in emotional and behavioural difficulties, as measured through the Boxall Profile (although potential bias adopted during the completion of these measures is acknowledged as a weakness). Lyndon (1992) also found that improvements were made in behaviour and a willingness to learn whilst improvements in attainment in literacy and numeracy have also been reported as a positive outcome of NGs (Reynolds, MacKay, & Kearney, 2009; Seth-Smith, Levi, Pratt, Fonagy, & Jaffey, 2010). Furthermore, Seth-Smith et al. (2010) found improvements, as measured by the Boxall profile and SDQ (Goodman, 1997).

Improvements have also been found in relation to emotional well-being and Reynolds et al. (2009) also found that levels of self-esteem, self-image, attainment in literacy and emotional maturity had improved (Reynolds et al., 2009). Binnie and Allen (2008) supported this finding (in relation to self-esteem) but also found that improvements were found both at home and school. Similarly, Sanders (2007) found that NGs made significant social and emotional gains which were generalised into the classroom. Alongside this, teachers felt more empowered to meet the needs of children presenting with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (Sanders, 2007). Cooper and Lovey (1999) also found that the establishment of a nurture group created a nurturing and caring school ethos and Doyle (2003a) reported a profound effect on the whole school development, with practices becoming entrenched in policies across the whole school. This impact both on the school and from the school seems to be transferable and head teacher support was found to be an important factor that contributed to the effective running of a NG (Cooper & Ticknaz, 2005).
When looking at challenges faced in running nurture groups, however, Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) found a range, both from nurture group staff (including a difference in attitudes between school and home) and mainstream teachers (such as a perceived lack of communication between nurture group staff and mainstream teachers and the creation of a possible dependency in children). Perceived progress was witnessed in relation to social, emotional and behavioural functioning and the opportunity to create nurturing practices within the daily routine was also established.

2.5.4. Is there a need for NGs in secondary schools?

NGs were initially designed to help young people with SEBD (Colley, 2009). Ofsted (2011) states that “the Department for Education and local authorities should take into account the substantial value of well-led and well-taught nurture groups when considering policies and guidance on early intervention and targeted support for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social needs” (p.7).

It has been stated that children described as experiencing SEBD have existing problems in relation to relationships (Farrell & Polat, 2003; Frey et al., 2011). The psychological underpinnings of nurture groups are based on attachment theory with a focus on developing relationships and providing a secure base. Nurture groups may, therefore, be well suited to meet pupils’ needs with SEBD in secondary schools.

Such children whose emotional, social and learning needs cannot be met in the mainstream class often have severe yet varied difficulties and are likely to cause underachievement, exclusion from school and referrals to PRUs (Boxall and Lucas, 2010). As barriers to inclusion continue to exist (Goodman & Burton, 2010), schools may need to do more to establish the inclusion and engagement of such pupils cognitively and socially. Although such engagement may be provided by alternative provision, reintegration from such provision remains a concern (Burton et al., 2009). Moreover, it is thought that some pupils may be entering a spiral of social exclusion (Follows, 2003) whilst the issue of segregation is argued to be a human rights issue (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). Pupils in alternative provision may also face stigma and isolation from their community (Farrell & Polat, 2003) although it has been reported that in such settings, children felt listened to and supported for the first time (Farrell & Polat, 2003). It may be beneficial then to attempt to replicate such settings as well as ones that allow acceptance, nurture, the formations of positive relationships, an ethos of acceptance and higher levels of teacher self-efficacy in a mainstream school (“the nurture group leads to a nurturing school”, Boxall and Lucas, 2010, p. 20). These factors have all been suggested to be essential in allowing the inclusion of SEBD in mainstream schools.
NGs may also be able to offer a bridge, educationally, for such pupils whilst improving the school’s climate (Lucas, 1999), teacher self-efficacy (Sanders, 2007) and whole school ethos (Doyle, 2003a), all of which have been found to be obstacles for the inclusion of pupils with SEBD in mainstream schools. Furthermore, children cannot be compelled to behave appropriately and instead humanistic approaches are needed to guide and support, (Cooper, 2005) another aspect that NGs claim to do (Boxall & Lucas, 2010). Munn & Lloyd (2005) also state that if schools are able to create space to listen to the most troubled pupils, practices may be developed which could help sustain some of these young people in mainstream school. Furthermore, Colwell and O’Connor (2003) suggest the need for a whole-school nurturing approach to meet the real needs of these children.

As stated earlier, research of NGs in primary schools has found that they have helped to maintain children in mainstream education (Iszatt & Wasilewska, 1997) whilst improving measures of SEBD (Binnie & Allen, 2008; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). It could be argued, that NGs could create space, support and connectedness for pupils although Bennathan (2001) states that “at first sight setting up the replication of early mother-child relationships central to nurture group thinking does not easily translate to work with adolescents” (p.40). Moreover, research findings indicate that more significant gains were made the younger the child was (Scott & Lee, 2009). A neurological perspective, however, provides evidence that it is not too late to intervene to support attachment difficulties in adolescents (Cooke et al., 2008) as another intense moment of brain reorganisation, during which important neural pathways are formed, occurs in early adolescence (Gerhardt, 2004). Cooke et al. (2008) argue that NGs are appropriate for adolescents in Key Stage 3. Furthermore, intelligent use of funding can create empathic environments (Follows, 2003) and, as outlined by Boxall and Lucas (2010) NGs may be cheaper than other forms of provision.

2.5.5. The effectiveness of NGs in secondary schools.

When attempting to investigate the success of NGs in secondary schools this becomes difficult and Colley (2009) states that “due to the growth of nurture groups in secondary schools being so recent, evidence of success is limited to Ofsted reports, professional testimonies and papers on small-scale research projects” (p.292). The absence of a clear NG model in secondary schools may also make research in this area difficult and it is thought that the development, particularly of a “true” NG (as defined by Cooper et al., 2001) may be somewhat more difficult to do in a secondary school with Colley (2009) questioning to what extent ‘classic’ NGs can be replicated. Bishop (2008) suggests that to develop a NG within a school, discussions need to take place with members of the school’s senior management team to discover if there is an agreement about the benefits of having a NG and further discussions should then focus on funding, staffing and a designated room.
Colley (2009) argues that although the six NG principles can be followed with a dedicated classroom being made available that provides a welcoming and homely atmosphere; the model of nurture for secondary schools will differ. As a consequence of the number of pupils identified with social emotional and behavioural needs exceeding the places available in nurture, schools are more likely to run a variety of support areas that vary between learning needs, behavioural needs and nurturing needs. Furthermore, Colley (2009) suggests that secondary schools inevitably provide a nurturing continuum of care whilst being able to respond to pupils needs flexibly and immediately as they occur.

Moreover, some secondary schools (through personal correspondence) would describe that some of their pupils “are in the NG” but, upon further exploration, it appears that this is a literacy support group which would categorise as an “aberrant NG” (Cooper et al., 2001; Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Despite there being a potential lack of a clear NG model existing in secondary schools, information gathered by Colley (2009) from Ofsted reports and through personal correspondence, indicate that nurture and inclusion centres were having a positive effect on supporting pupils with SEBD in mainstream secondary schools. This was the case particularly on behaviour and levels of self-esteem as well as enabling pupils to remain in mainstream education, who may otherwise have failed. Cooke et al. (2008) also add that adults who work in a NG may be able to provide an emotionally containing relationship during which vulnerable adolescents can experience new attachment experiences.

Although research is rare, three more studies that focus specifically on secondary nurture groups do however exist. Cooke et al. (2008) recruited one school that had a NG for pupils in Key Stage 3 (KS3). Their paper discusses the way in which the NG was set up and how it operates. As part of their research they also collected entry and exit Boxall Profile data after a year. Improvements were noted on the developmental strands but the scores in the diagnostic strands showed inconsistent findings. Alongside this, their research also involved an individual case study of a Year 7 girl. Improvements were noted in relation to academic gains, increased self-esteem and confidence and it is also reported that the young person appeared more relaxed and sociable in lessons. Cooke et al. (2008) therefore conclude that NG provision at KS3 can have a positive impact on pupils’ social, emotional and behavioural development and state that “it is not too late to offer a nurturing environment to adolescents” (p. 302).

More recently Garner & Thomas (2011) researched the impact of NGs in secondary schools. Garner and Thomas (2011) selected three schools that could be described as having a classic ‘Boxall NG’. They examined perceptions of school staff (17 in total who were a mixture of nurture staff and mainstream staff), eight parents and six pupils (one year seven pupil, four year eight pupils and one from year nine) and also outlined the structure of the NGs describing the room, staff, pupils, entry and exit procedures and session content.
Participant perceptions were gathered through focus groups (for the school staff and parents) and individual interviews with the pupils. Data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Findings outlined that the nurture group was deemed to be an effective intervention for pupils with SEBD and positive outcomes included: the development of positive relationships; the delivery of a secure base; improved levels of self-esteem and motivation. This success was, however, found to be influenced by support from home and support from senior management within the school as well as good communication.

More recently Kourmoulaki (2013) explored the purpose, features and values of NGs in two secondary schools. NG pupils were interviewed alongside parents, carers, NG staff and mainstream school staff. In this study it was found that the NG supported a smooth transition into secondary school and equipped pupils with social skills to build friendships. It also prepared pupils physically and emotionally for learning although some difficulties were found including gaps in communication, monitoring and reintegration processes.

2.5.6. Summary of NG literature review.

The inclusion of SEBD pupils in mainstream schools does appear possible in schools that offer a nurturing approach (Burton & Goodman, 2011) with approaches that focus on relationships (Armstrong & Hallett, 2012). Cooper (2008) suggests that settings that have these qualities are NGs. NGs have been found to be effective in primary schools in helping children to stay in mainstream classes (Iszatt and Wasilewska, 1997); improve in terms of cognitive and emotional development (O’Connor & Colwell, 2002); improve in levels of self-esteem and attainment in literacy (Reynolds et al., 2009); improve across literacy and numeracy tasks (Seth Smith et al., 2010) and make behavioural improvements in school and at home (Binnie & Allen, 2008). Whole school benefits have also been noted (Doyle, 2003a) and teachers have felt more empowered when a NG was present in the school (Sanders, 2007). Colwell & O’Connor (2003) also found, through observations, that NG staff used language more frequently than mainstream staff that may increase a child’s self-esteem and suggest the need for whole-school nurturing approaches to meet the real needs of children with SEBD.

Linking to previous sections, research into NGs in primary schools cover four of the main five areas of concern mentioned previously for pupils with SEBD. For example NGs helped to create positive relationships with parents (a key difficulty that has been outlined). NGs have also been found to improve academic achievements. Moreover, they have proven to improve the inclusion of pupils with SEBD and have been mentioned as a possible form of early intervention (Cooper & Lovey, 1999). The area, not covered in the NG literature,
however, is that of the transition between school and college/work. Whilst research into NGs in secondary schools is still in its early phases (Colley, 2009) future research would benefit from being of a longitudinal nature to explore possible long-term impact of NG attendance.

Examining the effectiveness of NGs in secondary schools may, however, be more difficult due to the growth being so recent and the delivery of a “true” NG possibly being difficult to do (Colley, 2009) due to a number of logistical reasons. Four papers do, however, exist and have shown positive outcomes, particularly in some areas measured through the Boxall profile (as well as academic, social, emotional and behavioural development) (Cooke et al., 2008). NGs have also been suggested to allow positive relationships to be developed and improve levels of self-esteem through the delivery of a secure base (Garner & Thomas, 2011). Gaps do, however exist, particularly in what a model of nurture may ‘look’ like in a secondary school and how barriers have been overcome to implement a “true” NG despite the existence of potential difficulties outlined by Colley (2009). Moreover gaps in communication are witnessed and difficulties with monitoring and reintegration (Kourmoulaki, 2013).

2.6. Aims of the current research

The current research will aim to replicate findings from Cooke et al., (2008), Garner and Thomas (2011) and Kourmoulaki (2013) by further exploring the benefits of secondary NGs with different people’s perspectives being collected. It will also add to the research by Colley (2009) by describing NGs that are run in secondary schools. The current research will also aim to add new information by exploring barriers and facilitators to implementation (similar to Cooper and Ticknatz’s, 2005 research in primary schools). To fill the gaps and add to existing NG literature, the following RQs will be answered:

1) How are NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG?
2) How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?
3) How does NG attendance affect pupils?

2.7. Expected contribution to practice

By answering the RQs outlined above, it will be expected that findings can be disseminated to allow a contribution to knowledge around how NGs may be set up in secondary schools and what secondary schools may expect these to involve. By exploring the benefits may also contribute to knowledge allowing secondary schools to have some evidence of the potential benefits of introducing a NG to their school at a financially difficult time.
Following a discussion with the National Director of NGN, findings will be disseminated through the NGN website and, where possible through the NGN’s work with practitioners in secondary schools. The contribution of this knowledge could also have an impact on the EPs’ role in guiding secondary school staff when introducing or considering establishing NG provision for pupils with SEBD. Plans will also be made to disseminate findings to schools in the LA in which the current author works, should they be considering implementing NGs in secondary school.

2.8. Impact of that knowledge contribution

The impact of this knowledge could create a wider knowledge or awareness of the potential benefits and description of secondary NGs. Should findings of the research be positive, and findings disseminated successfully, this may encourage secondary schools to consider implementing a NG within their school as a possible intervention for maintaining and including pupils with SEBD into full time mainstream education. Should this happen, it could be expected that adaptations would, therefore, be made to behaviour policies, protocols and support for pupils with SEBD emphasising what the school as a system can do to support this group of potentially vulnerable children to improve long term outcomes.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Chapter Outline

This chapter outlines the design used to facilitate and produce the research along with considerations and research to support choices made. The research design will be presented initially before discussing the recruitment of participants, RQs to be answered and units to be analysed. Data collection methods will then be discussed offering a critique for each method. Data analysis methods used will then be outlined discussing steps taken to ensure the reliability and validity of such processes. Ethical considerations made will then be presented as will an operational risk analysis which was composed during the research planning phase.

3.2. Rationale leading to RQs

As outlined in section 2.4 a number of concerns exist for pupils conceptualised as experiencing SEBD. A variety of interventions are currently implemented within secondary schools to ameliorate such concerns and one intervention that has been implemented with success for such pupils in primary settings are NGs. Although evidence exists for the success of NGs for pupils with SEBD in primary schools, limited research exists relating to NGs in secondary schools and they have been outlined as being a relatively new form of intervention within a secondary setting. Alongside this is the question about the NG provision that secondary schools provide, potentially with it being more of a continuum than a model. Difficulties in implementing a classic NG within a secondary setting have also been considered in the literature. This research, therefore aims to explore how a classic NG in a secondary setting is implemented as well as exploring how some of the difficulties outlined in the NG literature have been overcome. Benefits of the NG for the young people, and for the school as a whole, will also be explored. The research project aimed to fill these gaps by attempting to answer the following RQs:

1) How are classic NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG?

2) How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?

3) How does NG attendance affect pupils?
## Table 3.1: Time line and time budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Completed by/Number of hours to complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td>Check the Nurture Group Network for secondary schools with Nurture Groups with the QMA</td>
<td>January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make initial contact with High Schools who have a NG with a quality mark award</td>
<td>At various occasions throughout January – September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply for ethical approval</td>
<td>February 2013 / 3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create questionnaire to give to NG staff</td>
<td>January 2013 / 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compose questions for semi-structured interviews and focus groups</td>
<td>January 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant recruitment</strong></td>
<td>Send out participant information and consent forms to the school staff of the schools that have agreed to be involved</td>
<td>May 2013/1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>September 2013/ 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Send out information sheets/consent forms to parents of 4 - 6 chosen pupils</td>
<td>June 2013/ 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>October 2013/ 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact a Key Worker with some knowledge of the NG</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Send information sheets/consent forms to Key Worker</td>
<td>August 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>October 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data collection</strong></td>
<td>Distribute questionnaire to NG leaders and observe NG sessions</td>
<td>May 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>September 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with school staff</td>
<td>June 2013/ 1 day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3. Philosophical position

3.3.1. Ontological and epistemological position.

Ontology is a branch of philosophy and focuses on the nature of reality and how reality is defined (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). In research, the question that drives ontology is ‘what is there to know?’ (Willig, 2002). Ontological positions can be described as realist or relativist (Willig, 2002). Where realists believe that there is one true reality, relativists believe that multiple constructed realities exist (Ponterotto, 2005).

Epistemology is another branch of philosophy and considers how we come to realities and make sense of them whilst being concerned with the theory of knowledge (Willig, 2002).
Epistemological positions range from positivism to constructionism. Positivists assume that there is one true reality that is measurable (Ponterotto, 2005) and maintain that the world is made up of structures and objects that have cause–effect relationships with one another (Willig, 2002).

Epistemology attempts to consider how we come to know realities (Cohen et al., 2007) and attempts to answer questions such as ‘how, and what, can we know?’ (Willig, 2002) whilst considering the validity and reliability of claims of knowledge (Willig, 2002). A researcher’s epistemological and ontological position influences the design and completion of studies (Willig, 2002) and is therefore decided prior to research commencing, informing the whole research process.

When considering the current author’s epistemological position her general philosophical view of social research was considered and it was decided that a critical realism stance would be taken. Critical realism accepts that a true reality exists (rather than multiple realities) but acknowledges that this can be measured imperfectly (Ponterotto, 2005). Where realism assumes that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it, critical realism presumes that facts are theory dependant but not theory determined (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson, 2002).

Critical realism was a perspective developed in order to critique the positivist approach of social sciences (Danermark et al., 2002). Positivism may analyse the world as cause and effect presuming that if two events occur in sequence then one is said to explain the other. Easton (2010) argues, however, that this simple formulation does not answer why such a relationship may have occurred and lacks a theoretical basis. He goes on to outline that critical realists argue for the use of causal language but with thinking. Critical realism assumes that the world could not be viewed merely as cause and effect but that mechanisms underlie this relationship and so, instead, there is a switch to attempting to understand what produces events not just the events themselves (Danermark et al., 2002). This stance therefore fits with the underlying aims of this research.

The stance of the researcher affected data collection method choices and critical realism focuses on the relation between the real world and the concepts we form whilst assuming that reality has an objective existence but our knowledge of it is conceptually mediated (Danermark et al., 2002). In other words all knowledge is open to adjustment and is not a fixed reality.
3.3.2. Axiology.

Critical realists believe that all research is fallible and the researcher acknowledges that conclusions drawn are limited by what is conceivable. Axiology refers to the principles and meaning of conducting research and the ethics adopted (Cohen et al., 2007) and the role and place of values in research (Ponterotto, 2005). Axiology acknowledges that a researcher’s personal and professional values impact on every stage of research including the planning, design, analysis and interpretation of findings and it is therefore important for a researcher to be transparent about his/her values prior to conducting the research. Ethical considerations are also considered and it is essential that research should adhere to ethical boundaries. Section 3.12 offers further discussion regarding ethical considerations made. Unlike positivists who maintain that there is no place for personal values in research (Ponterotto, 2005), critical realists acknowledge that they exist. The values and beliefs of the researcher with regard to the current study are now presented:

- Schools can provide security and a sense of belonging to improve pupils’ experiences of school by adopting a nurturing rather than a behavioural approach. Due to this belief, an interest in NGs in schools existed, particularly for pupils who may typically be excluded.

- Some pupils need to experience a secure base in school before higher order needs can be met (e.g., self-esteem, self-actualisation). Again, this belief instigated an interest in exploring whether nurture groups as a provision could provide this.

- Regardless of a child’s age, all pupils need to feel secure and benefit from a key adult in school and attachment theory need not just be applied to young children who may be developing attachments to primary caregivers. This belief instigated an interest in researching the effects of NG attendance for secondary age pupils.

- Young people’s perceptions are important in reviewing interventions and feelings about school. For this reason, focus groups were used to gather pupils’ perceptions. Focus groups were used as a belief about pupils’ reluctance to talk on a one-to-one with an unknown adult was considered. It was believed that pupils may feel more comfortable talking in groups.

- Key workers were used who were external to the NG as it was believed that if only NG staff’s perceptions were obtained, this may reflect a biased view of NGs.

- Members of the Senior Management Team were interviewed as it is believed that interventions and provisions need to have support from Senior Management who often have
an overarching view of the implementation of interventions and what supports or hinders this implementation.

Whilst being aware that values and beliefs affect the collection and analysis of data, numerous steps have been taken to ensure reliability and validity is considered and are outlined in table 3.4. A reflective dairy was also kept throughout the completion of the study to ensure values and beliefs were considered, discussed and presented. Reflections of limitations of the study are discussed in section 5.8.2.

3.4. Design of the study: Case Study Design

Given that a critical realist stance was taken, Easton (2010) outlines that:

Critical realism is particularly well suited as a companion to case research. It justifies the study of any situation, regardless of the numbers of research units involved, but only if the process involves thoughtful in depth research with the objective of understanding why things are as they are. (p.119)

Linking back to the RQs and aims of the current research one key aim is to understand why NGs are implemented in secondary schools and how they have managed to be implemented. A critical realist stance utilising a case study methodology would therefore seem reasonable in allowing the achievement of these aims.

3.4.1. Outline of case study designs.

A case study design offers a key opportunity to understand a phenomenon comprehensively (Easton, 2010) “afford[ing] researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). A case study design methodology is also flexible and rigorous (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and allows the researcher the opportunity to tease out and disentangle a complex set of factors and relationships (Easton, 2010).

Whilst case study designs can be described as ‘fuzzy round the edge’ (Easton, 2010, p.119), Yin’s (2010) method of case study design was used allowing distinctive characteristics to be followed. Key aspects of Yin’s (2009) version of case study research includes the use of a case study protocol, propositions, units of analysis, analytic strategy and attempts to discard rival theories.
Within case study designs, propositions are used to guide the research process. In this research propositions are taken from the existing literature on NGs and are outlined and discussed in Chapter 5. For an outline of propositions, and the literature from which they have originated, please refer to Appendix B.

Yin (2009) outlines a number of versions of case study designs but on this occasion an exploratory multiple-case design was used. An exploratory case study design was used due to the limited research in the area of NGs in secondary schools. A multiple case study allows a researcher to explore similarities and differences within and between cases with the goal of replicating findings. Cases must be chosen carefully however due to comparisons being drawn allowing similar predictions to be made across cases (Yin, 2003a). When using multiple case study designs chances of producing more robust results are higher and analytic conclusions arising from two cases will be more powerful than conclusions arising from a single case (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003b).

In this research, the case study also focussed on various (embedded) units of analysis and both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to seek convergence across data collection methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Yin, 2009) in a triangulating fashion (Yin, 2009). Once all data were collected, the case study analytical technique was used which was a cross case synthesis with pattern matching. This will be discussed in more depth in section 3.9.

3.4.2. Critique of case study design.

One major advantage of case study research is the flexibility that it offers (Easton, 2010). A key feature of case study research is also the use of multiple data sources and findings from each of the sources used can be integrated and converged in the analysis process adding further strength to the findings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Whilst a variety of data sources is desirable, one danger, however, is the collection of an overwhelming amount of data that require management and analysis which may often result in the researcher feeling lost in the data (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Baxter and Jack (2008) and Yin (2009) suggest that the use of a database to order the data is beneficial.

One key constraint of a case study analysis is its low statistical representativeness (Easton, 2010). If multiple case studies are used though, findings are thought to be more robust (Yin, 2009) allowing analytic conclusions to be drawn (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003b, 2009). Yin (2009) also states that if two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication can be claimed. Undertaking multiple case studies can however be time consuming to undertake and may include an extensive use of resources (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009). In this study, two schools were recruited and, given that it seems from the
NGN that there are approximately ten secondary schools that have the QMA, it is thought that this sample will generate findings that can be generalised to other secondary schools that have QMA NGs.

Despite having low statistical representativeness when considering research from a critical realist stance, case studies allow underlying processes of cause and effect relationship and an understanding of ‘phenomena’ to be gained comprehensively, whilst allowing a complex set of factors and relationships to be teased out (Easton, 2010).

To allow replication to occur and to increase the reliability of the case study, a case study protocol and case study database were developed. These were produced to allow replication of the study, should it be desired, and ensured that the author was kept on track (Yin, 2009). The database also allowed data and evidence to be reviewed directly increasing the validity of the case study findings. Validity and reliability tactics are outlined in table 3.4.

3.4.3. Case study protocol.

Yin (2009) states that a case study protocol should be developed allowing the researcher to be kept on track as well as to increase the reliability. As the write up of the current research naturally includes aspects of these, they are discussed throughout various sections of this thesis presentation. Yin (2009) states that the following sections should be included in a case study protocol:

- An overview of the case study project and relevant readings about the topic being investigated (this section of the protocol is therefore included in Chapters 1 and 2).
- Field procedures including presentation of credentials, access to case study sites (which are discussed throughout this chapter), outline of how human participants will be protected (section 3.12) and sources of data (section 3.7). A reflective diary was also kept and reflections are outlined in Chapter 5.
- Case study questions, referred to as “data collection questions” in Yin’s revised edition (Yin, 2014) are presented in each chapter. These have been understood to be the RQs.
- Sources of information for answering the questions are outlined (in section 3.7).
- A guide for the case study report exists. This ultimately exists in the presentation of the research through the thesis presentation and has also been completed through the submission of a thesis plan and through the presentation of the research at the thesis panel.
3.4.4. Units of analysis and theoretical frameworks.

To analyse and focus on various units of analysis, theoretical frameworks are developed. As well as proposing theoretical frameworks, Yin (2009) also states that the opportunity to obtain rival explanations must also exist. This will be discussed in more depth following an outline of data collection methods (section 3.7). The following visual representations provide finer details in relation to the units of analysis and propositions, as hypothesised following the literature review. Please see Appendix B for further information regarding the origin of such hypotheses/propositions. Data collections sources are also outlined.

Figure 3.1: Visual representation of Unit of Analysis 1 (UoA) 1

Unit of Analysis 1: To explore how NGs are delivered in a secondary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ descriptions of the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of NG session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews and focus groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The NG is part of a wider continuum of care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. NG principles are followed with a designated room and two members of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. NG sessions will be part-time e.g., three days a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2: Visual representation of UoA

Unit of Analysis 2: To identify facilitators to creating a NG in a secondary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School staff’s perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils’ perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Workers’ perceptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. NG will be embedded within whole school policies with a clear referral route</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adequately trained staff will run the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Supportive structures within the school will exist e.g., senior management, clear communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Figure 3.3: Visual representation of UoA 3**

Unit of Analysis 3: To identify barriers and explore how they are overcome

- **Unit of data collection**
  - School staff’s perceptions
  - Pupils’ perceptions
  - Key Workers’ perceptions

- **Data collection source**
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Focus groups

- **Propositions**
  1. Timetabling difficulties
  2. Large number of pupils in need
  3. Logistical issues e.g., room availability
  4. How have barriers been overcome? (same as facilitators)

**Figure 3.4: Visual representation of UoA 4**

Unit of Analysis 4: To explore the effects of having a NG in a secondary school

- **Unit of data collection**
  - Boxall profile data
  - School staff’s perceptions
  - Pupils’ perceptions
  - Key Workers’ perceptions

- **Data collection source**
  - Semi structured interviews
  - Focus groups
  - Boxall data

- **Propositions**
  1. Pupils have remained in mainstream
  2. Benefits in display of behaviour
  3. Improved relationships
  4. Emotional gains e.g., self-esteem, confidence
Initially an extra unit of analysis “why are NGs developed?” was included but upon reflection, this question could be answered through existing literature and data gathered to answer RQ1. To answer the units of analysis outlined above a number of participants were recruited and various streams of data were collected. The following sections outline the participant recruitment process and data collection process in greater detail. Yin (2009) also highlights the importance of searching for rival explanations.

3.5. Rival Explanations

Yin (2009) classifies and lists many types of rivals that should aim to be explored during case study research whilst acknowledging that the more rivals that an analysis addresses and rejects, the more confident one can be in their findings.

Initially Yin (2009) presents ‘craft rivals’ which underlie all social sciences research and include ‘the null hypothesis’ (during which observation is the result of chance only), ‘threats to validity’ (including selection, testing and instability) and ‘investigator bias’ (during which the experimenter effect impacts on the research). These rival explanations were considered naturally by the researcher and a number of methods were intuitively employed to explore or prevent these rival explanations from occurring. For example, to prevent findings being referred to as occurring by chance, various data streams and participants were used and to reduce ‘investigator bias’ a reflective diary was kept allowing the researcher to remain as mindful as possible about research procedures. Rival explanations are outlined in table 3.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Rival</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Method of data collection to discard or support rival</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Rival.</td>
<td>Other services and interventions are accessed by the pupil which allows effects to occur.</td>
<td>Questions will focus on if other services are accessed alongside the NG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation Rival (the implementation process, not the intervention accounts for the results).</td>
<td>Positive effects occurred because of attendance in a small group out of lessons rather than due to the content of NG sessions.</td>
<td>Focus group prompts to explore what it is about the NG that was beneficial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rival theory (A theory different form the original theory explains the results better).</td>
<td>NG will be used more as an inclusion base/’sin bin’.</td>
<td>Observations, initial questionnaire, interviews and focus groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barriers may outweigh</td>
<td>Interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
facilitators in allowing a classic NG to be established. Negative effects will be witnessed. Positive changes will not be witnessed on all strands of the Boxall Profile. Due to their age, NG pupils will not benefit from NG attendance. Interviews and focus groups. Boxall time 1 and time 2 data. Interviews.

Upon reflection, more rival explanations could have been examined. The difficulty of doing so is reflected upon and discussed in more detail in section 5.8.2.

Please see Appendix C for questions asked throughout the semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

3.6. Sampling and Participant Recruitment

When completing multiple case study designs it is important to select cases carefully (Yin, 2009). As findings aim to be compared in terms of similarities and differences it was felt to be important to recruit schools as cases that were as similar as possible, differing only in the context. It was decided that a case would be ‘the implementation of a NG in a secondary setting’ and two cases were chosen. As NGs may vary significantly in how closely they adhere to NG principles, NGs were selected on the basis of accreditation of the QMA from NGN (The NGN, 2012a). This was to ensure that NGs were selected that follow the six principles of nurture (The NGN, 2012a) adhering as closely as possible to the ‘classic’ model described by Cooper et al. (2001). This criterion for sampling was used as a proxy indicator rather than to establish the “quality” of the NG per se.
As stated above a case will be ‘the implementation of a NG in a secondary school’. Within each case various participants and data streams were used.

3.6.1. Recruitment of schools.

When selecting schools as cases initially it was decided that three schools would be recruited that had the QMA obtained from the NGN (The NGN, 2012a). This was to ensure that NGs recruited would be classic NGs, as conceptualised by Cooper et al. (2001) as opposed to aberrant NGs which may often be delivered, especially in a secondary school setting. Due to a difficulty with school recruitment (discussed in more detail in section 5.8.2) two cases were recruited rather than three.

To find secondary schools that had been given the QMA from the NGN, reference was made to the list outlined on the NGN’s website. From this list, schools were then chosen that were mainstream secondary schools. A number of schools were then contacted via email and telephone. During telephone conversations, a brief outline of the research was followed (Appendix D) and schools were given the opportunity to ask further questions. If the school gave verbal consent to being involved an informal meeting was arranged, allowing further information to be shared and Participant Information Sheet and Consent Forms (which can be found in Appendix D) to be distributed.

Following a discussion with the NGN director, one contact was given for a NG facilitator in one of the schools outlined on the list of accredited schools. This school (in Case 1) was then recruited by telephone contact with an informal meeting being made. The school used is an average sized Academy in Lancashire. It opened in 2008. A higher than average number of pupils speak English as an additional language and are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a
statement, is higher than the national average. The NG has been running for six years in the school and the QMA was received from the NGN in 2012.

A number of other schools were also contacted, based initially on location (with ones chosen that had the QMA and were within the closest proximity to the researcher’s location). Some attempts were unsuccessful and it was often difficult to make direct contact with NG facilitators or SENCos. Schools were then approached that were further away. The school used in Case 2 was recruited via email and then telephone contact. A meeting was then held to provide further information regarding the research. The school used as Case Study 2 is a larger than average secondary school based in West Yorkshire. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below that of the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few students speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils supported with a statement or through school action plus is average whilst the number of pupils supported at school action is below average. The NG has been running for six years in the school and the QMA was received from the NGN in 2012. The school is rated as an ‘outstanding’ school across all domains.

Another school was also recruited initially through email but unfortunately staff were not able to commence with all aspects of the research. As observations and interviews commenced first in this school, they were treated as pilot observations/interviews upon which the data collection procedure was reflected upon and improved.

3.6.2. Recruitment of individual participants.

For each case a number of participants were recruited in a purposive manner (in that participants considered best able to provide informed opinions were recruited).

A visual representation of participants is outlined below:

**Figure 3.6: Visual representation of the participants recruited in each case**
3.6.2.1. **Participant recruitment in school 1.**

In this school the NG facilitator was recruited after expectations were discussed, information was given (please see Appendix D) and consent was obtained (please see Appendix D). The NG facilitator was recruited purposively as it was felt that she would be best able to express informed opinions about the implementation of the NG. After meeting with the NG facilitator it was then decided which member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) would be best suited to also become involved in the research. On this occasion this was the Head Teacher as he had historical knowledge regarding why and how the NG was initially implemented. The Head Teacher was also given information and consent forms to complete (please see Appendix D). A Key Worker, external but with some knowledge of the NG was then identified by the NG facilitator and, in this case, was a member of a school counselling service.

Finally six NG pupils were identified who had been involved in the NG for at least one academic year (allowing them to share their experiences) and Information Sheets and Consent Forms were completed by parents (please see Appendix D). Informed assent was gained from the pupils using the Child Information Sheet (please see Appendix D). Some pupils were chosen who had already been resettled into mainstream lessons full time and other pupils were almost ready for resettlement.

3.6.2.2. **Participant recruitment in school 2.**

In this school the NG facilitator was approached initially (again in a purposive manner). A meeting was then held to discuss expectations, outline the nature of the research, discuss participant recruitment and data to be collected.

The NG facilitator identified a member of the SMT that she felt would have a good insight regarding the NG (which in this case was a Deputy Head Teacher). The Information Sheet and Consent Form was then given to him and completed. The NG facilitator also identified a Key Worker from an external agency who had worked with a number of pupils who attended the NG and was external to the school and to the NG. In this case this was a Behaviour Support Worker.

Finally four pupils were identified who would be ideal participants in that they were in the “resettlement” group and had therefore been attending the NG for at least two terms. It was felt that they would be able to discuss their experiences of their time in the NG.
### 3.7. Data Gathering

Table 3.3: Outline of data gathering and data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ</th>
<th>What data will be gathered?</th>
<th>How will this data be gathered?</th>
<th>How will this data be analysed?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) How are classic NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded Nurture Group?</td>
<td>Information about the NG that is run in that school e.g. layout, frequency, members of the group.</td>
<td>Through a short questionnaire (Appendix C) developed by the current researcher and observations.</td>
<td>Content analysis (Hsieh &amp; Shannon, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about the NG principles that are adopted during the sessions.</td>
<td>Through a short questionnaire (Appendix C) developed by the current researcher and observations.</td>
<td>Braun and Clarke (2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?</td>
<td>Information about what has helped the NG to be created and run successfully.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with school staff and Key Worker from external agency (questions can be found in Appendix C). Focus group with the pupils (prompts can be found in Appendix C).</td>
<td>Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about what has made the creation and running of the NG difficult and how these difficulties have been overcome.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with school staff and Key Worker from external agency. Focus group with the pupils.</td>
<td>(Braun and Clarke, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) How does NG attendance affect pupils?</td>
<td>Information about the benefits, both for individuals and within the wider school context.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with school staff. Semi-structured interview with a key worker involved with the school/NG. Focus group with the pupils.</td>
<td>(Braun and Clarke, 2006).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information about changes in scores from completed Boxall profiles at Time 1 (entry into the NG) and Time 2 (the latest point available).

Collation of BPYP data at Time 1 (entry into the NG) and Time 2 (the latest point available).

Descriptive statistics.

As case study research is eclectic and flexible, data gathered can (and should) involve any data that is thought to be relevant as opposed to being constrained by what data can actually be collected (Easton, 2010). Data were collected from multiple sources of evidence as Yin (2009) suggests is important. Some data were gathered from documents submitted to obtain the QMA but upon reflection these data were later discarded from the presentation of the findings. For further elaboration please see section 5.8.2. All data gathering methods are now discussed in greater detail:

3.7.1. Observations of NG sessions.

The author’s observation sessions focussed mainly on the logistical set up of the NG setting and also aimed to capture the adherence of NG principles. General notes were taken about the set-up of the room and the activities that occurred during the observational period. Before the observations commenced, specific examples of the practical application of the principles were stated beforehand and guidance was taken from a previous observation schedule that was designed for the same purpose by Herring (2009). These observation schedules allowed the NG principles to be observed tangibly and the NG design to be captured. Some additional areas for observation were also identified, however, as it was felt that these would further suggest the application of NG principles. A copy of these can be found in Appendix C.

Observations took place over two sessions although meetings had occurred over a few sessions in the NG setting. A brief description of the setting and activity was recorded and a ‘running record’ of the NG facilitator’s communication was completed. Herring (2009) discovered, through a pilot observation, that it was easier to observe the NG Facilitator only due to the busy nature of NG sessions and this was the approach used in the current research. Herring’s (2009) schedule was then used as an initial framework allowing a directed content analysis to be completed. This identified comments that could be categorised as one of the six principles of nurture.

3.7.2. Short questionnaire developed by the researcher.

This questionnaire was given to the NG facilitators and aimed to obtain similar data captured through the observations. By gaining another perspective hopefully supported the reliability
of this data. Please see Appendix C for a copy of the questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed after looking at Cooper et al.’s (2001) variations of NGs and aimed to find information that they had used to categorise variations of NGs (e.g., the number of group members, the number of staff).

3.7.3. Semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with school staff (the NG facilitator and a member of the SMT) and a member of an external agency. Each semi-structured interview prompt sheet can be found in Appendix C. A focussed interview was used to allow coverage of important issues yet allowing for flexibility (Mertens, 2005) whilst remaining open ended and conversational (Yin, 2009). As case studies are about behavioural events and human affairs, Yin (2009) states that interviews can provide important insights into such affairs. Questions remained open-ended allowing rival explanations to be obtained.

3.7.4. Focus groups.

As children have the right to be heard from an ethical dimension, making children’s perspectives a focus of enquiry (Toynbee, 2009) perceptions of young people were gathered through focus groups. Given that students described as experiencing SEBD are usually the most disenfranchised and disempowered (Cefai & Cooper, 2009) it was felt to be important to obtain their views and perceptions from them as well as school staff. Prompts were drafted prior and, although these key questions were followed, points were also followed up as and when they arose. To allow rival explanations to be obtained (e.g., a rival explanation could be that pupils may not have found the NG to be useful) questions were asked to allow such information to be gathered. See Appendix C for prompts followed during the focus group.

3.7.5. Boxall Profile for Young People (BPYP) (Bennathan et al., 2010).

The BPYP (Bennathan et al., 2010) is a checklist designed to be completed by an adult who knows the child well. The Boxall profile consists of two sections: the Developmental Profile and the Diagnostic Profile. Within the Developmental Profile two cluster scores can be obtained (‘organisation of experience’ and ‘internalisation of controls’). Within the Diagnostic Profile three cluster scores can be obtained (‘self-limiting’, ‘undeveloped behaviour’ and ‘unsupported development’). Each cluster has numerous strands and within these strands scores from questions on the checklist can be collated. Prior to the development of this measure, schools with a NG would typically use the Boxall Profile (Bennathan & Boxall, 1998) which was designed for use with pupils aged between three years four months and eight years. Now that the BPYP has been produced this allows the measure to be used robustly with pupils aged 11 to 14 years. Examples of BPYP scores can be found in Appendix E.
Time 1 and time 2 BPYP data were gathered from NG facilitators. These had been completed prior to the research commencing and were the measures that were used in school to monitor progress. Given that they were not completed for the research per se it is felt that this could make these data more reliable as they were produced by the NG facilitator for their own records.

3.8. Description of Data Analysis

3.8.1. Overview of thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse interview and focus group data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (or themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and is suggested as the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative methods of data analysis rarely state how to analyse textual material but guidance and steps were used systematically during the current study (as outlined by Attride-Stirling, 2001 and Braun & Clarke, 2006) to allow meaningful useful results to be presented that have been analysed using a robust methodological approach (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

Thematic analysis can also be used within different theoretical frameworks and emphasises a researcher’s active role in the data analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that a ‘theme’ is determined by a researcher’s judgement but ultimately would be something that captures something important about the data in relation to the RQ. Themes can be identified in two ways; in an inductive (or ‘bottom up’ way) or in a theoretical (or ‘top down’ way) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the current study it was decided that the data would be analysed from a ‘theoretical’ position (also referred to as ‘deductive’). Data were therefore coded for the specific RQs. To answer RQ1, data were coded that focussed on the delivery of the NG, who accessed the NG and logistical information about the NG. To answer RQ2 data were coded that focussed on what made running the nurture group difficult or eased the difficulties. For RQ3, data were coded that focussed on effects of NG attendance.

Thematic analysis was chosen as the data analysis method as it fits within the current author’s philosophical stance as a method that can used in a critical realism perspective (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As highlighted above, steps and stages were available to be used to allow the data analysis method to be transparent and robust increasing the validity of the research findings.

Guidance was taken from Braun and Clarke (2006), who provide a six phase step-by-step guide, and Attride-Stirling (2001) which supported the creation of thematic networks of analysed data. Similar phases presented by Braun and Clarke (2006) were amalgamated with steps outlined by Attride-Stirling (2001) resulting in the thematic analysis process involving:

1. **Familiarising yourself with your data:** This involved listening to and transcribing recorded interview and focus group data which allowed familiarity of the data to be established. Transcripts were also read to begin to develop an idea of key messages conveyed.

2. **Generating initial codes after applying a coding framework:** Transcripts from the range of stakeholders were collated and quotes were highlighted according to which RQ they could answer (see Appendix F as an example). Quotes for each RQ were then collated and initial codes were produced that involved summarising the message conveyed in each quote (see Appendix G for an example). As quotes were attended to that focussed on the RQs and theoretical propositions, this analysis would be described as theoretical (as outlined by Braun & Clarke, 2006). Please see Appendix F for further information on how quotes were coded for each RQ.

3. **Searching for and identifying themes:** Salient, common or significant themes in the coded text segments were extracted and these similar themes were then recorded onto post-it notes (See Appendix H for photographic examples).

4. **Constructing the thematic networks:** This stage involved grouping clusters of basic themes together that conveyed a shared message. This overarching message conveyed through each cluster was considered and resulted in the development of an organising theme. Organising themes were then grouped and a global theme that was the main message and metaphor conveyed by all themes was produced. Thematic network diagrams of clusters of themes were then produced. Attride-Stirling (2001) offer the following descriptions of each of these levels of themes:

   - Basic themes: These are the lowest-order and most basic themes derived directly from the text. They provide a statement of belief around a central message conveyed through the data and, when grouped together with other similar basic themes, produce an organising theme.
   - Organising Theme: These are middle order themes and group similar basic themes into clusters that convey a similar message. They summarise the principle message of basic themes and, together with other organising themes, produce a global theme.
   - Global themes: This is the super-ordinate theme that encompasses the main metaphor of the data and is described as “a concluding or final tenet” (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389)
5. **Reviewing themes:** When grouping basic themes that conveyed a similar message and producing a thematic network, initial codes were referred back to ensuring that themes genuinely did convey similar messages and encapsulate the overall message conveyed in the data set coherently.

6. **Describe and explore the thematic network:** Initial codes (with quotes) were grouped under each basic theme and each basic theme was grouped under each organising theme. This allowed quotes to be collated that conveyed a similar message resulting in a summary of the analysis and findings to be made.

7. **Producing the report:** Extract examples were then selected and findings were summarised (as presented in the Chapter 4). Findings were then linked to the RQs, propositions and relevant literature (as presented in the Chapter 5).

The entire process was completed eight times but when producing themes for RQ3 (which focusses on the effects of NG attendance) some negative effects were identified. Separate thematic maps were therefore produced allowing different basic themes, organising themes and global themes to be generated. Steps 4-6 were followed again when completing a cross-case synthesis of findings from cases 1 and 2 as basic themes already identified were used to produce new cross-case thematic networks. These thematic networks are presented in Chapter Four.

Following the thematic analysis, a post-hoc validity check occurred during which a TEP colleague also coded sections of some transcripts. As this colleague was a fellow TEP, he had also obtained a sufficient level of knowledge regarding the process of thematic analysis with relevant skills. Through the inter-coder reliability process, all sections that were coded by the current author were also coded by the TEP colleague. 39 out of 42 initial codes conveyed the same message demonstrating 93% (to the nearest percentage) agreement. Following discussions about any differences, 100% agreement was established. Main differences involved a broader code which the researcher had developed as a theme at a later stage, e.g., one extract was coded by the researcher as ‘pupils feel that they can open up to NG members and staff’ but coded as ‘safe to talk’ by the TEP colleague. This quote had however been included in the basic theme ‘feeling safe’ at a later stage. Some basic themes were also asked to be combined to make organising themes which, again were the same as the current researcher. This process therefore assumed a sufficient level of validity with regard to findings.

### 3.8.3. Overview of content analysis.

Originally content analysis was developed as a qualitative or quantitative data analysis method and, whilst being primarily used as a quantitative method, during more recent research, potential of its use as a qualitative method has been recognised (Hsieh &
Shannon, 2005). Content analysis “takes texts and analyses, reduces them and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to generate or test a theory” (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 564).

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) describe three ways of completing content analysis (conventional, directed and summative). The current author decided to complete a directed content analysis as existing theory and prior research were used whilst recognising that the phenomenon of NGs in secondary schools would benefit from further description (an approach that Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, suggest in relation to directed content analysis). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) also suggest that the role of directed content analysis is to validate or extend a theoretical framework or theory which, in this study was conceptualised to be ‘the presentation of the six principles of nurture in mainstream secondary nurture group’.

3.8.4. Process of content analysis.

Content analysis was completed on the ‘running record’ of the observation notes. The initial framework was identified (to fit with Hsieh and Shannon, 2005 description of directed content analysis) and in this instance was an observation schedule developed by Herring (2009). This allowed the six principles of nurture to be observed tangibly and these were the pre-existing categories used to code the data. An outline of this initial framework can be found in Appendix C. As some data could not be identified in the initial framework (but was still felt to be relevant) some new codes were identified which still fitted into the wider coding framework of the six principles of nurture (see Appendix C).

Data were not summarised into numerical quantitative data (a way in which content analysis may also be used) and instead were used to allow observations of sessions to be summarised and reduced into manageable and comprehensible proportions (Cohen et al., 2007) relating to the use of the six principles of nurture.

3.8.5. Descriptive statistics.

To allow statistical information to be summarised and presented to the reader, descriptive statistics were used. This is a way of summarising and analysing raw data that are gathered in a study (Coolican, 1999). As it is not useful to give untreated and unorganised raw data, trends and differences need to be abstracted and highlighted (Coolican, 1999).

3.9. Analytic Strategy

The analytic strategy chosen was a cross-case synthesis analysis (Yin, 2009) which is particularly useful when a case study consists of at least two cases (Yin 2009). This
analytical technique looks for overall patterns across each case but treats each case separately. Yin (2009) suggests that one possibility of finding similarities or differences across cases is through the use of word tables according to a uniform framework. Similar basic themes from each case for each RQ were grouped together and presented into word tables. New basic themes (that encapsulated messages from both cases) were developed. Following the cross-case synthesis, findings were also pattern matched onto the initial theoretical propositions and rival explanations.

3.10. Critique of Method

3.10.1. Reliability and validity.

Yin (2009) outlines a number of tactics that can be applied to establish the quality of designs. The following table has been adapted from one presented by Yin (2009).

Table 3.4: Outlining of tactics to maximise reliability and validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Case Study Tactic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construct validity</td>
<td>· Multiple sources of evidence were used, including interviews (with various stakeholders), observations, initial questionnaires, interview and focus group data and BPYP data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Chains of evidence (as suggested as an important feature by Yin, 2009) were also made explicit from the planning phase to the data analysis and linking of findings to the literature. All evidence of data analysis were kept allowing reference to be made to them if needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External validity</td>
<td>· As multiple case studies were used, this allowed replication logic to be used during which similar patterns were predicted to be found across cases (a literal replication).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal validity</td>
<td>· Pattern matching was used as an analytic strategy after a cross-case synthesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Rival explanations were also identified prior to data collection and aimed to be discarded through the data analysis process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Triangulation of data also occurred with evidence from different sources of information being converged to develop a “fact” (Yin, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· Baxter and Jack (2008) also suggest that the dependability of the data can be promoted through inter-rater reliability checks and this occurred on thematically analysed transcripts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>· A database was made, holding all of the raw data collected. Yin (2009) suggests that this is a way of increasing reliability and will allow for independent inspection should it be felt necessary. Using a database</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
also allows the research to track and organise data (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

- Within this database, following guidance from Yin (2009), notes from interviews, observations and focus groups could be made available including transcripts. Completed questionnaires could also be made available as could anonymised raw pupil data.
- The use of a case study protocol also improves reliability (Yin, 2009) and this was also used as discussed in section 3.4.3.

### 3.10.2. Critique of data gathering methods.

Given that a number of data streams were used, this aimed to minimise the chances of only one form of data being used to answer each of the RQs. For example to establish the “effects”, data were collected in different forms from different participants. A critique of each data gathering method is outlined below.

#### 3.10.2.1. Observation schedule.

Given that observations were undertaken by only one researcher (the author), observation data may be biased and are from only one person’s perspective. An observation schedule was used to attempt to alleviate such biases. Questionnaires were also completed to support observational data.

Following an initial observation (which consequently was a pilot observation) it became apparent how difficult it was to observe and record every aspect of what was occurring during the session. This was also something that was noted by Herring (2009) and for this reason advice was taken from her methodological process in that only the nurture group facilitator was observed. This allowed data to be recorded more effectively, quickly and accurately.

It is also acknowledged that observations add another dimension to the setting and NG facilitators may act differently as they know that they will be being observed. The use of observations is, however, thought to be a useful form of data collection as it allows the researcher to have direct contact with the setting (Mertens, 2005) with Yin (2009) describing them as ‘invaluable aids’ (p. 110).

#### 3.10.2.2. Semi-structured interviews.

As stated by Yin (2009) interviews can provide important insights into human affairs (which are often the focus of case studies). One possible limitation of semi-structured interviews
may be the degree to which participants feel that they can be honest and open. Participants were, however, assured that all data would remain anonymous. As only two schools were recruited, participants could easily be identified by other members of school staff that had been involved in the research.

When undertaking a pilot interview with a member of the SMT, on reflection, it was felt that some of the questions drafted felt fairly repetitive. For this reason some of the questions were omitted and merged with other ones to allow the flow of the interview to be improved. During the pilot interview with the NG facilitator there was a realisation that, due to previous discussions held through informal meetings, some important points were not discussed in the interview. For this reason when recruiting further participants the majority of questions asked about the implementation of the NG were asked during the formal data collection process.

3.10.2.3. Focus groups.

Focus groups are a time effective way of collecting a number of views at the same time and discussion amongst members of the focus group may provoke exchanges in views, providing more information and insights which may not be discussed on a one-to-one basis (Coolican, 1999) which is one of the benefits (Mertens, 2005). Although focus groups may prevent the participation of some quieter individuals, it was decided that a focus group would still be used to enable perspectives, original ideas and insights to be gathered, which can often be missed in more traditional forms of research (Kennedy, Kools, & Krueger, 2001). Given that group discussion is often the focus at the start of each NG session it was hoped that the quieter individuals would feel as comfortable talking in this forum as they would usually feel in a NG session.

To ensure that pupils felt comfortable focus groups took place in the NG room (or another room close by) to further ensure a familiar, comfortable setting. Observations commenced prior to the focus group to allow familiarity with the researcher and pupils were told how long the focus group would last and other important information through the Pupil Information Sheet (as shown in Appendix D).

One of the main criticisms of focus groups is the tendency for them to create ‘group think’ (MacDougall & Baum, 1997) which draws on earlier work from social psychological perspectives that investigated the behavioural adjustments of group members in conformity experiments (for example the study completed by Asch, 1956). Whilst it was acknowledged that the voices of individuals with ‘power’, status and information may over-power the voices of other members (MacDougall & Baum, 1997) careful precautions were taken to prevent this from happening. For example at the start of the focus group each pupil was given the
chance to talk about something that was unthreatening and straightforward to answer. Each pupil was asked their name and how long they have been attending the NG as this knowledge was something that they had and could hopefully share at ease. Given that the location was also chosen to ease the pupils into the focus group it was also hoped that quieter pupils would feel comfortable to talk. Active listening skills were also used throughout the completion of the focus groups to ensure that all pupils felt valued and ‘heard’.

3.10.2.4. BPYP (Bennathan et al., 2010).

As stated earlier, the BPYP data were collected originally for the NG facilitators’ use and it is thought that this makes the data and responses more valid and reliable. The BPYP was developed through a research project involving 584 young people alongside the SDQ (Goodman, 1997). 395 pupils from the 584 young people screened were identified as being ‘competently functioning’ and rephrased Boxall Profiles were then completed on this group. Mean scores and standard deviations were then calculated (as described by Colley, 2009). The BPYP has since been piloted in five regions and Colley (2009) reports that feedback has been positive.

3.10.3. Critique of data analysis.

3.10.3.1. Thematic analysis.

As stated earlier, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six step variation of thematic analysis was used in a theoretical manner during which data were coded for the specific RQs. Although this method could cause the data to be less rich, it was felt that this was a better use of the data in explicitly linking findings to units of analysis, RQs and then propositions. Data were transcribed by the current author allowing the familiarisation of data. The author also met with a TEP colleague to allow inter-rater reliability of themes to be established. It is thought that through this process, validity of the thematic analysis process was established.

3.10.3.2. Content analysis.

A directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was undertaken of the ‘running record’ created through the observations of NG sessions. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) discuss a strength of this approach is that it allows existing theory to be supported and extended, allowing the reality to be made explicit compared with researchers working from a naïve perspective. Limitations of such an approach do however exist. For example using a pre-existing coding framework may limit the likelihood of a researcher finding evidence that is not supportive of a theory, instead, finding evidence to support the theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). An over-emphasis on theory is also thought to ‘blind’ researchers, making findings
biased (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Examples have, however, been appended to allow transparency in the interpretation of findings. Given that schools used in this study have received the QMA from the NGN (The NGN, 2012a) it is also hoped that this adds rigour to the reported findings about the demonstration of the six principles of nurture.

### 3.10.3.3. Descriptive statistics.

As the sample size of the participants is relatively small, meaning assumptions of normality cannot be met (Mertens, 2005) inferential statistical techniques cannot be used. It was considered to complete a binomial sign test, as outlined by Coolican, (1999), but this would have simply outlined the direction of the change between pre and post data and if this direction of change was random or not. Binomial tests have also been suggested to lack power. It was, therefore decided that descriptive statistical techniques would be used instead and this is a useful way of summarising and presenting statistical information to a reader (Coolican, 1999). Mean BPYP scores were calculated at time 1 and time 2 and the distance from the expected range were also calculated. As the mean, is however easily distorted by one or a few unrepresentative values (Coolican, 1999) to account for this potential bias, raw data has been kept available, allowing others to query and look at the data differently should this be necessary. Changes in scores between time 1 and 2 were also calculated.

### 3.11. Operational Risk Analysis

When planning the research a number of risk factors were considered and a contingency plan was derived. These are presented in table 3.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Level of risk</th>
<th>Contingency plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in recruiting school</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Key contacts have been shared by the NGN Director. If however, it is not possible to make contact the link Educational Psychologist will be contacted and asked as a “bridge” to engaging with the school initially. Should this not be possible schools from a wider area will be contacted and will be asked for contacts that they have become to know through their Nurture Group forum/events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents may not give consent to the research</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>I will ensure that parents are given as much information as possible. Contact details will also be given if they wish to discuss the research further. Should some parents not wish to consent, other pupils will be chosen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon reflection the recruitment of schools initially was slightly harder than anticipated. As NG Facilitators are often busy throughout the day (and may continue to run groups for breakfast or lunch) it was difficult to speak with some NG facilitators. For some schools messages were left with administrative staff and contact was made again if there had been no response with two weeks. Following two calls, and two emails, it was presumed that schools did not wish to be involved in the research resulting in contact being made with schools from a wider geographical area, identified from the NGN's list of secondary schools with the QMA.

3.12. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was applied to the School of Education Quality Assurance team on 07/03/13 and granted on 12/04/13. This was achieved by completing the research, risk and ethics assessment (RREA) form and The School of Education (SoE) Ethical Approval Form. The following ethical considerations were made:

Free and informed consent

To ensure that participants were given free and informed consent, participant information sheets and consent forms were distributed. Participants were also informed that if they did not wish to consent to involvement this would in no way affect their relationship with senior management (for schools) or with their child’s school (for parents). Informed assent was obtained from pupils after a pupil information sheet was read to them.

Right to withdraw

Participants were given the right to withdraw and this was explained through the information sheets. During the data collection phase one school did withdraw from the study via email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children may opt out of the research</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Children will be given the option to do this but I will ensure that they have a good understanding of what they can expect from the focus group. They will also be given enough time to decide, allowing them to talk to the NG facilitator or their parents should they wish to. If the initial six pupils identified do not wish to be involved, other members of the NG will be approached.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school staff may not wish to be interviewed afterwards</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>It will be made clear through the information sheets what the data collection would involve and what would happen to the data afterwards. A consent form will also be given which the school staff will have two weeks to complete.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consent was obtained, however, to discuss the observation and interviews as pilot interviews/observations.

**Protection from harm**

As participants in the NG could be described as vulnerable, respect for this was made throughout. Observations were undertaken first and introductions were made by the Nurture Group facilitator. Information sheets were also discussed with the young people to obtain informed assent. The research also took place in a familiar setting to minimise any distress. The young people were also given the option to stop any interviews should they wish to.

The use of procedures that avoid harm were also utilised both for the researcher and the participants. For example the research commenced at times that had been negotiated with participants to provide minimal disruption possible. It was also agreed that should the researcher or participants face any distress or danger at any point the research will be stopped. Fortunately this did not occur and the research could commence as planned.

**Confidentiality**

Respect for privacy and confidentiality was maintained by anonymising all data collected and ensuring that this remained anonymous during the write up stage. The data protection act was adhered to throughout.
Chapter 4: Results

4.1. Chapter Outline

Within this chapter data will be presented that has been gathered across the two cases. Each case, and data gathered to answer each RQ, will be presented separately. The final section of this chapter will then outline findings from a cross-case synthesis of data from each of the case studies. The table below offers another outline of the RQs and how data were gathered to answer these RQs. Data sources are also presented for each research question.

Table 4.1: Overview of data gathered to answer each RQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ</th>
<th>What data will be gathered?</th>
<th>How will this data be gathered?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) How are classic NGs delivered in schools that have a quality mark awarded Nurture Group?</td>
<td>Information about the NG that is run in that school e.g. layout, frequency, members of the group.</td>
<td>Through a short questionnaire (Appendix C) developed by the current researcher and observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about the NG principles that are adopted during the sessions.</td>
<td>Through a short questionnaire (Appendix C) developed by the current researcher and observations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?</td>
<td>Information about what has helped the NG to be created and run successfully.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with school staff and Key Worker from an external agency (questions can be found in Appendix C). Focus group with the pupils (prompts can be found in Appendix C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about what has made the creation and running of the NG difficult and how these difficulties have been overcome.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with school staff and Key Worker from external agency. Focus group with the pupils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) How does NG attendance affect pupils?</td>
<td>Information from the Key Worker about changes they have witnessed since they have worked within the school.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview with a Key Worker involved with the school/NG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information about the benefits, both for individuals and within the wider school context.</td>
<td>Focus group with pupils, semi-structured interviews with school staff and Key Worker.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within each case, data were gathered from embedded multiple units of analysis (Yin 2009). Yin (2009) explains that each embedded unit of analysis acts as a sub-unit to the main unit of analysis / phenomenon of interest. In this study, each case study focussed on four units of analysis:

1. To explore how NGs are delivered in secondary schools.
2. To identify facilitators to creating a NG in a secondary school.
3. To identify barriers to implementation and explore how they are overcome.
4. To explore the effects of having a nurture group in a secondary school.

These units of analysis link to the broader RQs that were developed:

RQ1. How are classic NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded Nurture Group?
RQ2. How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?
RQ3. How does NG attendance affect pupils?

For RQ1, UoA1 was the focus (units of data collection, data collection sources and theoretical propositions were initially presented in figure 3.1). For RQ2, UoA2 and UoA3 were the focus (as presented in figures 3.2 and 3.3). For RQ3, UoA4 was the focus (as shown in figure 3.4). The data sources used for each research question are presented in the figures below.

Figure 4.1: Visual representation of data sources used to answer RQ1
4.2. Findings from Case Study 1

4.2.1. How are classic NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG?

To answer RQ1 the data sources described in Chapter 3 (and shown in figure 4.1) will be described separately before data are drawn together.
4.2.1.1. **Data from initial questionnaire.**

Information about the NG members:

Young people are identified in two ways: 1) From Year 6 teachers from the feeder primary school or 2) from referrals by school staff. Alongside these referrals, Boxall profiles are also completed, observations are undertaken and information regarding environmental factors (e.g., family circumstances) are also taken into account.

Should it be felt that the NG would not be the most suitable place for that young person, they would be referred to pastoral staff to support and monitor.

Currently two Year 7 NGs exist (and at the start of September 20 pupils were in these groups) whereas at the time of data collection (toward the end of the academic year) 14 Y7s remained. A Year 8 group also commences involving five pupils.

**Monitoring**

To monitor progress made, BPYP scores are referred to and information regarding behaviour referrals (behaviour points). Teacher and student feedback is also taken into account. Questionnaires are also given to staff and feedback is obtained from pastoral staff.

**Logistics**

NG sessions take place in a designated room. The number of NG sessions that pupils attend each week varies (from a minimum of three to a maximum of ten). Each session lasts for an hour and two members of staff (one teacher and one TA Level 3) facilitate the group. The teacher attended the four day NG Theory and Practice training (facilitated by the Nurture Group Network).

**Nature of the sessions**

Each NG session follows the six principles of nurture and a typical NG session involves:

1) Welcome  
2) Discussion about feelings  
3) Relaxation  
4) Activity  
5) Discussion and reflection
4.2.1.2. Findings from observations.

Observations revealed that the NG adhered to all six principles of nurture and an example of comments can be found in Appendix I. Observable information conveyed from the initial questionnaire were also supported.

4.2.1.3. Interview and focus group data.

Following the process of thematic analysis, basic themes and organising themes were developed. From these, four organising themes were developed and a global theme as show in the thematic network below. Whilst some quotes are outlined below, further examples are presented in Appendix J.

4.2.1.4. Thematic network: A structured home within school to meet your needs.

Figure 4.4: Thematic network 1.1: A structured home within school to meet your needs
Organising theme: Well prepared

Interviews revealed that the NG was a well-planned and structured intervention with clear referral routes in place and plans for re-integration. The NG was delivered on part-time temporary basis and sessions and groups were organised and timetabled. A designated member of staff has run the NG for a sustained period of time.

we do, like, we’re tight with our planning [NG Facilitator].

They attended, we tried to get them to come in everyday but it doesn’t always work like that, so we tried to get them in everyday at least for an hour, so they tend to have five hours a week with us [NG Facilitator].

when I came four years ago I had my training and that’s when it became more like it is now more structured, we implemented a lot more of the paperwork and it became more formal and things [NG Facilitator].

Organising theme: A nurturing and supportive base

Interviews revealed that the NG provided a home-like environment with an open door policy conveying a relaxing, warm and welcoming environment during structured and unstructured periods throughout the day. It provides comfort and support to pupils and home-like activities (such as breakfast) and apparatus (such as soft furnishings) are present in the room. The NG supports transition and supports mainstream staff if needed.

I haven’t really been in, well I pop in to say “hi” and it is quite a chilled place compared to the [other parts of school] [Pupil].

I’ll visit every day [when I leave] just to nip in and to tell her how my day is going [Pupil].

so that when it doesn’t go right the nurture group is a comfort blanket for them [Head Teacher].

and if you don’t want to talk about it and she asks you what is wrong I think if you don’t want to talk about it you can just say to her I don’t want to talk about it [Pupil].

Organising theme: Embedded into the wider system of support

The NG fits into the wider system of support as it is embedded within other support based services. Transition and generalisation of skills into mainstream school are the foci and targets continue to be focussed upon when the child is not in the NG. Wider school policies, e.g., the behaviour policy, are used in the NG. NG staff access support from the wider environment if necessary.

we might, sometimes what we might do is, we’ve got a TA level 3 who does a lot of social communication and language small group work so sometimes I might re-integrate them out via Lisa, just because it’s a different approach, it’s smaller
groups, it might be one-to-one or an adult to two or three children, it’s less intense it’s only maybe half an hour or twenty minutes, maximum of an hour a week so sometimes I’ll maybe say “look Lisa I’ve got someone who’s ready to go out but they just need something but maybe not me,” you know it’s a change of person as well and then she’ll so some bits with them [NG Facilitator].

I pop into mainstream lessons and it’s random I’ll just turn up at mainstream lessons just for them to realise that I am there whether I’m here or out there with them [NG Facilitator].

We get VIVOs (the school reward system) in there and you can buy stuff with them, like you can buy things off websites [pupil].

Conversations happen with [NG Facilitator], and [the director of inclusion] and [my Vice Principal] and she is in charge of student support, they take a strand of stuff and conversations go through them and they pick up line management [Head Teacher].

Organising theme: A child-centred approach to meet a range of needs

The NG has transformed over the years to meet pupils’ needs and as the need for nurture is increasing, multiple groups run alongside one another. Sessions include a range of activities that are child-centred based on the child’s needs and can be delivered flexibly. Points of referral, duration, frequency of sessions and re-integration into mainstream classes full time are also based upon the child’s needs. The NG serves pupils in KS3 with a range of social, emotional and behavioural needs (both internalising and externalising behaviours).

it’s been a metamorphosis into its current state which is sort of a mix and match of both really based on student needs [Head Teacher].

if they weren’t referred in Y7 and they were only referred in Y8 then it would just be an internal referral from a member of staff and it would get completed by the pastoral manager [NG Facilitator].

and there was this other one where we went to the beach for the day [Pupil].

we’ve got a young boy at the min who didn’t start with us until Jan this year so ‘cos he didn’t start until Jan he’s only done two terms so he will roll over to year 8 and do another two terms if he needs it [NG Facilitator].

if Joe Blogs comes in and is irate or anxious or upset I have the freedom that I can sit and bash it out with those kids, you know share experiences [NG Facilitator].

They might have been at risk of bullying as well because they were quite vulnerable [NG Facilitator].

but then you’ve got the others who don’t understand and shout out and it comes out in negative behaviours [NG Facilitator].
4.2.1.5. Conclusion for RQ1.

Findings revealed that the NG was a structured supportive provision with the children’s needs at the centre of planning. The NG fitted into wider school systems and into support systems and provided a home-like, supportive environment for pupils. Two NG staff facilitate the group and a range of activities are completed in sessions. Multiple groups of Year 7 and Year 8 pupils attend the NGs with a range of needs and monitoring tools are used to identify pupils and monitor impact. All six principles of nurture are followed. Pattern matched findings to the initial theory are outlined on p. 174.

4.2.2. How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?

RQ2 aimed to encompass information about how a NG had been implemented into a mainstream secondary school. This had two units of analysis that were the focus: to identify facilitators to creating a NG in a secondary school and what allowed the NG to be implemented and to gather information about what barriers existed.

To answer RQ2, data were drawn together before a thematic analysis was undertaken. This data included: transcription of the interview with the NG facilitator; transcription of the interview with a member of the SMT; transcription of the interview with a Key Worker and the transcription of the focus groups with the NG pupils. Barriers to implementation were explored as well as facilitators. The thematic network of barriers will be outlined before the thematic network of facilitators. Findings will be drawn together to summarise how the implementation of a NG has been possible.

4.2.2.1. Thematic Network: Barriers: Filling gaps in knowledge to change perceptions with the necessary resources.

Following thematic analysis of data coded as barriers, a thematic network was produced to allow a visual representation of global themes, organising themes and basic themes to be made. The global theme was produced from three organising themes and ten basic themes. Although some quotes are included to support each organising theme below, further examples are presented in Appendix J.
Organising Theme: Gathering essential resources was difficult

This theme found that the initial set up was difficult with regard to finding the correct facilitator and developing an understanding of how the room should be used. Funding concerns had also been raised. Timetabling issues were also discussed as pupils had to miss lessons to attend the NG.

*the other thing which was the major thing was getting the right member of staff to lead it and ........so the two things were the physical space and the right member of staff [Head Teacher].*

*Erm from a Head’s point of view looking at secondary I would say our current room and for a while we weren't really working with somewhere that allowed it to be what it needed to be [Head Teacher].*

*We’ve not had lots of money given to us in fact........funding’s been tight [NG Facilitator].*

*yes if I was missing learn to learn it was alright but missing RE, because I had a good teacher, I didn’t want to leave them [pupil].*

Organising Theme: Perceptions of NG can be difficult to break down

It was found that incorrect perceptions of the NG existed and a stigma was attached to the group by some mainstream pupils. Staff were also described as reluctant to engage or ‘not agreeing’ with the NG and gaps in communication were discussed.
The only other difficulties I would say are staff thinking that it is just for those who aren’t academic [NG Facilitator].

yeah and this one lad, he actually left [the NG] because he didn’t want to come to the lessons because he was getting teased [pupil].

But there are staff out there, and don’t get me wrong it is minimal, but they don’t agree with it and they are never going to agree with it. And some won’t change [NG Facilitator].

I don’t know how many staff managed to do that I think Mary has tried to reach out but often people are so busy you can try as much as you want but it often doesn’t happen does it [Key Worker].

Organising Theme: Knowledge of who the NG is for and what it involves

It was found that there was a lack of understanding across staff and pupils about what the NG was. Gaps were also suggested to exist in the NGN training. Getting the right NG members and grouping them was also found to be a difficulty. A suggestion was also made regarding the difficulty in measuring the impact of the NG.

there wasn’t an understanding about what the rationale was for having a nurture group and what it was trying to achieve [Head Teacher].

I think that [the NGN trainers] focus too heavily on the Boxall profiles, the neuroscience and attachment theory and they don’t quite tell you what a nurture group is about in my opinion [NG Facilitator].

I’m not saying this was but if I was to look back and look at it before I came I think probably having a clear idea of the children that you’re bringing – you know talking to the other staff in other nurture groups that seems to be a bit of an issue so I think in the early days, trying to educate staff about the sort of children [NG Facilitator].

and you know when you subject it to modern day evaluation procedures it might be quite difficult so I don’t know how they are measuring it but I’m guessing that there must be some sort of evaluation and I guess that could be quite qualitative really rather than quantitative [Key Worker].

4.2.2.2. Thematic Network: Facilitators: The NG and expertise are valued in a supportive environment.

Following thematic analysis of data coded as facilitators, a thematic network was produced to allow a visual representation of global themes, organising themes and basic themes to be made. The global theme was produced from three organising themes and ten basic themes. Whilst some quotes are outlined below, further examples are presented in Appendix J.
Organising Theme: An accepting and valuing environment

The ethos was one that was inclusive and seemed to be motivated to meet the needs of pupils emotionally as well as academically. Examples of supportive perceptions were discussed as were pupils’ positive views of their attendance. Resources were made available and the NG facilitator’s opinion and knowledge was valued.

Well yeah it helps you but I think a lot of it is to do with the ethos of the school, I thought we were and always have been a very inclusive school in terms of our outlook you know, our ethos is ‘the best in everyone’ and I’ve worked in five schools and I have to say this is the one that I can genuinely say that I think that this lives itself or was living in itself in practice anyway [Head Teacher].

I had, because I just wanted to get it over with what I was going through and I thought that it was the thing to help me and it did [Pupil].

So I think really when [the QMA assessor] came in she saw that we were well resourced [NG Facilitator].

I think she kind of valued what I was saying she appreciated that I’d been on the training [NG Facilitator].
Organising Theme: A supportive and interactive environment

A supportive and interactive environment was discussed in which relationships with others were formed and communication with staff occurred. The NG staff were also supported and pupils’ transition into nurture was supported.

“Staff will email if they have questions and there are some staff who you have a better rapport with who are more likely to ask you those questions [NG Facilitator].”

“Well on the central computer system we have something called share point on the intranet and on there all the vital paperwork documents so they are all on there for the staff to access, we keep them in the loop, we put things in the bulletin so staff are informed [NG Facilitator].”

“Yes I would say so because [the director of Inclusion] is still on board, management are on board [NG Facilitator].”

“Miss used to come to pick us up [Pupil].”

Organising Theme: Expertise and qualities allow its facilitation

Staff in school prior to the NG being established had some knowledge about NGs and were motivated to improve their knowledge base. The NG facilitator’s skills were important and they also had the motivation and means to improve their knowledge base which allowed a transformation into a classic NG to be made.

“the next steps to that then were to look at what was out there currently that was tackling those kind of issues so obviously we went and did a bit of a look at nurture groups that were established somewhere and did the usual online research but from my perspective it went a little bit wider really which was to look at how other agencies were working with students and what we wanted to capture was how they were working so we just did a bit of a best practice trawl and it shaped itself into our first incantation of how we thought it would be [Head Teacher].”

“I think that Mary has been really proactive about how she has gone about [having conversations with staff] so I think that has been one of the major players [Head Teacher].”

“by speaking to other people and by reading up and getting information from the nurture group network – I just sensed that it wasn’t right [NG Facilitator].”

4.2.2.3. Conclusion to RQ2.

Barriers identified to implementation focussed on gathering resources (e.g., having the right member of staff in place and having a suitable room) and having gaps in knowledge regarding a NG. Ongoing barriers also exist including occasional reluctance of staff to engage. Incorrect perceptions of others with regard to who should access the NG and what it involves also existed. Another barrier could be a difficult in measuring impact which could consequently impact on funding.
Although a range of barriers existed before the NG was established and continue to exist once it has been established, a number of facilitators seem to be in place to allow the NG to run. These include a supportive, interactive, accepting and valuing environment and expertise and essential staff qualities. To further convey that facilitators may overcome barriers, each basic theme from each thematic network has been explicitly linked in the table below:

**Table 4.2: Linking barriers to facilitators in case study 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set up was difficult</td>
<td>Knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is an issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Resources are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in understanding</td>
<td>Knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting the right members together</td>
<td>More groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to measure impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of NG</td>
<td>Communication with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for NG staff and pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Changing perceptions of NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance of staff engagement</td>
<td>Communication with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 4.2 many barriers have and continue to be overcome due to numerous facilitators. Some barriers do not however; seem to have a matching facilitator. For example ‘stigma’ was a basic theme and focussed on other pupils’ perceptions of the NG. Whilst facilitators allow others’ perceptions to be changed (e.g., relationships, communication with staff and support for pupils about to go into NG) initial or basic themes did not focus on changing mainstream pupil’s views of the NG. Timetabling is also raised as an issue with which a facilitator was not directly linked.

Whilst some barriers do exist they do not appear to be preventing the NG from running. Should these barriers be eliminated, however, it may make the running of the NG easier (e.g., if pupils’ views of nurture are shifted, this may make attendance at the NG more enjoyable for NG pupils). Some barriers would be difficult, however to be prevented (e.g., timetabling). Knowing how to measure impact was also a barrier with which a facilitator was not explicitly linked and, if this was not accomplished, this may create difficulties in monitoring impact and securing ongoing funding.
4.2.3. How does NG attendance affect pupils?

RQ3 aimed to understand what outcomes (both positive and negative) of attendance at the NG achieved. Within this RQ, the unit of analysis was an exploration of the effects of having a NG in a secondary school.

To answer this RQ, data were gathered through interviews and focus groups. Pre and post BPYP data were also used for the pupils who had been included in the focus group. The majority of these pupils had, or were almost ready, for resettlement.

4.2.3.1. Interview and focus group data.

Following thematic analysis 12 basic themes were produced. From these, four organising themes were developed and a global theme was produced, as shown in the thematic network below. Findings revealed some positive effects to NG attendance and some negative effects. Although only a few negative effects were mentioned, to ensure that all data was attended to, a brief thematic network was developed. Whilst some quotes are outlined below, further examples are presented in Appendix J.

4.2.3.2. Thematic Network: Positive effects: An inclusive and positive school experience.

Figure 4.7: Thematic network 1.4: An inclusive and positive school experience
Organising theme: Benefits for the wider school

Positive effects for the wider school were found and it was suggested that the NG helped to recognise emotional needs in pupils. It was also suggested that the presence of a NG portrayed a positive message about the school.

so the nurture group has provided a place for them to congregate so it is a good way for me to, because if a child is struggling in year seven then they could either be in the nurture group or not in the nurture group and the ones that people perceive will struggle will be in the nurture group. And without the nurture group let’s pretend that it wasn’t there for a minute, it might be hard for me to reach the year sevens [Key Worker].

the choice that the school is making is sending out a message that we do care about people settling into school and we don’t have to do this but we are doing this because we want to do it, it sends out a positive message to people in the school and outside the school [Key Worker].

Organising theme: Greater emotional well-being

Pupils attending the NG had made reported gains with regard to their emotional well-being. Increased levels of confidence and greater emotional regulation and resilience were also described and, as the NG provided a place for children to congregate, it was also thought that it may make it easier for pupil’s emotional needs to be recognised and met.

we’ve seen a rise in students who are going on school trips and partaking in things because I think what we’re doing is giving them the confidence and the self-belief that they can do it [NG Facilitator].

[I’ve learnt to] distract myself [when I’m annoyed] and just take myself away from whatever situation I am in [Pupil].

but they’ve got through school being here and having the support we gave them, probably helped them to cope [NG Facilitator].

Organising theme: Positive school experience

This theme summarised positive school experiences for pupils in and out of the NG as they had the opportunities for success to be experienced and notified. Academic gains were also reported. The NG also provided opportunities for pupils to experience enjoyment.

but it’s clearly got the spirit and the people in it because the children themselves are enjoying going and I’m sure they are performing better in class [Key Worker].

it is right because the kids are happy, the students are happy [NG Facilitator].

I think the fact that children are praised for everything it’s so so positive [NG Facilitator].
I was kind of happy because I have got through it and I know that I have achieved something by doing it because I know by leaving that I have achieved my goal [Pupil].

Organising theme: A sense of belonging to engage positively

A range of basic themes conveyed the message of positive engagement with school and others. These included improvements in behaviour and the formation of positive relationships. Pupils were also able to remain in mainstream education and some examples of greater engagement with school activities and a generalisation of skills from the NG to mainstream were discussed. Linked to this (which possibly could have been the main factor in allowing these gains to occur) was the expression of security that was provided to the pupils.

I've learnt to make my behaviour better……I haven't been getting loads of referrals [Focus group].

I look back and a lot of them still hang around together, they've formed friendship groups through being in nurture [NG Facilitator].

Well usually I didn’t used to join in with English activities after school but I did play a part in George and the Dragon in year 8 and we performed it in town [Pupil].

[If the NG was not in place] I think we would have lost so many of our students early down the school that they would not even have had a chance when time came around as……six or seven years ago we were still losing chunks of kids who were becoming NEET who weren’t seen in school……attendance wasn’t good [Head Teacher].

if they didn’t have a safe haven to go to at breaks and lunch times and things they might have been a target for bullies being quite vulnerable [NG Facilitator].

Negative effects to NG attendance were also found and will now be outlined.

4.2.3.3. Thematic Network: Negative effects: Feeling of loss and disconnection from peers.

Four basic themes and two organising themes existed within this global theme. Although only a small number of basic themes were generated it was felt important to attend to all of the data. Whilst some quotes are outlined below, further examples are presented in Appendix J.
Organising theme: Peer effects

Pupils had mentioned that they had experienced bullying due to NG attendance. The Key Worker also wondered if attendance at the NG would create feelings of isolation from peers.

*I have rubbish friends, I get teased about the group [Pupil].*

*But they are kind of isolated from mainstream too so it makes it difficult then, you know I wonder what the mainstream people think about the pupils in nurture [Key Worker].*

Organising theme: Loss may make transition harder

Feelings of loss and a possible creation of a loss situation after NG attendance were discussed. It was also suggested that attendance at the NG may make transition into mainstream even harder as the full transition from primary to secondary may have been postponed.

*The only bad thing is about leaving because it can be really emotional because I must admit it is a bit upsetting when you are leaving [Pupil].*

*I don’t know if it makes it more difficult when you finally do come into mainstream, does nurture make it easier or harder? [Key Worker].*
4.2.3.4. **BPYP data.**

BPYP data were collated from entry into the NG (time 1 score) and the latest BPYP score available (time 2 score). Average scores were calculated by adding all participant scores together and dividing by the number of participants. In this case study the six pupils who were part of the focus group's BPYP scores were used. Average scores at time 1 for the group are presented below in table 4.3 along with the difference from the norm.

Table 4.3: Average time 1 BPYP scores and distance from the norm for Case Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Norm</th>
<th>Mean score at time 1</th>
<th>Difference from the norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.83</td>
<td>+0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.17</td>
<td>+0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>+0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>+0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.67</td>
<td>+0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>-1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>+0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>+0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-1.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, the majority of average scores for time 1 fell within the expected range on the developmental strands and the two strands that were below the expected score (strands B and I) were just slightly below.
Within the diagnostic strands some scores were already within the expected range at time 1 (as indicated with a minus difference from the norm). The five strands that were not in the expected range (strands Q, R, T, U and V) were however 1 score or less away from the expected range. Please see Appendix E for an example of BPYP scores.

Average scores for time 2 were then calculated. Again, the average of pupils’ scores (n=6) were calculated for each strand.

Table 4.4: Average time 2 BPYP scores and distance from the norm for Case Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Norm</th>
<th>Mean score at time 2</th>
<th>Difference from the norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>+0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>+1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.67</td>
<td>+0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.33</td>
<td>+1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19.83</td>
<td>+1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>+1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>+0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>+0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All but one score within the developmental strands at time 2 were in the expected range (Strand I was still slightly below the expected range but only 0.5 scores below which was closer than at time 1). For the diagnostic strands there was a fairly mixed picture. Five out of the ten strands were within the expected range and the five that were not within the expected range were less than one score away. Difference between time 1 and time 2 scores were then calculated. These can be found in table 4.5a below.

Table 4.5a: Differences between average time 1 and time 2 BPYP scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Norm</th>
<th>Mean score at time 1</th>
<th>Mean score at time 2</th>
<th>Difference between time 1 and 2***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.83</td>
<td>19*</td>
<td>+0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.33*</td>
<td>+1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11*</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.17</td>
<td>15.5*</td>
<td>+1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>+0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>11.67*</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.67</td>
<td>15.33*</td>
<td>+0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>19.83*</td>
<td>+1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>+0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.67*</td>
<td>+0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>0.83*</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>+0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>+0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.33*</td>
<td>+0.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+0.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td>+0.83**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*indicates a score in the expected range
**indicates a score that, although at time 2 is greater, is still within the expected range
***an increase in scores for developmental strands is desired where as a decrease in diagnostic strands is desired.
On the developmental strands scores increased at time 2 compared with time 1 on nine out of the ten strands (showing a positive improvement). For the one strand that showed a reduction in scores (‘is emotionally secure’) the change was very little (0.16) and both time 1 and time 2 scores were in the expected range.

On the diagnostic strands only one score reduced (a desirable change) allowing the score to be within the expected range (‘craves attachment’). Some strand scores did not change between time 1 and time 2 (strands Q, R and S) although one of these scores (‘undifferentiated attachments’) was in the expected range anyway and the other two were close to the expected range. Some scores had increased at time 2 (when ideally one would hope that they have decreased) meaning that scores were further away from the expected range. These included strands T (‘inconsequential behaviour’) V (‘avoids/rejects attachment’) and W (‘insecure sense of self’). Increases in scores were, however, very low (less than one full score). Although other strands showed increases in scores, some scores still remained in the expected range (e.g., strands X – Z).

The following figures offer visual representations of time 1, time 2 and expected scores for each of the Boxall Profile strands.

**Figure 4.9: Visual representation of the comparison between time 1 average scores, time 2 average scores and the expected score for the developmental strands**

As shown in figure 4.9, many time one scores were within or close to the expected range to start but the majority of time 2 scores also showed a desirable increase in scores.
As shown, some ‘time 1’ and ‘time 2’ scores were within the expected range but some ‘time 2’ scores showed an increase in scores meaning that scores were further away from the expected range. Although higher, some scores remained in the expected range.

Given the unexpected findings in the data, individual pupil scores were also considered with the hypothesis that the group’s mean score may have been affected by one or two scores. The findings of which are presented below in table 4.5b.
Table 4.5b: Differences between time 1 and 2 BPYP scores for individual pupils for Case Study 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil</th>
<th>Pupil A</th>
<th>Pupil B</th>
<th>Pupil C</th>
<th>Pupil D</th>
<th>Pupil E</th>
<th>Pupil F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Difference in scores between time 1 and time 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the developmental strands the majority of the pupils’ scores had increased or stayed the same. A few pupils’ scores had decreased however on some strands (pupil D and pupil E). On the diagnostic strands scores showed a mixed picture and most pupils (apart from pupil E) showed increases as well as decreases in scores.
4.2.3.5. Conclusion for RQ3.

A range of positive effects were discussed to NG attendance including greater emotional well-being, a creation of positive school experiences and development of a sense of belonging to engage with school positively. More specifically behavioural gains were witnessed and it was thought that the NG supports and allows pupils to remain engaged with mainstream education. Emotional gains included improved resilience, greater emotional regulation and increased confidence. Positive gains were also mentioned for the school as a whole and it was though that having a NG in place created a positive message about the school and helped emotional needs to be identified.

As data collection methods also allowed for rival explanations to be established, negative effects of NG attendance were also found. These included the possibility of the NG creating a loss situation when re-integrating into mainstream lessons fully. Peer effects were also found as bullying for attending NG was discussed as was the possibility that nurture pupils may feel isolated from peers.

Although still important, negative comments made were less frequently than positive ones and it would seem that, despite these negative effects, attendance at NGs continues to occur implying that positive effects outweigh negative effects.

Boxall data showed improvements in the majority of the developmental strands after NG attendance for the group as a whole and for the majority of individual pupils, although, interestingly a number of strand scores were within the expected range at time 1 anyway. The diagnostic strands showed a mixed picture with some scores staying the same, some increasing and only one decreasing for the group as a whole and the majority of individual scores demonstrated the same trend. One pupil did not, however show any increases in scores and so the group mean may not be representative of all pupils. Whilst some increases resulted in scores being further away from the expected range, other increases still allowed some scores to remain in the expected range.

4.3. Findings for Case Study 2

4.3.1. How are classic NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG?

To answer RQ1 an exploration of how NGs are delivered in secondary school was undertaken. Various data streams were used including: interviews with the NG facilitator; interview with the Deputy Head Teacher; interview with a Key Worker and a focus group with four pupils. These interview transcripts were then thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke,
2006). Observations and an initial questionnaire were also completed. Questionnaire data, observational data and interview/focus group data will be described separately before data is drawn together.

4.3.1.1. **Data from initial questionnaire.**

Questionnaire data were analysed using content analysis and was summarised into key headings.

**NG Members**

Young people are referred by staff in school and then selected through the use of the Boxall profile after it has been analysed by a member of the NG staff. Should it be felt that the NG would not be the most suitable place other student support services would be investigated. Generally four to five pupils form a NG although up to 6 members would also be appropriate.

**Monitoring**

To monitor progress made, two Boxall profiles are complete for each child. Progression and improvement are then analysed through the completion of later Boxall profiles. Evaluation of the NG relating to impact on the wider-school context is completed as part of a whole student support service. Achievement of the QMA was also conceptualised as a positive evaluation.

**Logistics**

NG sessions take place in a designated room. The number of NG sessions that pupils attend each week tends to be three. Each session lasts for between one and two hours and two members of staff facilitate the group. The teacher attended the four day NG Theory and Practice training (facilitated by the Nurture Group Network) amongst other relevant courses such as Restorative Practice course and an ‘Understanding Trauma’ course.

**Nature of the sessions**

Each NG session follows the six principles of Nurture and a typical NG session involves:

1) Welcome
2) Discussion about feelings
3) Activity (focussing on a topic discussed during that half-term)
4) Tidy away, positive comments and, if appropriate rewards given, ‘goodbye’
4.3.1.2. **Findings from observations.**

As found in case study one, observations revealed that the NG adhered to all six principles of nurture and examples of comments can be found in Appendix I. Observable information conveyed from the initial questionnaire was also supported.

4.3.1.3. **Interview and focus group data.**

Following the process of thematic analysis, basic themes and organising themes were developed. From these, three organising themes were developed and a global theme as shown in the thematic network below. Whilst some quotes are outlined below, further examples are presented in Appendix J.

4.3.1.4. **Thematic Network: A structured home in here to meet your needs out there**

Figure 4.11: Thematic network 2.1: A structured home in here to meet your needs out there
Organising theme: carefully structured and planned

This organising theme is made up from four basic themes. These four themes conveyed a message of a carefully planned and consistent environment with referral routes and re-integration routes in place. Attendance is part time and groups are composed and scheduled carefully.

we start them in groups after we have done the Boxall [NG Facilitator].

you come out of mainstream school and they go there for an hour or two hours [Key Worker].

Yes how we group them is by looking at their Boxall’s and looking at which strand of development they need to be working on [NG Facilitator].

we haven’t got a group of children with only the same areas of development ……………..they often have areas of development in common but we try to mix up as much as we can because they need to learn from one another [NG Facilitator].

Organising Theme: Embedded within the wider school with a focus on generalising skills

This theme conveyed a setting that was fully supported and embedded in wider school support systems. Pupils and staff could access support from other services and regular contact with mainstream staff occurred. There was also a focus on ensuring that pupils could function in the wider system as the generalisation of skills was supported.

the support structures work together really and there is a crossover [NG Facilitator].

[The NG Facilitator] would come to the meetings and say about how well he was doing in the nurture group........she was always at the meetings as well so she could always put her point of view across as well [Key Worker].

this morning I had a discussion with the form tutor and said we have noticed in nurture that this this and this seems to work and she said brilliant I’ll pass that on and make sure all staff know what works for him [NG Facilitator].

[We include] tips for coping in school, how you can get by, all the things you can do to make people want to be friends with you and be a good class member [NG Facilitator].

Organising Theme: A supportive child-centred approach meeting different needs

This theme discussed how the NG meets a range of pupils’ needs from a child-centred approach. This is done in a comforting and home-like environment through a range of activities.

so it varies from that kind of hot tempered, antisocial type of behaviour to withdrawn, antisocial behaviour [NG Facilitator].
and we’ve got time to talk through feelings to put strategies into place we can take everything at a really slow, steady pace and keep going over things with children because sometimes you do have to go over the same things a few times but it just gives them the chance to learn [NG Facilitator].

you take your shoes off and put slippers on which all the children do [Key Worker].

I was invited for breakfast.........when I went for breakfast I think Paul was allowed to invite somebody and he asked me if I would like to go with him which was lovely [Key Worker].

We go cycling [Pupil].

We played a game [Key Worker].

4.3.1.5. Conclusion for RQ1.

Various data revealed that the NG offers a structured home-like setting within school that offers a child-centred and nurturing approach to meet a range of KS3 pupils’ needs. All aspects of the NG are prepared and structured and the NG is embedded within the wider school and system of support. Two staff facilitate the sessions and multiple groups run alongside one another and attendance is part-time and temporary. A range of activities are completed during sessions and monitoring procedures are in place for pupils. All six principles of nurture are demonstrated. These findings are pattern matched to the original theory and presented in table 5.6.

4.3.2. How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?

4.3.2.1. Thematic network: Barriers: Finding the belief, knowledge and support in the wider environment.

Following thematic analysis, eleven basic themes and three organising themes were produced. This global theme explained the barriers to implementation.
Organising theme: Belief in the NG

This organising theme summarised a lack of or reluctance to engage with the NG from some parents. Initial perceptions of the NG were also mentioned which may have impacted on parents’ reluctance to allow their child to attend. Some staff were also described as reluctant to wanting pupils to miss their lessons, potentially missing the importance of the NG. Funding concerns were also raised and concerns about measuring the long-term impact (which may add to funding concerns).

- some parents have had a bad experience of school and are uncomfortable about school generally so a lot of the students of nurture group’s parents, that’s probably a key issue, that’s not something you could ever fix [Deputy Head].

- one parent has refused to let their child attend she has sent me a really aggressive email, she was very angry [NG Facilitator].

- occasionally there will be a grumpy member of staff [who does not want a child to miss their lessons] [Deputy Head].

- the year before last there was a cut in school budgets I think by 10 or 20 [Deputy Head].

- and you can’t measure the long-term impact until five or ten years down the line when they are hopefully working, not in jail or having babies or whatever it is that might of happened to them otherwise [Deputy Head].
Organising theme: Understanding of how the NG can meet pupils’ needs

Pupils, parents and staff were described as having a lack of understanding about what the NG was and a difficulty in identifying some pupils for support. Difficulties with group composition also existed in terms of understanding how pupils could be supported to be in the same group.

[pupils and some teachers] they don’t actually understand what it means to be in the NG [Pupil].

Candidates that we do find more difficult to spot are the ones that become more withdrawn and quiet and a bit insular [Key Worker].

in fact there were two pupils in the class, one being the child who I was supporting and another one and they really didn’t get on and mean really disliked each other, they both went to nurture group and they couldn’t go to nurture group together because that’s how much they dislike each other [Key Worker].

Organising theme: Connection in the wider environment

Mainstream staff did not know that a child was in nurture and due to timetabling issues pupils missed lessons and they emphasised the difficulty in keeping up with their peers. Transferring skills or allowing children to continue to feel a sense of belonging after the NG was also mentioned as a possible difficulty. Comments were also made about NG staff possibly feeling isolated and requiring some reassurance on occasions.

There was one piece of feedback that I felt was useful and that was about the form tutor who was not aware that he had been attending [NG Facilitator].

timetabling really is our biggest issue [NG Facilitator].

catching up on work and you’ve got to work a lot harder [Pupil].

it’s hard to [ensure pupils feel that school is a place for them] and keep that going as much once they’ve left nurture group [Deputy Head].

4.3.2.2. Thematic network: Facilitators: An understanding and supporting environment where engagement occurs.

Following thematic analysis, eleven basic themes and three organising themes were produced. This global theme explained the barriers to implementation.
Engagement and communication with others occurs and information is provided to improve understandings about the NG and share information about pupils.

We have produced a little document that is available on the website that we send out to the staff members [NG Facilitator].

then that’s a case of working with the parents to help them to understand what NG is.....it was just about inviting them in, getting into a conversation with them and breaking down the barriers [Deputy Head].

we also, we have parent’s evening and we will encourage students’ parents to make an appointment which also it is a chance to feed back to parents [NG Facilitator].

Organising theme: Pupils are supported to attend

This theme conveyed the message that the pupils are supported to attend through various support systems including peer and staff support. Transition into the NG is supported and attempts are made to alleviate the difficulty with missing lessons.

the way that they have done it now is a lot better because instead of having the card on the front of your planner they put a sticker on the inside so when you have got your planner out [other pupils] don’t know that you go to the NG [Pupil].
[NG facilitators] showed me round and told me what it was [Pupil].

we always move the group timing so that they are not always missing the same lesson. I guess it wouldn’t be fair, or legal or beneficial if they were missing the same lesson or one particular subject all the time so we vary when they come [NG Facilitator].

Organising Theme: An empathic and supportive environment

This theme described that the NG is based in a supportive environment in which senior management value and support its running whilst making financial resources available. The school ethos is one of a caring nature and NG staff receive support from senior management and access supervision. NG staff are also empathic and understanding of others’ views and perceptions of NG attendance.

a lot of it comes from Clive (Head Teacher) really seeing the value of it and supporting it so much he is committed to it working [Deputy Head].

I don’t know how [the Head] does it but he makes sure within the school budget that the finances are there [Deputy Head].

and it’s just the ethos of the school really …….it must come from Clive because he’s been here for ten years so pretty much it’s probably reflective of him [Deputy Head].

James and Mary both have supervision with the rest of the team to talk about issues [Deputy Head].

It’s really important to have empathy for the parents and acknowledge that they might not have had the best experience of school themselves [Deputy Head].

4.3.2.3. Conclusion to RQ2.

Barriers identified to implementation focussed on the difficulties engaging and changing perceptions/improving the knowledge of people external to the NG. People included: parents, some staff and pupils. Funding concerns had also been discussed and there was some disconnection in terms of support for pupils and communication regarding their attendance at nurture. Although a range of barriers existed before the NG was established, and continue to exist once it has been established, a number of facilitators seem to be in place to allow the NG to run. These include a supportive and empathic environment, communication with others and support for pupils to attend. Each basic theme from each thematic network has been explicitly linked in the table below:
Table 4.6: Linking barriers to facilitators in case study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in communication</td>
<td>Communication with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing nurture after the group</td>
<td>Supported school ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have to keep up with mainstream</td>
<td>Impact of lessons missed aims to be reduced (initial theme: support in lessons missed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with the NG</td>
<td>Others invited to the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding concerns</td>
<td>Resources available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetabling issue</td>
<td>Measures in place to support attendance (initial theme: groupings are reassessed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to measure the long term impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of the NG</td>
<td>Information offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others invited to the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication with school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying group members</td>
<td>Information offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others invited to the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication with school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties with group composition</td>
<td>Measure in place to support attendance (initial theme: groupings are reassessed termly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding</td>
<td>Information offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others invited to the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication with school staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of barriers were around understanding, perceptions and engagement with the NG, all of which aimed to be alleviated by inviting others to the NG, providing information, communicating with staff and engaging with parents.

Although a number of barriers existed, numerous facilitators seemed to be in place to allow the NG to be implemented successfully whilst closely adhering to the ‘classic’ NG model. Only one barrier was mentioned that did not directly link to a facilitator (difficult to measure the long-term impact) and although this could be hypothesised to create funding issues in the future, given that funding is available it is likely that this barrier does not affect the running of the NG at the moment.
4.3.3. How does NG attendance affect pupils?

4.3.3.1. Interview and focus group data.

Transcripts from interviews with the NG facilitator, member of the SMT, Key Worker and from the pupil focus group were pulled together and treated as one data source when completing the thematic analysis. Findings revealed some positive effects to NG attendance and some negative. Although only a few negative effects were mentioned, to ensure that all data was attended to, a brief thematic network was developed. Following data analysis a thematic network was produced that allowed a visual representation of the global theme, organising themes and basic themes to be produced. Positive effects will be presented first before the thematic network of negative effects is presented. Some quotes to support each organising theme are presented below but further examples can be found in Appendix J.

4.3.3.2. Thematic Network: Positive effects: Nurtured to make gains.

Four organising themes and twelve basic themes were grouped to make this global theme.

Figure 4.14. Thematic Network 2.4: Nurtured to make gains to engage
Organising theme: Effects for the wider school

Basic themes discussed a positive message about the school, support for mainstream staff to support NG children and the positive impact that improved gains in NG pupils has on their class mates.

but it says a lot that we do so much to try to not let them fall through the cracks [Deputy Head].

[The NG Facilitators] have trained form tutors into some of the techniques they’ve used over here, like circle time [Deputy Head].

If you’re in a group, if you’ve got somebody who before NG couldn’t work in a group and now knows how to work in a group, everybody benefits [Deputy Head].

Organising theme: Improved emotional well-being

This organising theme included basic themes that highlighted an improvement in pupils’ self-awareness. This included taking responsibility for their actions and regulating emotions successfully. Improvements in confidence and levels of resilience were also noted.

they know who they are a bit more as a person [NG Facilitator].

if they hadn’t been to the nurture group they would still be doing that but because by going to the nurture group they have taught them to answer calmly and stay calm [Key Worker].

[I have learnt] to be more confident …… well if somebody asks you a question, I used to be really shy and not answer the question…….. If they just ask me, I would say it now [Pupil].

Yes because it has kind of taught me to put my hand up and even if I am wrong it is not the end of the world [Pupil].

Organising theme: Nurtured to belong

Pupils were described as feeling supported from staff and from peers in the group. This support focussed on transition and also allowed difficult feelings to be discussed. Pupils also reportedly felt safer, ‘nurtured’ and comforted whilst achieving a sense of belonging through being included and remaining in mainstream whilst feeling ‘part of something’ in the NG.

they are actually safe to come across here and sit and talk to us and we’ll sort things out and knowing those staff are around was a big thing [Key Worker].

all of the people here [helped me settle in] [Pupil].

yes because it helped me settle in before I actually came to High School [Pupil].
it made me feel a lot more safer in a way and settled in [Pupil].

feeling like there is a place that is for them……. they felt that school was a place for them [Deputy Head].

Organising theme: Positive engagement with school and others

The NG provided enjoyable experiences to pupils and reportedly made school easier for pupils. Improvements in behaviour at home and school were also discussed and greater engagement with lessons. Opportunities to develop friendships were also discussed and a pupil who had huge behavioural gains reportedly received acceptance from peers. Moreover, improved social skills and an opportunity to connect with an adult were also discussed.

it gives them chance to talk and express themselves and have a bit of fun sometimes [NG Facilitator].

Yes definitely because I think that that behaviour in lessons has improved [NG Facilitator].

but NG helped us to build up a really good friendship [Pupil].

once he learned [those social skills] they accepted him so that was good [Key Worker].

confidence to vocalise your feelings because before I would not talk to anyone and I would bottle it up and explode a bit, whereas now I can kind of talk about it [Pupil].

Negative effects were also found and these are summarised in thematic network 2.5.

4.3.3.3. Thematic Network: Negative Effects: Emotional, peer and academic effects to NG attendance.

This global theme was produced from three organising themes and six basic themes. Whilst some quotes to support each organising theme are presented below, further examples can be found in Appendix J.
Organising Theme: Bullying

This organising theme was made up of one basic theme. This theme summarised pupils’ experiences of bullying due to their attendance at the NG.

*people at break might pick on me if they find out that I go to NG calling me stuff like I’m a s**z [Pupil].*

*then they will take the mick out of me and call me a s**z [Pupil].*

Organising Theme: Sadness

This organising theme was made up of one basic theme that discussed a pupil’s sadness of having to miss favourite lessons due to NG attendance.

*I felt sad because I was missing History [Pupil].*

Organising Theme: Consequences for missing lessons

This theme was created from four basic themes and presents the consequences to missing lessons which included late marks, detentions, missing tests and having to work harder to keep up with peers.
then I found out that you get late marks which would have ruined my perfect attendance [Pupil].

catching up on work and you’ve got to work a lot harder [Pupil].

I’ve had seven detentions because I didn’t get the homework and didn’t ask anyone about the homework so I’ve had detentions for not asking [Pupil].

4.3.3.4. BPYP scores.

Table 4.7: Average time 1 BPYP scores and distance from the norm for Case Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Norm</th>
<th>Mean score at time 1</th>
<th>Difference from the norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75*</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All scores for time 1 within the developmental strands fall outside of the expected range. ‘Shows insightful involvement’ and ‘accommodates to others’ seemed to be furthest away from the expected range. Within the diagnostic strands all strands were above the expected range apart from ‘wants, grabs, disregards others’ which was in the expected range.
Average scores for time 2 were then calculated. Again, the average of pupils’ scores (n=4) were calculated for each strand (and these are presented in table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Average time 2 BPYP scores and distance from the norm for Case Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Norm</th>
<th>Mean score at time 2</th>
<th>Difference from the norm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5*</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.75*</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At time 2 five strand scores on the developmental clusters were within the expected range. The strand scores that were not in the expected range were however fairly close (with the greatest score being 3 scores away from the expected range (strand D – ‘shows insightful involvement).

In the diagnostic strands two out of the ten scores were now in the expected range and the other scores were relatively close to the expected range with scores being no greater than
1.5 away from the expected range. Difference between time 1 and time 2 scores were then calculated. These can be found in table 4.9a below.

Table 4.9a: Differences between average time 1 and time 2 BPYP scores for Case Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Norm</th>
<th>Mean score at time 1</th>
<th>Mean score at time 2</th>
<th>Difference between time 1 and 2***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18*</td>
<td>+6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>+5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td>+3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+7.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>+4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>+2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>+2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>+9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>+3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>-3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.5*</td>
<td>-1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>+1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>-1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>+0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.75**</td>
<td>+1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*indicates a score in the expected range
** indicates a score that, although at time 2 is greater, is still within the expected range
****an increase in scores for developmental strands is desired where as a decrease in diagnostic strands is desired.

On all the developmental strands, scores had increased showing positive outcomes for pupils. The biggest changes occurred in the ‘accommodates others’ strand. In the diagnostic
strands all but three score had decreased from time 1 to time 2, again, signifying a positive outcome. Some strand scores had, however, actually increased including ‘inconsequential behaviour’ (strand T) (by 1.5), ‘negative toward others’ (strand Y) (by 0.25) and ‘wants, grabs, disregards others’ (strand Z) (by 1). The following figures offer visual representations of time 1, time 2 and expected scores for each of the BPYP strands.

Figure 4.16: Visual representation of the comparison between time 1 and 2 average scores and the expected scores for developmental strands

![Comparison of average time 1 and time 2 scores and expected scores for developmental strands](image)

Figure 4.17: Visual representation of the comparison between time 1 and 2 average scores and the expected scores for diagnostic strands

![Comparison of average time 1 and time 2 scores and expected scores for diagnostic strands](image)
Given the unexpected findings in the data, individual pupil scores were also considered with the hypothesis that the groups mean score may have been affected by one or two pupils’ scores. The findings of which are presented below in table 4.9b.

Table 4.9b: Differences between time 1 and 2 BPYP scores for individual pupils for Case Study 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil</th>
<th>Pupil A</th>
<th>Pupil B</th>
<th>Pupil C</th>
<th>Pupil D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difference in scores between time 1 and time 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Gives purposeful attention</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Participates constructively</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Connects up experiences</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D: Shows insightful involvement</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>+13</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Engages cognitively with peers</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F: Is emotionally secure</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G: Accepts constraints</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H: Accommodates to others</td>
<td>+6</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>+8</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: Responds constructively to others</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J: Maintains standards</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diagnostic Strands</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q: Disengaged</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Self-negating</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Undifferentiated attachments</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Inconsequential behaviour</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U: Craves attachment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V: Avoids/rejects attachment</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W: Insecure sense of self</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Negative toward self</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Negative toward others</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Wants, grabs, disregards others</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of pupils’ scores had increased on all developmental strands at time 2. Pupil A’s scores did however decrease slightly on some strands. On the diagnostic strands patterns were less consistent and whilst some scores decreased for some pupils, others demonstrated an increase. The directions of change for some strands were, however, consistent for all pupils, (including strands Q, R and U). Pupil C’s scores either stayed the
same or decreased on all strands. Given the variety in scores it would be wise to interpret the group mean scores with caution.

4.3.3.5. Conclusion for RQ3.

The over-arching message was that NG pupils made social, emotional and behavioural gains allowing them to positively engage with school, form positive relationships whilst being provided with safety and support to foster a sense of belonging. More specifically, pupils had reported higher levels of emotional resilience, improved self-awareness and emotional regulation skills and increased levels of confidence. Positive effects for the wider school were also noted including support for staff and pupils in the mainstream setting as well as delivering a positive message about the school.

Data collection methods also allowed negative effects of NG attendance to be established. These included feelings of sadness when missing lessons, consequences for missing lessons and experiences of bullying due to NG attendance. Although a smaller number of negative effects were found, it was felt important to include these to attend to all the data. Despite these negative effects being found, they did not seem to impact on pupils’ motivation to attend the NG but may have made the experience less enjoyable.

Although when looking at individual strand scores within the diagnostic strands some had decreased allowing scores to be within the expected range, some scores had actually increased. The majority of scores on the developmental strands showed a desirable increase in scores as a group and for all but one pupil. The diagnostic strand scores for individual pupils showed more of a mixed picture with only one pupil showing only the same or lower scores on all strands at time 2.

4.4. Cross Case Synthesis of findings

4.4.1. How are classic NG delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG.

Thematic network 3.1 (figure 4.18) represents cross case findings from case study 1 and case study 2. Similar basic themes from thematic network 1.1 and 1.2 were grouped together to make new basic themes. Almost all basic themes could be matched but if this was not possible, an individual basic theme remained. Further discussion about similarities and differences between cases will be discussed in Chapter 5 in which findings will be pattern matched to initial theories developed from the literature.
Table 4.10: Cross case synthesis of basic themes for RQ1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 1</th>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 2</th>
<th>New basic theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fits into the wider system of support</td>
<td>Contact with staff in the wider school</td>
<td>NG is embedded within the wider school system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within wider school system</td>
<td>Embedded in other support systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG is organised and structured</td>
<td>Carefully planned and organised</td>
<td>Every aspect of the NG is organised and structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group composition is planned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for NG staff</td>
<td>Embedded in other support systems</td>
<td>Support for NG staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus on pupils after nurture</td>
<td>Focus on pupils after NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time/temporary</td>
<td>Part-time attendance</td>
<td>Attendance is temporary and part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety of activities</td>
<td>Range of activities with different aims</td>
<td>Various activities occur in sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centred</td>
<td>Child-centred</td>
<td>Child-centred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For pupils with a range of SEBD needs in KS3</td>
<td>KS3 pupils with a range of needs</td>
<td>NG can meet varying needs of KS3 pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A home-like environment</td>
<td>A home-like environment</td>
<td>A nurturing supportive base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG is supportive</td>
<td>Ongoing attendance and provision</td>
<td>Attend for a reasonable amount of time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1.1. *Thematic Network: A Structured home within school that meets your needs in and out.*

Figure 4.18: Thematic network 3.1: A structured home within school that meets your needs in and out.

4.4.1.1.1. *Organising Theme: Embedded in a wider system of school and support*

This organising theme was made up from two basic themes: ‘Support for nurture group staff’ and ‘NG is embedded within the wider system’.

**Basic Theme: Support for NG staff**

This basic theme was presented in Case Study 1 and a similar message was discussed in Case Study 2 as NG staff were able to access supervision from support service within school.

*Funny you should say that because I was thinking about that and we had some visitors in from Whitesands who I met on a course about NGs [CS1: NG Facilitator].*

*Mary who is the head of the nurture group saw the article and came to me and sent an email to me really saying that it was a useful article and could we have a copy of*
that so that started the relationship with Mary and then I spent some time in the nurture group to understand what it was about [CS1: Key Worker].

since I've been here, [supervision] has been something that has been wanted from both directions so it's just happened. .........Just coming back to that supervision point that probably came about because within the counselling service and all of the people who do counselling have to have supervision as part of their accreditation and that counselling approach is so strong in school that I imagine that is where it will have strung up from [CS2: Deputy Head].

Basic Theme: NG is embedded within wider system

This basic theme was developed from ‘Contact with staff in the wider school’ and ‘within the wider school system’ from Case study 1 and ‘NG fits into wider school system’ and ‘Embedded in other support systems’ from Case Study 2.

but if we feel they’ve got strategies and coping and we’re maybe never going to make all that difference we’ll maybe refer them back then to the pastoral managers who will monitor them and do a lot of mentoring work with them [CS1: NG Facilitator].

[NG facilitator] would come to the meetings and say about how well he was doing in the nurture group [CS2: Key Worker].

just in briefing this morning the form tutor mentioned that the girl was having friendship issues [CS2: NG Facilitator].

the support structures work together really and there is a crossover [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Yes definitely she was accessing [the counselling service] alongside [CS2: NG Facilitator].

4.4.1.1.2. Organising Theme: Well prepared

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Every aspect of the NG is organised and structured’ and ‘Attendance is temporary and part-time’.

Basic Theme: Every aspect of the NG is organised and structured

This basic theme was developed from: ‘NG is organised and structured’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Carefully planned and organised’ and ‘Group composition is planned’ from Case study 2.

by the end of this half term at Christmas that will be their final session and they will be ready to go back into school [CS2: NG Facilitator].

we Boxall them if the Boxall comes back that yes this is all fine then we have a resettlement project [CS2: NG Facilitator].
Yes how we group them is by looking at their Boxall’s and looking at which strand of development they are need to be working on......we haven’t got a group of children that only the same areas of development [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Attendance is temporary and part-time

This basic theme was developed from ‘Part-time/temporary’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Part-time attendance’ from Case Study 2.

I came three or four times a week [CS2: Pupil].

I came once or twice a week [CS2: Pupil].

It depends why you’re here [CS1: Pupil].

4.4.1.1.3. Organising Theme: Flexible and child-centred

Basic Theme: Child-centred

Both Case Study 1 and 2 had a basic theme ‘child-centred’ so this basic theme remained.

we would never force any youngster to come here we wouldn’t force any family to let their children come here [CS2: Deputy Head].

It depends on the kids’ needs really so if they’re not really good at working in groups then we would make sure they do lots of group work [CS1: Deputy Head].

and we’ve got time to talk through feelings, to put strategies into place and we can take everything at a really slow and steady pace and keep going over things with children because sometimes you do have to go over the same things a few times but it just gives them the chance to learn [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Yes [I started coming more but then that reduced] [CS2: Pupil].

I started coming at the end of Year 6 because I had some problems then [CS2: Pupil].

Basic Theme: NG can meet varying needs of KS3 pupils

This basic theme was developed from: ‘For pupils with a range of SEBD needs in KS3’ from Case Study 1 and ‘KS3 pupils with a range of needs from Case Study 2’.

you can speak to the children and they know that they can get a drink when they want at home or they can get up and wander around, they can play on the computer when they want, go to bed when they want, so when they come to school and somebody’s saying sit in that chair and listen to me they’re like why? And they can’t cope with it [CS1: NG Facilitator].
They might have been at risk of bullying as well because they were quite vulnerable [CS1: NG Facilitator].

they were quiet with the social skills being so low [CS1: NG Facilitator].

they decide when you are coming in and I didn't like know anyone so they put me in for confidence [CS1: Pupil].

it can be a variety of things, and may manifest itself in aggressive behaviours, abusive sort of behaviour….last year we had one boy who, within days of starting at high school they were already looking at a reduced timetable, putting in an application for the PRU his behaviour was violent …..but it varies from that kind of hot tempered, antisocial type of behaviour to withdrawn, antisocial behaviour [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Various activities occur in sessions

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Variety of sessions’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Range of activities with different aims’ from Case Study 2.

and there was this other one where we went a Lytham beach for the day [CS1: Pupil].

it was good because at the start we did relaxation and people think “oh relaxation” but you get proper into it and then it just starts [CS1: Pupil].

every single lesson we got asked what did we do at the weekend [CS1: Pupil].

and I know that there is a formality about it, it is not without rules, you know they are still being taught how to manage boundaries and rules which is important things up quite a lot of people could be doing in in there [CS1: Key Worker].

4.4.1.1.4. Organising Theme: An ongoing support structure

This organising theme was developed from three basic themes: ‘Focus on pupils after nurture’, ‘Pupils attend for a reasonable amount of time’ and ‘A nurturing and supportive base’.

Basic Theme: Focus on pupils after nurture

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Support to generalise skills after NG’ from Case Study 2.

[re]settlement packs have] things written down so it is something that they can take hold and put away in a drawer and in a bit of a down day they get it back out and think ‘ahh yes’ [CS2: NG Facilitator].

that they have got but is also about communication and working together and thinking about who you are working with, not losing your temper, and things that they learn in the NG that we can carry on doing outside [CS2: Deputy Head].
Basic Theme: Pupils attend for a reasonable amount of time

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Ongoing attendance and provision’ from case study 2.

when they are in their group they stay in their group for a reasonable amount of time [CS2: NG Facilitator].

I’ve been coming for nearly a year [CS2: Pupil].

Basic Theme: A nurturing and supportive base

This basic theme was developed from: ‘A home-like environment’ and ‘NG is supportive’ from Case Study 1 and ‘A home-like environment’ from Case Study 2.

So that when it doesn’t go right the nurture group is a comfort blanket for them [CS1: Head Teacher].

and if you don’t want to talk about it and she asks you what is wrong I think if you don’t want to talk about it you can just say to her I don’t talk about it [CS1: Focus group].

we are gradually getting there so I have seen conversations with staff and heads of department in the nurture group about how to support students [CS1: Head Teacher].

we sat on the floor in the cosy type room [CS2: Key Worker].

I like the bean bags [CS2: Pupil].

We have an open door policy so we give them an appointment card to say you can come back whenever you want to if you’re having a bit of a down day comeback and see us [CS2: NG Facilitator].

4.4.2. How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?

Cross case findings of barriers to the implementation of NGs from case study 1 and case study 2 are represented in thematic network 3.2. (figure 4.19). Similar basic themes from thematic network 1.2 and 2.2 were grouped together to make new basic themes. Further discussion about similarities and differences between cases will be discussed in Chapter 5 in which findings will be pattern matched to initial theories developed from the literature. When looking back at basic themes, ‘NG members’ encapsulated a few different messages and so this was used twice in the table below to generate, with basic themes from case study 2, new basic themes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 1</th>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 2</th>
<th>New basic theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Funding concerns</td>
<td>Funding concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up difficult</td>
<td></td>
<td>Having correct resources initially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG members</td>
<td>Identifying NG members</td>
<td>Identifying members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG members</td>
<td>Difficulties with group composition</td>
<td>Grouping members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of the NG</td>
<td>Perceptions of the NG</td>
<td>Incorrect perceptions and stigma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stigma attached to the group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance of staff engagement</td>
<td>Engagement with the NG</td>
<td>Engagement with the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is an issue</td>
<td>Timetabling issues</td>
<td>Timetabling issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to measure impact</td>
<td>Difficult to measure long-term impact</td>
<td>Difficulty to measure impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in understanding</td>
<td>Lack of understanding of NG</td>
<td>Gaps in understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in communication</td>
<td>Gaps in communication</td>
<td>Gaps in communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have to try to keep up with mainstream</td>
<td>Difficulties when back in mainstream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuing nurturing ethos after group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2.1. Organising Theme: Having the necessary tools.

This organising theme was developed from three basic themes: ‘Having correct resources initially’, ‘Funding concerns’ and ‘Difficult to measure impact’.

Basic Theme: Having correct resources initially

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Set up difficult’ difficult from Case Study 1.

the other [barrier] which was the major thing was getting the right member of staff to lead it [CS1: Head Teacher].

I didn’t and I knew what we wanted to achieve but I didn’t get how that space needed to function and so that was a barrier [CS1: Head Teacher].
Basic Theme: Funding concerns

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Funding’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Funding concerns’ from Case Study 2.

We’ve not had lots of money given to us in fact …..Funding’s been tight [CS1: NG Facilitator].

the year before last there was a cut in school budgets think by 10% or 20% [CS2: Deputy Head].

Basic Theme: Difficult to measure impact

This basic theme was developed from: ‘ability to measure impact’ from Case Study 1 and ‘difficult to measure long-term impact’ from Case Study 2.

and you know when you subject it to modern day evaluation procedures it might be quite difficult [to evaluate] [CS1: Key Worker].

and you can’t measure the long-term impact until five or 10 years down the line when they are hopefully working, not in jail or having babies or whatever it is that might of happened to them otherwise [CS2: Deputy Head].

4.4.2.1.2. Organising Theme: Engaging with others

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Engagement with NG’ and ‘Gaps in communication’.

Basic Theme: Engagement with NG

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Reluctance of staff engagement’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Engagement with the NG’ from Case Study 2.

I don’t get a sense that teachers engage with it or pop in and have a chat about what they are doing and how they are and teachers are so busy that maybe it’s easy for them to know it’s there but not to interact with it [CS1: Key Worker].

But there are staff out there, and don’t get me wrong it is minimal, but they don’t agree with it and they are never going to agree with it. And some won’t change [CS1: NG Facilitator].

there will be staff who have worked here for a very long time and know it exists but will not have necessarily been in the room [CS2: Deputy Head].

[a parent] was invited to come here today for the coffee morning but she is declined to do that [CS2: NG Facilitator].
Basic Theme: Gaps in communication

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Gaps in communication’ from Case Study 1 and 2.

“They don’t access the resources as much as we would like them to but they are there [CS1: NG Facilitator].

I don’t know how many staff managed to do that I think Mary has tried to reach out that often people are so busy you can try as much as you want but it often doesn’t happen does it [CS1: Key Worker].

It can be isolating…. [the NG Facilitators] are over here all the time by themselves [CS2: Deputy Head].

One piece of feedback that felt was useful and that was about the form tutor was not aware that he had been attending [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Yeah think I have also had someone call my mum saying that I have been skiving off school when I was at NG because I missed period one and two [CS2: Pupil].

4.4.2.1.3. Organising Theme: Mainstream difficulties in identifying and supporting

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Difficulties when back in mainstream’ and ‘Identifying NG members’.

Basic Theme: Difficulties when back in mainstream

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Having to keep up with mainstream’ from Case Study 2.

Yes [I had to be at the same point in your work as the rest of the people in my group] [CS2: Pupil].

Basic Theme: Identifying NG members

This basic theme was developed from: ‘NG members’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Identifying NG members’ from Case Study 2.

Candidates that we do find more difficult to spot the ones that you become more withdrawn and quiet and a bit insular [CS2: NG Facilitator].

I’m not saying this was but if I was to look back and look at it before I came I think probably having a clear idea of the children that you’re bringing – you know talking to the other staff in other nurture groups that seems to be a bit of an issue so I think in the early days, trying to educate staff about the sort of children [CS1: NG Facilitator].
4.4.2.1.4. Organising Theme: Arrangements

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Timetabling’ and ‘Grouping members’

Basic Theme: Timetabling

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Time is an issue’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Timetabling issues’ from case study 2.

*I was actually gutted at missing R.E because I liked my teacher [CS1: Pupil].*

*Timetabling really is our biggest issue [CS2: NG Facilitator].*

Basic Theme: Grouping members

This basic theme was developed from: ‘NG members’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Difficulties with group composition’ from Case Study 2.

*I got in a fight with [another pupil] [CS1: pupil].*

*grouping, I think the grouping is really difficult [CS1: NG Facilitator].*

*Initially it was difficult [having two pupils in the same group who did not get on] [CS2: NG Facilitator].*

4.4.2.1.5. Organising Theme: Lack of understanding

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Incorrect perceptions and stigma’ and ‘Gaps in understanding’.

Basic Theme: Incorrect perceptions and stigma

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Perceptions of the NG’ and ‘Stigma attached to the group’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Perceptions of the NG’ from Case Study 2.

*yeah and this one lad, he actually left the NG because he didn’t want to come to the lessons because he was getting teased [CS1: Pupil].*

*it scared me at the start because I thought I got sent to Miss Jones that’s my head of College and if we get more than two referrals each week we get a detention and then you can get put in isolation [CS1:Pupil].*
occasionally there will be a grumpy member of staff [who does not want a child to miss their lessons .... the same in all schools with any sort of intervention or small group, there is a bit of making staff see the bigger picture [CS2: Deputy Head].

Basic Theme: Gaps in understanding

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Gaps in understanding’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Lack of understanding of NG’ from Case Study 2’

nervous, I was nervous because I didn’t know what it was [CS1: Pupil].

pupils and some teachers don’t actually understand what it means to be in the NG [CS2: Pupil].

and it’s important that the kids don’t see it as a place where naughty or stupid kids go, there is a lot of mystique around the NG amongst the students that is hard to break down but it is getting them to know what the NG is [CS2: Deputy Head].

4.4.2.2. Thematic Network: Facilitators: Having the support to apply knowledge and skills to engage.

Cross case findings of facilitators to the implementation of NGs from case study 1 and case study 2 are represented in thematic network 3.3. Similar basic themes from thematic network 1.3 and 2.3 were grouped together to make new basic themes. Further discussion about similarities and differences between cases will be discussed in Chapter 5 in which findings will be pattern matched to initial theories developed from the literature.
Table 4.12: Cross case synthesis of basic themes for facilitators for RQ2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 1</th>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 2</th>
<th>New basic theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for NG staff and pupils</td>
<td>Support from school and senior management</td>
<td>Support from school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for nurture from the wider school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge base</td>
<td>Knowledge base</td>
<td>Knowledge base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources available</td>
<td>Resources available</td>
<td>Resources available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Engagement with parents</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG Facilitator is valued</td>
<td>Empathy and understanding of others’ views</td>
<td>A skillful and respected facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG Facilitator’s skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School ethos</td>
<td>Supportive school ethos</td>
<td>School ethos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with staff</td>
<td>Communication with school staff</td>
<td>Communication with school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils view of attendance</td>
<td>Measures in place to support pupils to attend the NG</td>
<td>Support to attend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact of lessons missed aim to be reduced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Nurture</td>
<td>Information offered to improve understanding</td>
<td>Providing knowledge to change perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others are invited to the NG to improve understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This global theme was developed from four organising themes and nine basic themes.

4.4.2.2.1. Organising Theme: A supportive environment.

This organising theme was developed from three basic themes: ‘School ethos’, ‘Support from school staff’ and ‘Available resources’.

Basic Theme: School ethos

This basic theme was developed from: ‘School ethos’ in Case Study 1 and ‘Supportive school ethos’ from Case Study 2.

Well yeah it helps you but I think a lot of it is to do with the ethos of the school, I thought we were and always have been a very inclusive school in terms of our outlook you know he’s our ethos is ‘the best in everyone’ and I’ve worked in five schools and I have to say and this is the one that I can genuinely say that I think that this lives itself or was living in itself in practice anyway [CS1: Head Teacher].
Basic Theme: Support from school staff

This basic theme was developed from: Support for NG staff and pupils from Case Study 1 and ‘Support from school and senior management’ and ‘Support for nurture from the wider school’ from Case Study 2.

I think [school staff] have an overall nurturing ethos [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Yes I would say so because [member of SMT] is still on board, management are on board……pastoral staff back us up [CS1: NG Facilitator].

[The Head], I don't know how he does it but make sure within the school budget that the finances are there [CS2: Deputy Head].

Really it's been down to senior leadership, they are totally 100% supportive of the work that we do......I know that whatever decision I make they will back me and help me so yeah the SLT is just fab [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Available resources

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Resources available’ from Case Study 1 and 2.

Yeah and the room is important, that’s important you know since I've been doing a counselling have been quite envious of the room [CS1: Key Worker].

We are also arranging a conference that we are hopefully going to try to run in school and hopefully local schools will come who have NGs and we are hoping that will be a money earner for us because we can charge them and that will be some money back into us for our nurture pot [CS1: NG Facilitator].

[The Head], I don't know how we does it but make sure within the school budget that the finances are there [CS2: Deputy Head].

They are very generous with the budget that they have given us so we have not had to worry too much about, it doesn't curtail the activities that we do too much [CS2: NG Facilitator].

4.4.2.2.2. Organising Theme: Engaging with others

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Communication with school staff’ and ‘Relationships’.

Basic Theme: Communication with school staff

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Communication with staff’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Communication with school staff’ from Case Study 2.
[NG Facilitator] has clearly herself personally and the other staff that she works with they obviously do their best to promote the service in the school [CS1: Key Worker].

Well on the central computer system we have something called ‘share point’ on the intranet and on there is all the vital paperwork so they are all on there for the staff to access, we keep them in the loop, we put things in the bulletin so staff are informed [CS1: NG Facilitator].

yes because at the front at the beginning when I had a bit of a rough start there was an email that went round from Mr Green so they kind of understood [CS2: Pupil].

and having [information about NG attendance] on the staff area of the school website so staff can check up, because it should be on the register that they are here at the NG, but if they are not too sure they can check the timetable to see where people would be [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Relationships

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Relationship’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Engagement with parents’ from Case Study 2.

They will email if they have questions. And there are some staff who you have a better rapport with who are more likely to ask you them questions [CS1: NG Facilitator].

I were alright for the first lesson because I knew that some of my friends were there and I was missing some of my not so good lessons [CS1: Pupil].

it was just about inviting them in, getting into a conversation with them in breaking down the barriers [CS1: Deputy Head].

we set it up so that [the NG Facilitator and an acting Headteacher] were just having a coffee morning during which the parents are invited to come in, not any reason other than chatting over a biscuit and it breaks down their fears [CS1: Deputy Head].

4.4.2.2.3. Organising Theme: Knowledge and skills are respected

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Knowledge base’ and ‘A skilful and respectful facilitator’.

Basic Theme: Knowledge base

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Knowledge base’ from Case study 1. This had not been mentioned in Case Study 2 but was felt to be an important basic theme.

[A Member of SMT] had worked on something in her previous school which had been something like a precursor to nurture group so she had a bit of a background in it [CS1: Head].

What [the NGN] tell you is vital ……..So I knew all of the theory behind [CS1: NG Facilitator].
Basic Theme: A skilful and respectful facilitator

This basic theme was developed from: ‘NG Facilitator is valued’ and ‘NG Facilitator’s skills’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Empathy and understanding of others’ views’ from Case Study 2.

I think [the member of SMT] kind of valued what I was saying she appreciated that I'd been on the training [CS1: NG Facilitator].

I mean you have met [the NG Facilitator] and we are really fortunate we recruited her [CS1: Head Teacher].

she is really polite and pleasant always [CS1: Pupil].

I can understand [how staff feel] because I think it’s important that the pupil come here just as much as they think it’s important [CS2: NG Facilitator].

4.4.2.2.4. Organising Theme: Supporting attendance by altering perceptions

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Support to attend’, and ‘Providing knowledge to change perceptions’.

Basic Theme: Support to attend

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Pupils view of attendance’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Measures in place to support pupils to attend the NG’ and ‘Impact of lessons missed aim to be reduced’ from Case Study 2.

the way that they have done it now is a lot better because instead of having the card on the front of your planner they put a sticker on the inside so when you have got your planner out [other pupils] don't know that you go to the NG [CS2: Pupil].

we always move the group timing so that they are not always missing the same lesson [CS2: NG Facilitator].

I had to [come] because I just want to get it over with what I was going through and I thought that it was the thing to help me and it did [CS1: Pupil].

Basic Theme: Providing knowledge to change perceptions

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Perceptions of Nurture’ from Case Study 2, and ‘Information offered to improve understanding’ and ‘Others are invited to the NG to improve understanding’ from Case Study 2.

there were a lot of times when teaching staff saw it as a naughty room, a SEN room that’s broken down and is breaking down but the reason why it is breaking down is the outreach of the nurture group teacher [CS1: Head Teacher].
well they introduce you to the room at breaks and stuff so like they say you are going to come on this break and they show you five minutes before the break when nobody is in [CS1: Pupil].

then that’s a case of working with the parents to help them to understand what the NG is [CS2: NG Facilitator].

4.4.3. How does NG attendance affect pupils?

Cross case findings of positive effects of NG attendance from case study 1 and case study 2 are represented in thematic network 3.4. Similar basic themes from thematic network 1.4 and 2.4 were grouped together to make new basic themes. Further discussion about similarities and differences between cases will be discussed in Chapter 5 in which findings will be pattern matched to initial theories developed from the literature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 1</th>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 2</th>
<th>New basic theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helps to identify emotional needs</td>
<td>Wider school support</td>
<td>Support for people wider than the NG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive message about school</td>
<td>Gives a positive message about the school</td>
<td>Gives a positive message about the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of success</td>
<td>Enjoyable school experience</td>
<td>Enjoyable school experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional needs can be met</td>
<td>Emotional needs can be met</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater emotional regulation</td>
<td>Improved emotional regulation</td>
<td>Improved emotional regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased self-awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to be included in mainstream</td>
<td>Positive engagement with school</td>
<td>Positive inclusion in mainstream education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural gains</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Feeling safe</td>
<td>Feelings of security and belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feelings supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of positive relationships</td>
<td>Able to form positive relationships</td>
<td>Positive relationships are formed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13: Cross case synthesis of basic themes for positive effects in RQ3
4.4.3.1. Thematic Network: Positive Effects: Internal and external gains with support and belonging.

Figure 4.21: Thematic network 3.4: Internal and external gains with support and belonging

This global theme was developed from three organising themes: ‘Effects for the wider school’, ‘Positive engagement with a sense of belonging’ and ‘Improved emotional well-being’.

4.4.3.1.1. Organising Theme: Effects for the wider school

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Support for people wider than the NG’ and ‘gives a positive message about the school’.

Basic Theme: Support for people wider than the NG

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Helps to identify emotional needs’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Wider school support’ from Case Study 2.

If you’re in a group, if you’ve got somebody who before NG couldn’t work in a group and now knows how to work in a group, everybody benefits [CS2: Deputy Head].
I had a discussion with the form tutor and said we have noticed in nurture that this this and this seems to work and she said brilliant I’ll pass that on and make sure all staff know what works for him and that is a good way to support the staff [CS2; NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Gives a positive message about the school

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Positive message about school’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Gives a positive message about the school’ from Case Study 2.

I like what it says about the school [CS2: Deputy Head].

the choice that the school is making is sending out a message that we do care about people settling into school and we don’t have to do this but we are doing this because we want to do it, it sends out a positive message to people in the school and outside the school [CS1: Key Worker].

4.4.3.1.2. Organising Theme: Positive engagement with a sense of belonging

This organising theme was developed from four basic themes: ‘Positive inclusion into mainstream education’, ‘Feelings of security and belonging’, ‘Ability to form relationships’ and ‘Enjoyable school experience’.

Basic Theme: Positive inclusion into mainstream education

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Able to be included in mainstream’ and ‘Behavioural gains’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Positive engagement with school’ from Case Study 2.

Yes definitely because I think that that behaviour in lesson has improved [CS2: NG Facilitator].

I think [if the NG was not here] we would have lost so many of our students early down the school that they would not even have had a chance when time came around [CS2: Deputy Head].

Basic Theme: feelings of security and belonging

This theme was made up from ‘Security’ from case study 1 and ‘Feeling safe’, ‘Feeling supported’ and ‘Sense of belonging’ in Case Study 2.

it made me feel a lot more safer in a way and settled in [CS2: Pupil].

they are actually feel safe they say “come across here and sit and talk to us and we’ll sort things out” and knowing those staff are around was a big thing [CS2: Key Worker].

and they do very much see here as somewhere that is for them……they felt that school was a place for them [CS1: Head Teacher].
I think that they feel cared for, and feel nurtured they are nurtured into secondary school. They feel that they are ready to fly and can go into a class on their own, joining with other pupils [CS2: Key Worker].

**Basic Theme: Ability to form relationships**

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Formation of positive relationships’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Able to form positive relationships’ from Case Study 2.

I look back and a lot of them still hang around together they’ve formed friendship groups through being in nurture [CS1: NG Facilitator].

When you’re working in small groups children get to know you and get a chance to speak to you and trust you, you don’t get that in and English lesson with twenty other kids, you never build up that rapport with your teacher [CS1: NG Facilitator].

it builds relationships that they perhaps would not have had [CS2: NG Facilitator].

but NG helped us to build up a really good friendship [CS2: Pupil].

**Basic Theme: enjoyable school experience**

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Experience of success’ and ‘Experience of school’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Enjoyable school experience’ from Case Study 2.

I think the fact that children are praised for everything it’s so so positive [CS1: NG Facilitator].

those kids are more effective and are more successful in school [CS2: Deputy Head].

NG is my favourite lesson……We have a lot of laughs [CS2: Pupil].

It gives them chance to talk and express themselves and have a bit of fun sometimes [CS2: NG Facilitator].

**4.4.3.1.3. Organising Theme: Improved emotional well-being**

This organising theme was made up from four basic themes: ‘Improved emotional regulation’, ‘Resilience’, ‘Increased confidence’ and ‘Emotional needs can be met’.

**Basic Theme: Improved emotional regulation**

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Greater emotional regulation’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Improved emotional regulation’ and ‘Improved self-awareness’ from Case Study 2.
they helped him so much with dealing with his anger and things like that in and out of lessons as well [CS2: Key Worker].

they can manage their temper better [CS2: Deputy Head].

it taught me not to think about [my anxiety] at unnecessary times [CS1: Pupil].

**Basic Theme: Resilience**

Resilience was named as a basic theme in both case studies.

about the self-belief you know they can cope because they learn to have some self-belief they may not be particularly bright but they may think you know if I can achieve ……..we are getting them to a point where they can cope [CS2: NG Facilitator].

Yes because it has kind of taught me to put my hand up and even if I am wrong it is not the end of the world [CS2: Pupil].

so I taught myself to ignore people like that so I just ignore them if they say things about me [CS1: Pupil].

**Basic Theme: Increased confidence**

Increased confidence was named as a basic theme in both case studies.

[I have learnt] to be more confident ……. well if somebody asks you a question, I used to be really shy and not answer the question…….. If they ask me, I would say it now [CS2: Pupil].

they are confident to make friends [CS2: NG Facilitator].

we’ve seen a rise in students who are going on school trips and partaking in things because I think what we’re doing is giving them the confidence and the self-belief that they can do it [CS1: NG Facilitator].

**Basic Theme: Emotional needs can be met**

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Emotional needs can be met’ from Case Study 1.

And without the nurture group let’s pretend that it wasn’t there for a minute, it might be hard to me to reach the year sevens [CS1: Key Worker].

**4.4.3.2. Improvements in BPYP scores.**

As time 1 scores were different for each case to start with it was decided to not collate scores from each case as the meaningfulness could become ‘lost’. It seemed that these scores suggested that each case represent different populations. For this reason a general
cross case discussion of changes in scores will be presented rather than a discussion in changes for collated scores.

**Developmental strands**

In both cases across the majority of developmental strands, scores showed signs of improvement between time 1 and time 2. On the strands where positive changes were not witnessed scores were within the expected range anyway. In case 1 all scores on the developmental strands increased apart from one strand score which remained in the expected range. In case 2 all developmental strand scores increased and five scores out of the ten were in the expected range at time 2. Greatest improvements were witnessed in Case 2 as time 1 scores on the developmental strands were somewhat below the expected range whereas the majority of developmental strand scores in case 1 were already within the expected range.

**Diagnostic strands**

Improvements in the diagnostic strands were more mixed and some strand scores showed improvements in both cases (with four out of ten scores in the expected range in case 1 and two out of ten scores in the expected range for case 2). In both cases increases in strands T, Y and Z were witnessed. In Case 1, strands V, W and X also increased. Although some increases were witnessed, some scores in case 1 were within the expected range (strands X and Z) and in Case 2 strand Z was within the expected range. When looking at individual scores this also demonstrated a mixed picture, although one pupil in case 2 showed either the same or lower scores on all strands at time 2. Group mean scores should, therefore, be interpreted with caution.

### 4.4.3.3. Thematic Network: Negative Effects: Emotional, peer and academic pressures.

Cross case findings of negative effects of NG attendance from case study 1 and case study 2 are represented in thematic network 3.5. Similar basic themes from thematic network 1.5 and 2.5 were grouped together to make new basic themes. Further discussion about similarities and differences between cases will be discussed in Chapter 5 in which findings will be pattern matched to initial theories developed from the literature.
Table 4.14: Cross case synthesis of basic themes for negative effects in RQ3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 1</th>
<th>Basic Theme from Case Study 2</th>
<th>New basic theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Experienced bullying</td>
<td>Experienced bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates a loss situation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Creates a loss situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition after NG may be harder due to loss</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated from peers</td>
<td>Late marks for missing lessons</td>
<td>Consequences to missing lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detentions for missing lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing lessons means you have to work harder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missed tests</td>
<td>Have to catch up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sad about missing lessons</td>
<td>Sadness at missing lessons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.22: Thematic network 3.5: Emotional, peer and academic pressures
4.4.3.3.1. Organising Theme: Sadness

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Creates a loss situation’, and ‘Sadness at missing lessons’.

Basic Theme: Creates a loss situation

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Creates a loss situation’ and ‘Transition after NG may be harder due to loss’ from Case Study 1.

Yes and I think the loss as well could, you are creating a loss situation, you may be easing the loss at 10 to 11-year-olds when joining secondary school but you’re just postponing the loss when they come out of nurture because technically they will go through a loss and a grieving process when they are no longer in nurture [CS1: Key Worker].

The only bad thing is about leaving because it can be really emotional [CS1: pupil].

Basic Theme: Sadness at missing lessons

This basic theme was developed from ‘sad about missing lessons’ from Case Study 2.

I felt sad because I was missing history [CS2: pupil].

4.4.3.3.2. Organising Theme: Peer effects

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Experienced bullying’ and ‘isolated from peers’.

Basic Theme: Experienced bullying

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Bullying’ from Case Study 1 and ‘Experienced bullying’ in Case Study 2.

I keep on getting bullied because they keep saying it’s for special needs [CS1: Pupil].

People at break might pick on me if they find out that I go to the NG, calling me stuff like I’m a s**z [CS2: Pupil].

Basic Theme: Isolated from peers

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Isolated from peers’ in Case Study 1.
But they are kind of isolated from mainstream to so it makes it difficult then [CS1: Key Worker].

4.4.3.3. Organising Theme: Consequences to missing lessons

This organising theme was developed from two basic themes: ‘Having to catch up’ and ‘Consequences to missing lessons’.

Basic Theme: Have to catch up

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Missing lessons means you have to work harder’ and ‘Missed tests’ from Case Study 2.

they put pressure on you [when you have missed lessons] [CS2: Pupil].

catching up on work is hard and you’ve got to work a lot harder [CS2: Pupils].

Basic Theme: Consequences to missing lessons

This basic theme was developed from: ‘Late marks for missing lessons’ and ‘Detentions for missing lessons’ from Case Study 2.

sometimes teachers think that you are skiving and I’m going to use Mr X as an example. He used to, when I was in [the NG] period three when I should be with him, when I came back for the next lesson he used to shout at me, asking, where was I? And asked me to stay at the end of the lesson and then shouted at me for where I was and he used to think I was skiving the lesson [CS2: Pupil].

I’ve had seven detentions because I didn’t get the homework and didn’t ask anyone about the homework so I’ve had detentions for not asking [CS2: Pupil].

Cross Case findings will now be discussed further in Chapter 5. Findings will also be pattern matched to the initial theoretical propositions. Rival explanations will also be discussed.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1. Aims of the research

As stated in section 2.6 the current research aimed to fill gaps in the literature by replicating findings from Cooke et al. (2008) and Garner and Thomas (2011) by further exploring the benefits of secondary NGs with different people’s perspectives being collected. The current study also aimed to add to the research by Colley (2009) by further describing the model of NGs that are run in secondary schools. Moreover the current research aimed to add new information by exploring barriers and facilitators to implementation (similar to Cooper & Ticknazz’s, 2005, research in primary schools) as no studies have explored these in secondary schools. To fill the gaps and add to existing NG literature, the following RQs aimed to be answered:

1) How are NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG?
2) How has the implementation of a NG in a mainstream secondary school been possible?
3) How does NG attendance affect pupils?

By answering the RQs it was hoped that a contribution to knowledge around how NGs may be set up in secondary schools and what secondary schools may expect these to involve could be provided. By exploring the benefits may also contribute to knowledge allowing secondary schools to have some evidence on the potential benefits of introducing a NG to their school at a financially difficult time.

5.2. Discussion overview

Initially this chapter will outline a summary of the findings for each RQ, linking these to the existing literature. For RQ1 and 2, findings will be linked to the relevant NG literature. For RQ3, findings will be linked to the wider SEBD literature that was presented in section 2.4. Findings will also be linked to existing theoretical propositions through the use of pattern matching as an additional analytic strategy to the cross case analysis outlined in chapter four. Rival explanations will also be presented through this pattern matching process before discussing the theoretical implications of the research. Implications for professional practice will then be made before a critique of the current research is offered through the presentation of strengths and limitations of the research. Recommendations for future research will then be outlined.
5.3. How are classic NGs delivered in secondary schools that have a quality mark awarded NG?

To answer this RQ a cross case analysis of themes from interview data from case study 1 and 2 generated the global theme ‘A structured home within school that meets your needs in and out’. This global theme incorporated four organising themes and ten basic themes. Findings from this global theme will be presented alongside data from the initial questionnaire and from observations.

5.3.1. Organising Theme: Embedded in a wider system of school and support.

Basic Theme: Support for NG staff.

NG staff had the opportunity to liaise with NG staff from other schools and with pastoral staff within school. In case study 2, supervision was also available for NG staff. The consequences of this supportive structure will be discussed in greater depth for RQ2.

Basic Theme: NG is embedded within wider system.

Themes considering contact with wider staff and support systems within school were discussed in both cases implying congruency of findings. This theme focussed on other support systems that were available to pupils during or after their NG attendance. NG staff also liaised with mainstream staff in both cases and, particularly in case study 2, attendance at meetings was discussed. This supports Colley’s (2009) suggestion that NGs need to be embedded into the school to be successful.
Garner and Thomas (2011) also suggested that staff should consider how pupils can access support out of the NG sessions, suggesting the creation of opportunities to attend for breakfast or over lunch. This is something that was reported to occur in the NGs involved in this research. Kourmoulaki (2013) found that young people attending the NG also had access to supportive learning environments during break- and lunch-times and access to one-to-one support and counselling. These services were described to compliment the work of the NG rather than directly focusing on physical and emotional needs.

5.3.2. Organising Theme: Well prepared.

Basic Theme: Every aspect of the NG is organised and structured.

Both cases conveyed the message of a carefully planned and structured NG. This included planning of groups, sessions and reintegration into mainstream. Measures were also in place to identify and monitor pupils. The intervention was planned rather than one that was used on an *ad hoc* basis (or as a ‘sin bin’). The models described in this research are similar to how Colley (2009) described how a NG should run in an organised and professional way. Furthermore, observations revealed that all six principles of nurture were in place.

Basic Theme: Attendance is temporary and part-time

NG attendance was on a part-time temporary basis and this was discussed across both cases. Observations revealed that pupils attended for one to two hour sessions. A secondary school mentioned in Colley’s (2009) research also found that the NG was delivered for three sessions but an interviewee felt that this kind of intervention can still promote positive outcomes for vulnerable pupils through the “exchange of experience” (p.296) provided in the NG.

Although NG attendance was part-time it would still meet Cooper et al.’s (2001) conceptualisation of a ‘classic nurture group’ and would be described as ‘variant 2’. Despite this part-time attendance, other research studies have found that part-time NGs are still as beneficial as the full time NGs (see Binnie & Allen, 2008, Colley, 2009 and Scott & Lee, 2009 as examples). Moreover, Scott and Lee (2009) also mentioned that a sense of belonging and feelings of safety could still be developed despite the part-time nature of attendance and, given the gains reported in this study, it would also seem that the part-time nature of the NG did not affect gains.
5.3.3. Organising Theme: Flexible and child-centred.

**Basic Theme: Child-centred**

Both Case Study 1 and 2 conveyed the message of a child-centred approach to planning and intervention delivery. This included the frequency and length of nurture group attendance. Inclusion into the NG was also based on need and sessions were also planned according to needs as identified through completed Boxall Profiles. Interviews within both cases also discussed the possibility of having time to talk to pupils in sessions depending upon where they ‘are at’.

Doyle (2005) also describes nurture groups as “person-centred and solution-focused” (p.10). Moreover following their research, Garner and Thomas (2011) discussed the need for sessions to be carefully planned to adequately reflect the children’s needs as the number of sessions that a child accessed affected how long they needed the provision. Garner and Thomas (2011) therefore suggested that the number of sessions should be adapted from year to year depending on the children in the group. This was something that seemed to occur in NG practices in the two NGs involved in this research.

**Basic Theme: NG can meet varying needs of KS3 pupils**

Both cases discussed the notion that the NG was for a range of pupils displaying various SEBD needs in Key Stage 3. These included pupils displaying externalising aggressive behaviours and pupils displaying internalising withdrawn behaviours impacting on socialisation.

Doyle (2003a) also outlined that NGs do not only address the behaviour of pupils exhibiting aggressive and acting out behaviours but also they also have a role in addressing the needs of pupils who exhibit withdrawn and socially isolating behaviours and those who find it difficult to develop secure social relationships. An Ofsted report (2011) summarising an evaluation of 29 NGs also explained that pupils demonstrated one of three ‘types’ of behaviour including either ‘acting out’ behavioural difficulties, not being able to work independently or being very withdrawn (Ofsted, 2011).

**Basic Theme: Various activities occur in sessions**

Interview data in both cases revealed that a variety of activities occur in sessions. Questionnaire data also showed that a variety of activities occur in sessions. Interviews discussed trips, relaxation, circle time (allowing pupils to share feelings) and opportunities to learn new skills (e.g., organisation skills, communication skills). Home-like activities were
also discussed such as celebration events and making Christmas dinner to which pupils could invite members of staff.

5.3.4. Organising Theme: An ongoing support structure.

Basic Theme: Focus on pupils after nurture

Support to generalise skills after nurture was discussed in the interviews in case study 2 but was not discussed in case study 1. An open-door policy was however discussed that allowed pupils who had reintegrated into lessons to keep in touch with NG staff if desired.

Basic Theme: Pupils attend for a reasonable amount of time

It seemed, from basic themes developed from interviews in case study 2 that NG pupils attended for a reasonable amount of time. Although not developed as a basic theme in Case Study 1, the same message was conveyed and pupils discussed ongoing attendance at the NG (i.e., for a year).

Basic Theme: A nurturing and supportive base

Both cases described the NG as a home-like environment that provides opportunities for shared eating experiences and soft furnishings. It was thought that this home-like environment allowed pupils to feel safe and supported as one would hope they would at home. The NG staff provided an opportunity for children to discuss their feelings using the open-door policy allowing children to feel that there is someone in school for them.

Garner and Thomas (2011) also found that pupils interviewed in their research felt that they could access the NG as when needed, potentially similar to the open-door policy conveyed through this research. Support was also provided for outside school life events such as bereavement. Garner and Thomas (2011) also found that the NG was perceived as a ‘safe haven’ allowing pupils to feel protected from bullies and experience feelings of safety, an environment in which they could also feel secure in trying and learning new skills. Garner and Thomas (2011) also found that the NG provided a safe base in which children could learn to cope inside and outside of school.

5.3.5. The six principles of nurture are adopted.

Although not conveyed specifically through interviews, possibly due to questions asked, it would be likely that transcripts could have been coded within the six principles should this approach have been chosen. As the coding of data allowed for more exploratory findings to be obtained, however, ‘the six principles of nurture’ were not summarised in thematic maps.
Observations did, however, allow for evidence of the demonstration of each of the principles to be captured and in both cases, all six principles were present supporting Colley’s (2009) views that the six principles of nurture can be implemented appropriately within the secondary setting without any difficulty.

5.3.6. Conclusions to RQ1.

Data gathered suggest that a NG that meets Cooper et al.’s (2001) criteria of a classic nurture group can be delivered in a mainstream secondary school, although on a part-time basis (fitting ‘variant 2’). The NGs adhere to the six principles of nurture and, in addition, offer a child-centred and flexible approach to meeting a variety of needs of pupils displaying various SEBD. The nurture group offers a safe base during and after NG attendance with a focus on support and monitoring during and after NG attendance. The table below shows a cross case summary of replicated themes in each case.

Table 5.1: Cross Case summary of findings for RQ1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme</th>
<th>Found in case 1</th>
<th>Found in case 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for NG staff</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG is embedded within the wider school system</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every aspect of the NG is organised and structured</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance is temporary and part-time</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centred</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG can meet varying needs of KS3 pupils</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various activities occur in sessions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on pupils after NG X (but other data conveys an opportunity to focus through the open-door policy).</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend for a reasonable amount of time X (not a basic theme but message was discussed during descriptions of NG attendance).</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nurturing and supportive base</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The six principles are adopted</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4. How has the implementation of a classic NG been possible?

Figure 5.2: A visual representation of the data sources used to answer RQ2

In both case studies although barriers existed, facilitators seemed to be in place that allowed these barriers to be overcome. A cross case synthesis of barriers was completed and a cross case synthesis of facilitators was completed but prior to this facilitators for each case study were specifically linked to a barrier. In Case Study 1, three barriers existed without a matching facilitator (including ‘time is an issue’, ‘knowing how to measure long term impact’ and ‘stigma’ (of pupils) but for Case Study 2 all but one barrier could be linked to a facilitator (‘ability to measure the long term impact’) (please see tables 4.2 and 4.6).

Barriers will be discussed initially, with similar barriers explained in the literature being linked accordingly. Facilitators will then be presented from the cross case synthesis, and, again, will be linked to similar patterns found within the literature.

5.4.1. Barriers: Having tools to arrange, engage and fill gaps in knowledge to support pupils.

A cross case synthesis of findings revealed a global theme ‘Having tools to arrange, engage and fill gaps in knowledge to support pupils’.

5.4.1.1. Organising Theme: Having the necessary tools.

Basic Theme: Having correct resources initially

Having the correct resources initially was discussed only in the interview with the Head Teacher in case study 1. Upon reflection, this was perhaps due to other interviewees not being in post when the NG was initially developed. When asked what barriers existed when
the NG was created, although some staff were unable to answer this question, they could reflect on ongoing difficulties.

When discussing this, having the correct room available and appointing the correct member of staff were the main features discussed. Shaver and McClatchey (2013) also discussed a difficulty in finding the space for a nurture room and Colley (2009) found that a NG in a secondary school had to use three different settings to run the NG, presumably, due to a lack of space.

**Basic Theme: Funding concerns**

Funding concerns were mentioned in both cases during interviews. This included discussions about cuts in budgets and the amount of money given to the NG to get appropriate resources. Although funding concerns were named as a barrier, Bennathan (1997) describes the cost effectiveness of a NG as placement in NGs would cost less for an authority than providing support through a statement.

**Basic Theme: Difficult to measure impact**

A difficulty to measure impact was discussed in both case studies and with this difficulty in measuring impact could come difficulties in securing funding in the future. If it is difficult for school staff to measure the impact that the NG has it may be difficult to prove its worth.

5.4.1.2. **Organising Theme: Engaging with others.**

**Basic Theme: Engagement with NG**

Both case studies discussed a difficulty in promoting others to engage in the nurture group. Both cases discussed the engagement of mainstream staff and, in case study 2, a discussion also occurred about reluctance for parents to engage with the NG. In case study 2, reluctance to engage with the NGs by parents was also discussed and was linked to possible negative school experiences. This supports previous research outlining difficulties with parental involvement (Bishop & Swain, 2006; Cooper et al., 2001, Farrell & Humphrey, 2009).

**Basic Theme: Gaps in communication**

Gaps in communication were discussed in both cases. This mainly considered gaps in communication with mainstream staff about the NG or in general (and in case study 2, it was hypothesised that NG staff may be quite isolated). In case study 2 gaps in communication about NG attendance were discussed and, as some teachers did not know that pupils were attending the NG, this created some difficulties.
Similar findings were also revealed by Kourmoulaki (2013) who also found that a key area of difficulty related to the level of communication among and between staff, parents and young people regarding NG attendance in a secondary school. These gaps in communication focused on why NG pupils were due to attend and what the group involved. It was also found that there was a lack of time to communicate between staff within the school making it difficult to discuss the young person or set targets. Cooper et al. (2001) also found that there was a lack of effective communication between NG and mainstream staff.

Garner and Thomas (2011) also reported the importance of communication with home, school and external agencies in enabling pupils to make progress. Linked to this, Cooper and Ticknaz (2005) also found that there was a lack of specific communication of data about pupils’ academic progress. Mainstream staff also highlighted the need to improve communication between NG staff and them and access information about NG teachers’ targets for improving academic progress.

With regards to NG staff’s ability to communicate with others for their own support, Garner and Thomas (2011) also discussed support for NG from others, particularly supervision for NG staff to talk to others about ‘what they do’. Potential benefits of this were thought to be hindered by a lack of support from the wider school and home. Sanders (2007) also suggested that NG staff could feel isolated in school.

5.4.1.3. Organising Theme: Mainstream difficulties in identifying and supporting.

Basic Theme: Difficulties when back in mainstream

Messages conveyed within this theme were around pupils having to ‘keep up’ with mainstream lessons and allow a feeling of belonging to be transferred to mainstream. These were, however, only conveyed in Case Study 2 and pupils discussed that even though they had missed lessons due to their NG attendance they were expected to be up to the same point in the curriculum as their peers who had attended more lessons. Generalisation of skills into mainstream was also briefly mentioned and Kourmoulaki (2013) also outlined concerns raised regarding young people’s ability to generalise the skills they practised within the NG.

Basic Theme: Identifying NG members

In both case studies, discussions focused on a difficulty in identifying members for the NG. Case study 2 specified a difficulty in ‘spotting’ more withdrawn pupils where as in case study 2, a difficulty in trying to get mainstream staff to identify NG pupils was raised.
5.4.1.4. Organising Theme: Arrangements.

Basic Theme: Timetabling

Timetabling was discussed in both cases as a concern. As the NG is carefully planned, sessions are slotted into the regular school timetabling resulting in lessons being missed. Shaver and McClatchey (2013) also found that staff reported difficulties with timetabling groups. Cooke et al. (2008) also mentioned that timetabling is a key difficulty when arranging NGs in secondary schools.

Basic Theme: Grouping members

Difficulties in grouping members together were discussed in both cases. It seemed quite common that some group members did not get on and some discussions suggested that fights and arguments had occurred between pupils. Kourmoulaki (2013) also found that ‘tension between group members’ (p. 72) was raised as an issue by staff, pupils and parents. This tension was sometimes so extreme that members needed to be withdrawn from the group.

Problematic peer relations have been found to manifest as a barrier in developing social skills in NGs (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005) and Cooper and Ticknaz (2005) also found that the initial imbalance of a group (e.g., too many pupils with ‘acting’ out behaviours) may delay the implementation of a nurturing approach. As some pupils’ behaviour needed to be managed directly by NG staff (which resulted in staff needing to adopt reactive teaching strategies to control and manage behaviour) it was though that this would postpone a nurturing approach from being adopted. Moreover, Shaver and McClatchey (2013) found that staff reported choosing children for nurture was a challenge to ensure that the group dynamics would allow children to work together.

5.4.1.5. Organising Theme: Lack of understanding.

Basic Theme: Incorrect perceptions and stigma

Negative perceptions of the NGs were discussed in both cases. These included perceptions of staff, fellow mainstream pupils and parents. The NG members’ perceptions of the NG prior to their attendance were also discussed. Comments included perceptions about who should attend the NG by staff and stigma attached to the NG conveyed by fellow pupils.

Colley (2009) outlines that “the credibility of secondary nurture provision is earned not imposed” (p. 297) and NG staff should work on building momentum by asking mainstream staff to join nurture sessions and disseminate information. Moreover, he suggests that the
NG might try to support pupils during unstructured periods which may impact positively on behaviour around school. With strategies such as these, an acceptance of nurture across the whole school may be created.

Difficulties have also been found in persuading mainstream staff that the NG is important (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005; Shaver & McClatchey, 2013) and this was something that was particularly discussed in case study 2.

**Basic Theme: Gaps in understanding**

Gaps or a lack of understanding were discussed in both cases as a barrier which potentially links to incorrect perceptions. Pupils explained that they did not know what the NG was prior to their attendance and it was thought that some staff did not know what the NG was about or who should attend. In case study 2, gaps in the NGN training course were also mentioned and in his research, Colley (2009) suggested that training for secondary schools may need a different emphasis.

In their research Cooper & Tiknaz (2005) explored the challenges and difficulties faced in running a NG in three school (two infants and one primary school). Although a different setting, similar findings were matched to the current research. Particularly, Cooper and Ticknaz (2005), who interviewed NG staff and mainstream staff, found that mainstream teachers commonly referred to their lack of knowledge of what pupils had actually done during their time in the NG. Garner and Thomas (2011) also reported that an understanding by mainstream staff and SMT meant that it may be harder for children to fully re-integrate into mainstream classes without NG support.

Due to pressures of teachers in mainstream (including busy timetables) a lack of understanding of NG aims and practice is also thought to limit the amount of communication between NG staff and mainstream staff (Garner and Thomas, 2011). Kourmoulaki (2013) also found that subject teachers had no awareness of the process or criteria for reintegration back.

In this research it was also suggested that parents’ own experiences of school may have been negative resulting in a lack of engagement with the NG or with school in general. The influence of parents’ own school experiences on lack of engagement was also hypothesised by school staff during interviews in Taylor and Gulliford's (2011) research.
5.4.2. Facilitators: Having the support to apply knowledge and skills to engage.

Facilitators will be presented that were generated from a cross-case synthesis of facilitators from case study 1 and facilitators from case study 2. The global theme ‘Having the support to apply knowledge and skills to engage’ was developed.

5.4.2.1. Organising Theme: A supportive environment.

Basic Theme: School ethos

Both cases discussed the school ethos that surrounded the NG and it is hypothesised that the development of the NG initially depends on a supportive and nurturing wider school ethos. Previous research has also found that a NG present in a school created a nurturing ethos (Cooper & Lovey, 1999) and changed the culture of the school (e.g., Doyle, 2003a and Shaver and McClatchey, 2013). Lucas (1999) suggests that NGs can create ‘Nurturing Schools’ if the theory which underpins them is applied to the whole school and Cooper and Ticknaz (2005) also found that nurturing practices were introduced into the mainstream classes. Moreover, a NG was also found to give a school the opportunity to be more inclusive and offer a nurturing environment by providing opportunities for staff development and the use of alternative strategies to support SEBD pupils (Doyle, 2003b).

Garner and Thomas (2011) also summarised the importance of support and understanding of the Senior Leadership Team in allowing the creation of the important nurturing ethos to be established. They explain that “practitioners will subsequently need to ensure that they have complete support from their Senior Leadership Team who fully understand and agree with the Nurture Group approach” (p. 222). Cooper and Ticknaz (2005) also found, when interviewing Head Teachers that a ‘philosophy’ of nurture had already been in place in the school. Kournmoulaki (2013) also found that a wider school ethos of support was present toward vulnerable young people in her research.

Basic Theme: Support from school staff

Both cases discussed feelings of support from the wider school (e.g., mainstream staff) and particularly from the SMT. This support ensured that designated NG funding was provided and senior management valued and supported the work of NG staff. Support from Senior Management was also found to be an important facilitator by Colley (2009), Kournmoulaki (2013) and Lucas (1999). Support from mainstream staff was also discussed by Cooke et al. (2008).
In case study 2, more specific support was discussed in the form of supervision from counselling staff within the school, which allowed staff to talk about issues and promoted reflection. Although this was not found in case study 1, supervision had been mentioned in another school that later withdrew from the study. When considering negative aspects of a NG teacher’s role, Syrnyk, (2012) found a main theme to be the emotional cost on the staff through working with pupils with SEBD who may have had a traumatic and complicated background. As trust and supportive relationships with pupils are developed, negative emotions may be shared and transferred to the NG teacher. Due to this, Syrnyk (2012) suggested that support for NG staff should be established.

Syrnyk (2012) also found that teachers relied on one another for support and advice and raised the importance of off-loading as a way of coping, allowing emotions of working with pupils with SEBD to be adsorbed and processed. The notion of supervision has briefly been mentioned in the NG literature by Garner & Thomas, (2011) and, given that NG staff are often working with risky and vulnerable pupils, it seems essential for NG staff to access supervision. Although not mentioned in the current research, Kourmoulaki (2013) mentioned that NG staff found support in discussions with the school EP as well as with school staff. The role of the EP in this support will be discussed and reflected upon in section 5.7.2.

**Basic Theme: Available resources**

In both cases, available resources were discussed as a facilitator. This included an available room (specifically mentioned in case study 1) and financial resources which were mentioned in both cases. The NG involved in Cooke et al.’s (2008) research also mentioned the use of a designated room, set up to adhere to the NG principles and it seems that the use of a stable room is essential to convey the safe and secure base that NGs aim to do. Colley (2009) does question this, however, after finding that a secondary NG moving across three settings (always the same three settings) was still benefitting the young people who attended.

**5.4.2.2. Organising Theme: Engaging with others.**

**Basic Theme: Communication with school staff**

Communication with staff was mentioned in both cases. This included communicating about NG attendance through systems that are in place (e.g., central computer systems) and through email contacts about individual pupils. Staff bulletins were also mentioned to keep mainstream staff ‘in the loop’. Information was also delivered to improve understanding and knowledge of the NG. Staff were also invited into the NG to improve their understanding. Leaflets are also given to staff to help them to identify pupils and communication occurs with Year 6 teacher to identify possible nurture candidates.
Kourmoulaki (2013) also named ‘communication with others’ as a facilitator and highlighted that informal communication systems were in place which provided a supportive mechanism. Moreover communication and working relationships were found to be essential factors in running an effective NG by Cooper and Ticknaz (2005).

**Basic Theme: Relationships**

Both cases discussed the importance of relationships and, specifically in case study 2, this focussed on relationships with parents. Coffee mornings were discussed during which parents are invited into the NG. Positive relationships with staff were also mentioned and it was thought that relationships between pupils made NG attendance easier. Cooper and Ticknaz (2005) also highlighted a balanced group composition and peer relations to be essential factors in running an effective NG.

**5.4.2.3. Organising Theme: Knowledge and skills are respected.**

**Basic Theme: Knowledge base**

‘Knowledge base’ was mentioned in case study 1 but not in case study 2 but was felt important to include. Knowledge base was discussed prior to the NG being developed and the knowledge that the NG facilitator had increased through attendance at the NGN training. Staff were also motivated to improve their knowledge base and sources of information were available allowing that to occur (e.g., through training courses and by liaising with NG staff in other schools).

**Basic Theme: A skilful and respectful facilitator**

The NGs skills were discussed in both cases and it seemed that these skills were respected by others in the wider school. The NG facilitator was conveyed as someone who children could speak to, was kind, caring and empathic. In case study 1, a proactive image of the NG Facilitator was also conveyed. This seemed to be important to secure extra funds through grant applications.

Syrnyk (2012) found NG teachers to have skills and knowledge base but also personal attributes including a calm and empathic nature and an ability to maintain relaxed and reasoned. NG teachers were also described as highly attuned to others as well as maintaining awareness of their own internal state. Staff’s skills and qualities were also highlighted by Cooper and Tiknaz (2005) as an important factor contributing to the success of NGs and in other research (for example Kourmoulaki, 2013) NG staff are described to be at the heart of the groups.
5.4.2.4. Organising Theme: Supporting attendance by altering perceptions.

**Basic Theme: Support to attend**

Support to attend the NG was discussed in both cases and focussed on pupils’ views of attendance supporting their attendance (e.g., liking the NG or accepting missing lessons).

In case study 2, specific measures also seemed to have been put in place (e.g., a discrete reminder was included inside a child’s planner) and timetabling of groups changed ensuring that the same lessons were not frequently missed. This was a facilitator also mentioned by Cooke et al. (2008) who found that changing the timetabling of the sessions to ensure that the same lessons were not missed was helpful in overcoming timetabling difficulties.

Ways of overcoming bullying was also mentioned in both case studies as this had been mentioned as a barrier to attendance (‘Incorrect perceptions and stigma’).

**Basic Theme: Providing knowledge to change perceptions**

Attempts to change perceptions of the NG were mentioned in both cases. Staff and parents are invited into the NG and information is offered to improve an understanding about what the NG is about. Colley (2009) also reported that INSET training was vital for staff when a NG first began in a secondary school to ensure that the practices and philosophies of the NG were clear from the outset.

Pupils in case study 1 also discussed getting to know and visiting the NG prior to their attendance which seemed to ease their transition into the group.

5.4.3. Conclusion to RQ2.

From thematic analyses it seems that NGs can be implemented into mainstream secondary schools due to numerous facilitators being in place. Most facilitators could be linked to barriers in each case implying that the majority of these have and continue to overcome the barriers. Barriers were found to include having the necessary tools; difficulties communicating and engagement with others; mainstream difficulties in identifying pupils and support; difficulties in the arrangement of groups (e.g., timetabling and group composition) and a lack of others’ understanding about NGs. Facilitators to overcome these were found to be: a supportive environment (including available resources and a supportive ethos); ability to engage with others through communication streams; respect for knowledge and skills and
supporting the attendance of pupils by altering perceptions. The tables below indicate the basic themes matched across cases.

Table 5.2 Cross case summary of findings regarding barriers in RQ2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme</th>
<th>Found in case 1</th>
<th>Found in case 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding concerns</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having correct resources initially</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying members</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping members</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect perceptions and stigma</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with the NG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetabling issues</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty to measure impact</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in understanding</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulties when back in mainstream</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only barrier not mentioned in case study 2 that was mentioned in case study 1 was ‘having the correct resources initially’. It was hypothesised that this was due to there being only one participant (in Case 1) who was in post when the NG was established.

Only one barrier was identified in Case Study 2 that was not discussed in Case 1. This was regarding discussions about difficulties for pupils when back in mainstream, having to keep up with the nurturing ethos and pupils having to keep up with lessons. It may be useful to explore this barrier in other NGs to see if replication occurs in future research.
Table 5.3: Cross case summary of findings regarding facilitators in RQ2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme</th>
<th>Found in Case 1</th>
<th>Found in Case 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support from school staff</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge base</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources available</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A skilful and respected facilitator</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School ethos</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication with school staff</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to attend</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing knowledge to change perceptions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only barrier not mentioned in case study 2 that was mentioned in case study 1 was ‘knowledge base’.

5.5. How does NG attendance affect pupils?

During interviews and focus groups positive and negative effects were established. Thematic maps were produced for each case study and then a cross case thematic map was produced by combining basic themes from each case to create new themes. To answer this RQ, the BPYP (Bennathan et al., 2010) data were also gathered for each case.

Figure 5.3: A visual representation of the data sources used to answer RQ3
5.5.1. Positive effects: Internal and external gains with support and belonging.

Both NGs had been running for approximately six years and had achieved the QMA a couple of years prior to partaking in this study. Findings from Cooper and Whitebread (2007) revealed greater rates of improvements in pupils attending an established NG in comparison to a new NG. This could be a reason for positive reported effects. The global theme ‘Internal and external gains with support and belonging’ was developed.

5.5.1.1. Organising Theme: Effects for the wider school.

Basic Theme: Support for people wider than the NG

Effects for pupils wider than that of the NG pupils was mentioned in both cases. It was thought that through NG attendance, other pupils would benefit as the NG pupils would no longer be disruptive or difficult to work with. It was also suggested that knowledge from staff in the NG could be shared with staff outside of the NG. Specifically in case study 1 it was thought that the NG may help to identify emotional needs. In their national evaluation, Cooper and Whitebread (2007) also found that SEBD pupils attending mainstream classes (rather than the NG) in schools that had a NG, also made improvements as measured through SDQs (Goodman, 1997). Comparisons between SEBD pupils in mainstream classes in a school that did not have a NG revealed a statistically significant difference.

Basic Theme: Gives a positive message about the school

Both cases discussed the positive message that the NG conveys about the school and, going into more depth, staff in case study 1 felt that the NG gives out a caring message about the school. In case study 2 discussions involved conveying a message of not letting children ‘fall through the crack’ implying an inclusive environment for all. Cefai and Cooper (2009) also suggested that NGs allow schools to become more inclusive.

5.5.1.2. Organising Theme: Positive engagement with a sense of belonging.

Basic Theme: Positive inclusion into mainstream education

Both cases discussed positive inclusion in mainstream education. Behavioural gains were also witnessed and cross case findings revealed that the NG had allowed pupils to remain in mainstream education, preventing them from being “lost” through reluctance to engage with school or “lost” through permanent exclusions. This conveys a similar message to that given by Colley (2009) who included quotes from interviews about NGs “keeping some students in mainstream who might otherwise fail” (p. 294).
In the current research positive engagement was also discussed with school including engagement with lessons and school activities (e.g., engagement with a school play) and greater attendance on school trips. This supports prior research that discusses the witnessing of behavioural gains following NG attendance. For example, Gerrard (2006) found that children made positive changes in their behaviour. This was compared with two groups of pupils from a ‘control’ group (in a different school) who did not have a NG. Sanders (2007) also found that pupils were able to regulate their behaviour and manage their anger when problems arose and Seth-Smith et al. (2010) found that children attending a NG’s level of hyperactivity significantly decreased over time. Positive contribution to lessons has also been found (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005; Sanders, 2007).

Through these behaviour gains it could be argued that NGs prevent the exclusion of pupils and the point raised in this research supports prior research that has shown NGs to prevent pupils’ exclusion from school (see Doyle, 2005 for an example). Other research into NGs in secondary schools (e.g., Colley, 2009; Cooke et al., 2008; Garner & Thomas, 2011) also found that attendance at a NG helped to avoid school exclusions. The majority of primary school pupils in Sander’s research (2007) who had attended a NG also were able to return to mainstream classes (the majority without support). Bennathan (1997) also concluded that pupils were able to return to mainstream after NG attendance and integration into mainstream following NG attendance was also mentioned by Cooper et al. (2001). Linking to the wider SEBD literature (outlined in Chapter 2) one of the most discussed concerns across the SEBD literature is that of the inclusion of pupils with SEBD and it would seem that NGs in the cases used in this study were able to promote the positive inclusion of SEBD pupils through NG provision.

Basic Theme: Feelings of security and belonging

Both cases discussed the role of the NG in providing a sense of security, safety and belonging for the NG pupils. In both cases a message was conveyed about pupils feeling that they have somewhere that is for them, a place in which they feel cared for and nurtured. This supports previous findings from Colley (2009) who suggested that secondary NGs offered pupils a ‘safe base’.

It is possible that a number of factors allow the NG to be portrayed in this way. For example, the home-like environment may allow this to occur and other aspects discussed in RQ1 (e.g., a child-centred approach, a nurturing and supportive base, pupils attend for a reasonable amount of time) as well as some of the facilitators discussed such as ‘pupils are supported to attend’ and the NG Facilitator’s skills. The open-door policy is also likely to have allowed pupils to feel safe, supported and nurtured. In other research (for example Kourmoulaki, 2013) NG staff were described to be at the heart of the groups. They allowed
trusting relationships to be formed with pupils due to being seen as constantly there for young people whilst being attentive and attuned to their needs.

Kourmoulaki (2013) also found that feelings of safety were promoted for pupils attending NGs because the provision was consistent, predictable, small, calm and safe from bullying. The staff in the NG were also found to offer a constant point of support due to the formation of close relationships, familiarity and appropriate responses. Feelings of trust were also fostered and acceptance toward young people enabled the disclosure of information, problems and ideas. In Kourmoulaki’s research (2013) a sense of belonging was also reported through which opportunities for friendships and closeness to others were developed.

Providing belonging and safety links to the overall NG aims which are based mainly on Bowlby’s Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) (Bennathan, 2009; Boxall & Lucas, 2010; Colwell & O’Connor, 2003). The Attachment model suggests that core outcomes of secure attachments result in responses and behaviour which support the positive engagement in learning and social inclusion (e.g., a capacity to tolerate frustrations and uncertainty) (Geddes, 2006). Providing a sense of belonging also links to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) which has also been cited by researchers in relation to NGs (Cooper and Whitebread, 2007 and Cooper et al., 2001). Within this theory, a hierarchy of needs is presented and for higher order needs to be met (e.g., self-esteem) other needs such as physiological needs and feelings of safety need to be met first. These are found throughout the NGs practices through, for example, the core element of breakfast (to meet physiological needs such as hunger) and the implementation of routines (for safety).

**Basic Theme: Ability to form relationships**

Both cases discussed the notion that NG pupils were more able to form positive relationships with peers through the development of social skills and opportunities that arose through NG attendance. For example in case study 1, it was noted that many pupils who were together in the NG continue to ‘hang around’ together implying that the NG had created an opportunity for friendships to be formed. Formation of relationships with staff were also discussed, particularly the idea that NG sessions allow trusting relationships to be formed with NG staff and improvements in communication were also discussed. Similar findings were presented by Kourmoulaki (2013) who found that being in a NG helped young people’s interpersonal skills. An improved ability among pupils to initiate conversations with peers was also found to be a positive effect by Cooper and Ticknaz (2005).

Garner and Thomas (2011) also found the NGs in the secondary schools helped to develop relationships with adults and peers and, although their research was focussed on much younger pupils, Sanders (2007) also found that interactions between NG pupils and staff
were more relaxed and balanced. An Ofsted summary report (2011) also outlined that children who had attended NGs learned to build positive relationships with adults and with other pupils. Moreover, Seth-Smith et al. (2010) found that NG children showed significant improvements in their peer problems and pro-social skills as measured through SDQs (Goodman, 1997).

Other SEBD interventions were discussed in section 2.4.3.4 that focus on the development of relationships with peers. Cooper and Jacobs (2011) suggested that the impact of peer influence in the classroom can be both positive and negative but highlight examples of positive impacts of peer influence, particularly on learning through, for example peer-tutoring or peer assisted learning. Wassef et al. (1995) also outline that adolescents seem to favour using friends and trusted adults when needed (as opposed to mental health professionals) and tend to “reach out” to peers for support, further highlighting the importance of an ability and opportunity to develop positive peer relationships. Teacher perceptions and teacher training are also key factors that have been suggested to affect the successful inclusion of pupils with SEBD and educators are frequently cited as a key agent; a significant other (Humphrey, 2004).

**Basic Theme: Enjoyable school experience**

In both cases, positive school experiences were discussed. This related directly to the NG through enjoyment of attending the group and engaging with fun activities. Success was also discussed in the wider school and academic gains were discussed in both cases although fairly vaguely in terms of children being ‘academically successful’. Due to the nature of the NG sessions, children were also described as being praised, a finding that links to previous findings regarding the delivery of praise by NG staff (Binnie & Allen, 2008).

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5.5.1.3. **Organising Theme: Improved emotional well-being.**

In both cases across the majority of BPYP developmental strands, scores showed signs of improvement between time 1 and time 2. Large scale quantitative research studies have also reported improvements in social, emotional and behavioural functioning as measured through SDQs (Goodman, 1997) and Boxall profiles (e.g., Cooper & Whitebread, 2007). Reynolds et al. (2009) also found improvements in emotional and behavioural functioning (as measured through the Boxall Profile, SDQ and Behavioural Indicators of Self-Esteem) in one of the few large scale quantitative research studies. Identification of needs and perceived improvements in social and emotional measures, e.g., self-esteem and confidence and behaviour were also found through interviews with NG staff (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005). Sanders (2007) also found significant differences between changes in NG pupils’ Boxall Profile scores and comparison pupils’ (who did not attend a NG) Boxall Profile
scores. Furthermore, Cooper et al. (2001) reported improvements in Boxall Profile and SDQ scores.

Within this research, more specific improved emotional well-being gains were discussed:

**Basic Theme: Improved emotional regulation**

Both case studies discussed improvements of emotional regulation in pupils and, linked to this, case study 2 discussed improved self-awareness. NG attendance was described as helping pupils to control their emotional reactions and better able to manage feelings such as anger and anxiety. Feelings of calmness were also discussed in both cases through NG attendance. An Ofsted report (Ofsted, 2011) also revealed that parents reported their children to be calmer and happier after spending time in NGs.

Kourmoulaki (2013) also found that emotional regulation skills were developed which linked to anti-bullying strategies. These included ignoring peers and moving away from the situation, diverting anger toward other objects or thinking about happy thoughts to take them away from the difficult situation. Improvements in pupils’ self-management of anger and becoming calmer were also found through interviews with mainstream staff by Cooper and Tickanz (2005) and Cooke et al. (2008) also discussed a pupil’s relaxed demeanour (who had previously been described as an ‘emotional time bomb’) following NG attendance.

Daunic et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of emotion regulation in establishing and maintaining positive social relations through effective self-regulation and go on to discuss the impact of problematic behaviours, such as aggression, on later difficulties meeting social and academic demands.

**Basic Theme: Resilience**

Increased levels of resilience were also discussed in both cases mainly through conversations about pupils improving in their abilities to ‘cope’ in school. This included being able to cope with pressures of school and coping when getting things wrong. Pupils, discussed being able to cope with difficult situations and managing feelings in response to these. Colley's research (2009) also summarised discussions with Head Teachers who explained that secondary NGs allowed pupils to ‘cope’ with the demands of mainstream school. It is noted that improved levels of resilience discussed in this research were based on perceptions of those interviewed rather than the collection of measurable outcomes.

Staff interviewed in Garner and Thomas’s (2011) research also found that pupils had a better ability to ‘cope’ in secondary mainstream schools, particularly vulnerable children at the point of transition from primary to secondary. The Ofsted summary (2011) also revealed...
that children learned strategies to help them cope with their emotions through attending NGs. Children have also found to be calmer and better able to manage feelings and anger following NG attendance (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005).

The importance of promoting resilience for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties was highlighted by Lewis, (1999) who suggested that a focus on promoting resilience strategies would benefit the experience of all pupils, specifically children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Resilience has been found to be an important aspect in coping with stress and adversity and people described as having high levels of resilience, recover faster from traumatic events or episodes (Prince-Embury, 2005). This highlights the importance of resilience in positive emotional health and well-being.

**Basic Theme: Increased confidence**

Increased confidence was named as a basic theme in both case studies and these themes emerged across interviews with all participants. Pupils were reported to have greater confidence in class (e.g., answering class questions and engaging with group work), greater confidence to socialise and make friends and greater confidence to go into mainstream lessons with self-belief. Kourmoulaki (2013) also found that secondary pupils attending NGs had helped pupils to become more confident and able to participate in social situations.

Garner and Thomas (2011) also found, from stakeholders interviewed, that children had greater self-esteem relating to social situations and to learning. Pupils were also reported to be happier and more confident. Staff in research complete by Shaver and McClatchey (2013) also discussed perceived improved levels of confidence following NG attendance. Cooper and Ticknaz (2007) also found increased self-esteem and improvements in confidence through discussions with mainstream staff and Cooke et al. (2008) reported increased confidence level when presenting a pupil’s progress.

Feelings of confidence toward tasks has been found to correlate with High School students’ achievements (as presented for example by Tavani and Losh, 2003) and link to wider theories of feelings of self-efficacy toward tasks (Bandura, 1986).

**Basic Theme: Emotional needs can be met**

This basic theme was discussed in case study 1 and discussed the fact that the nurture groups allows pupils with emotional needs to be ‘reached’ by external support services (i.e., the school counselling service). This finding was perhaps specific to this study as it involved a member of an external agency and the impact of the NG on their role.
Table 5.4: Cross case summary of findings regarding positive effects in RQ3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme</th>
<th>Found in Case 1</th>
<th>Found in Case 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for people wider than the NG</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives a positive message about the school</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyable school experience</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional needs can be met</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved emotional regulation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive inclusion in mainstream</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of security and belonging</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to form relationships</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.2. **Negative Effects: Emotional, peer and academic pressures.**

Findings also revealed some negative effects to NG attendance and, although mentioned less than positive effects, it was still felt to be important to incorporate these into the discussion of findings.

5.5.2.1. **Organising Theme: Sadness.**

**Basic Theme: Creates a loss situation**

This basic theme was discussed in case 1 only and conveyed a message of sadness when leaving the NG. The suggestion of pupils experiencing feelings of loss when they are no longer in nurture was discussed. Upon reflection, however, it would have been beneficial to discuss these feelings of loss further, exploring if these were transient feelings or sustained.

Cooke et al. (2008) also found that pupils were feared about losing access to the provision and implications on behaviour followed. The current research, did, however, find that an open-door policy was established and it would be hoped that, through this, pupils continue to feel a sense of belonging and connection with the NG following transition into mainstream.
In addition, Cooper and Ticknaz (2005) revealed that children sometimes found it difficult to relocate back into mainstream classes suggesting that pupils ‘attach’ themselves to their NG rather than to their mainstream class. These findings were taken from staff in a mainstream primary school, however, where the amount of time spent in the NG each day is somewhat greater than the time spent in NG in the secondary schools.

**Basic Theme: Sadness at missing lessons**

In case study 2, sadness at missing lessons was also discussed. To alleviate this pressure, Cooke et al. (2008) found that pupils’ views were taken into account when timetabling NG sessions but inevitably it was reported that attendance at the NG hopefully compensated for missing lessons. Given that NG attendance also allowed ‘enjoyable school experiences’ to be provided (as presented in the section outlining positive effects) it would be hoped that the initial sadness of missing lessons would later be alleviated through enjoyment at attending NG sessions.

It would have been beneficial, however, to explore this theme further with the aim of exploring the duration of such feelings to explore if this emotional state was transient or sustained. For example one pupil discussed feeling sad about missing lessons when he first began attending the NG sessions. Following some attendance he then realised that the NG was his favourite lesson and it seemed that when pupils habituated to the NG, enjoyable experiences occurred.

**5.5.2.2. Organising Theme: Peer effects.**

**Basic Theme: Experienced bullying**

In both cases pupils reported experiencing bullying due to NG attendance. This links to the barrier emphasising perceptions and stigma attached to the NG and, although plans were discussed to invite mainstream pupils into the NG, this did not seem to have occurred in the cases presented. To the current author’s knowledge this has not been mentioned in the NG literature although NG attendance in secondary schools has been found to improve pupils’ abilities to develop anti-bullying strategies (Kourmoulaki, 2013).

Kourmoulaki (2013) also mentioned that bullying continued in the wider school for NG pupils despite them being taught strategies and it may be that pupils who attend the NG may already be vulnerable to experiencing bullying. Attendance at the NG may, therefore, make pupils more noticeable to the pupils who ‘bully’ them.
Basic Theme: Isolated from peers

The idea of feeling isolated from peers was discussed in case study 1 briefly although this was mentioned by the Key Worker who had made some comments that suggested his perception of NG attendance as being more frequent than the part-time sessions attended.

5.5.2.3. Organising Theme: Consequences to missing lessons.

Basic Theme: Have to catch up

This theme was discussed in case study 2 only and focussed on the requirement to be at the same point in lessons as peers, despite attending fewer lessons due to attendance at the NG. Pupils discussed feeling pressured from subject teachers.

Basic Theme: Consequences to missing lessons

Further consequences to missing lessons were also discussed in case study 2 only. Pupils explained that late marks had been given for missing lessons and detentions had also been given when homework was not completed. This seemed to be linked to the wider barrier, however, of a lack of communication between NG staff and subject teachers, resulting in some teachers being unaware that pupils were attending the NG. Some discussions suggested that teachers thought that pupils were ‘skiving’ when pupils were not in their lessons due to them being unaware of the pupils’ NG attendance.

Table 5.5: Cross case summary of findings regarding negative effects to answer RQ3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Theme</th>
<th>Found in Case 1</th>
<th>Found in Case 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced bullying</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates a loss situation</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated from peers</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences to missing lessons</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have to catch up</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness at missing lessons</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative effects were not matched as well as positive effects across cases and themes were developed from fewer quotes. These themes were still thought to be important resulting in them being presented.
5.5.2.4. Increases in some strands of the diagnostic BPYP strand scores in case 1 and 2.

Although the developmental strands showed improvements in both case studies, improvements in diagnostic strands were less consistent with some scores on strands actually increasing after NG attendance. In both cases increases in strands T, Y and Z were witnessed. In Case 1 strands V, W and X also increased. Although some increases were witnessed, some scores in case 1 were within the expected range (strands X and Z) and in case 2 strand Z was within the expected range. Interestingly, an increase in diagnostic strand scores R, T, U and X was also found by Cooke et al. (2008). They offered three possible explanations to this finding:

1. The length of time spent in the NG was insufficient to allow pupils to develop coping strategies or outweigh any negative effects of the main school setting.
2. The length of time between pre and post measure was insufficient to portray measurable progress.
3. Some elements could reflect normal adolescent development (e.g., self-negating and negativism toward self).

Interpreting the group mean may, however, mis-represent some data as scores for one pupil in case 2 either decreased or stayed the same on all diagnostic strands. All other pupils’ scores in both cases did, however, show a less consistent pattern. The above points could, therefore, still be considered for each pupil individually.

5.5.3. Conclusion to RQ3.

Through thematic analyses of interviews and analysis of BPYP time 1 and time 2 data it would seem that attendance at NGs allow pupils to experience numerous positive effects. These include positive engagement with school physically (through a lack of exclusion due to behaviour improvement), with lessons (through positive engagement and experiences) and engagement and formation of relationships with others. Pupils also felt a sense of belonging to the NG, a setting in which they felt safe and secure. Improved emotional well-being was also reported relating to increased levels of confidence, greater emotional regulation and higher levels of resilience. Positive changes were also noted on the BPYP developmental strands, and in some strands, changes allowed pupils to achieve scores within the expected range. Positive effects were also reported for the wider school.

Although numerous positive effects were reported, some negative effects also emerged. These included feelings of sadness through a possible creation of a loss situation and sadness at missing some lessons initially. Negative peer effects (e.g., bullying) were also
discussed. Consequences were also implemented due to a lack of communication regarding pupils’ NG attendance. Moreover, some BPYP scores also showed an increase on some diagnostic strands.

5.6. Presentation of findings from pattern matching

To stay true to Yin’s (2009) Case Study design, an analytical strategy was used. Although a cross-case synthesis of findings was completed, findings were also pattern matched to original propositions. Comparisons were made across the two case studies and are presented in the table below. Again, to adhere to Yin’s (2009) Case Study design, rival explanations were also searched for through data collection methods. These were developed prior to the data collection process to ensure that data collection methods allowed for the searching and discarding of rival explanations. Yin (2009) highlights that the use of pattern matching as an analytic strategy increases the internal validity of findings.
**Table 5.6: Findings from pattern matching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Case Study 1</th>
<th>Case Study 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The NG is part of a wider continuum of care</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG principles are followed with a designated room and two members of staff</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG sessions will be part-time (e.g., three days a week)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGs will be embedded into whole school policies with a clear referral route</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequately trained staff will run the NG</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive structures within school will exist (e.g., support from senior management)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timetabling difficulties will occur</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large number of pupils are in need</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistical issues exist e.g., room available</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils will have remained in mainstream after the NG</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits in display of behaviour</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved relationships</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional gains (e.g., confidence)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rival Explanations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rival Explanations</th>
<th>Case Study 1</th>
<th>Case Study 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other services and interventions are accessed by the pupil which allows effects to occur (Direct Rival)</td>
<td></td>
<td>This was not explored in enough depth*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive effects occurred because of attendance in a small group out of lessons rather than due to the content of NG sessions (Implementation rival)</td>
<td></td>
<td>This could not be explored in enough depth*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG will be used more as an inclusion base/sin bin (Rival theory)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers may outweigh facilitators in allowing a classic NG to be established (Rival theory)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not all effects may be positive (Rival theory)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive changes will not be witnessed on all strands of the Boxall (Rival theory)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to their age, NG pupils will not benefit from NG attendance (Rival theory)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These are reflected upon in section 5.8.2.
5.7. Implications of the research

It is thought that this research will impact on professionals in two main areas:

1. Staff working within the NGN
2. EPs working with NG staff

5.7.1. Implications for the NGN.

Given that few NGs exist in secondary schools, findings from this research could be used to allow training course attendees to understand how a classic NG can be delivered in a secondary school. Information collected through observations, the initial questionnaire and interviews and focus groups may allow key features of a classic nurture group to be conveyed.

Information about the barriers and facilitators would also be useful to convey as these would be important in allowing a classic NG to be developed initially. School staff could consider that these were in place first before time and effort is established to create a classic NG. As some barriers also highlighted gaps in knowledge, the initial NGN training could continue to fill these gaps. Linking to social learning theories of learning however (e.g., Bandura, 1986), NG staff may learn more about running NGs through modelling and observations of other NGs in action.

Given that one facilitator was ‘the development of support for NG staff’, the NGN could continue to provide this or, equally, could arrange visits as part of the NGN training to existing NGs. This could create opportunities to ‘network’ allowing further support structure to be provided.

5.7.2. Implications for EPs’ practice.

It is thought that this research could impact on the role of EP in supporting the effective implementation and running of a classic NG within a secondary school. It is suggested that the EP could intervene at three different time points to offer support:

1. prior to the implementation of a NG;
2. during the implementation; and
3. following NG attendance.
Prior to the implementation of a NG

As this research has considered the implementation of an intervention, this is an area in which EPs can support schools. If working from a social constructionist paradigm an EP’s work can focus on systemic influences. A key professional practice framework that adopts this approach is Activity Theory (originally developed by Engestrom, 1987) which adopts the assumption that no action takes place in a vacuum-like environment and relationships between actions, tools and outcomes should be related to wider historical, social, cultural and contextual factors (Leadbetter, 2008).

Within Activity Theory, ‘tools’ (or mediating means) are named which are mechanisms that allow objects to be achieved (Leadbetter, 2008). Linked to this research then, objects could be defined as ‘the successful implementation of a classic NG’ whilst the facilitators found in this research could be named as ‘tools’. Activity Theory also mentions the identification of ‘rules’ and these are what support or could prevent work from occurring (Leadbetter, 2008). When defining rules, barriers found in this research could, therefore, be named and considered. Activity Theory also focusses on the ‘community’ which involves environmental influences and the wider context (Leadbetter, 2008). Factors such as the ethos of the school and support from the wider school could therefore be linked and considered should secondary schools be considering implementing a classic NG.

Given that barriers also existed regarding others’ perceptions of the NG and gaps in knowledge, EPs could also intervene in altering staff’s perceptions about the NG through training. Gaps were mentioned in teachers’ knowledge regarding pupils with SEBD in Chapter 3 and given that gaps were found in knowledge regarding NGs in this current study, training could aim to incorporate these two areas. Cameron (2006) conveys that EPs can work at three levels, one of which is at an organisational level delivering training to teachers. Whilst EPs are clearly equipped to deliver training (often applying psychological theories related to learning and motivation) the delivery of training from EP services has been found to be affected by staffing ratios (DfEE, 2000). EPs could also assist NG staff in developing plans to integrate ‘high status’ mainstream pupils into the NG. These plans could be implemented with the aim of raising the profile of the NG in schools, increasing the knowledge gap amongst mainstream pupils with the overall aim of reducing stigma.

During the NG implementation

Support during this phase could be delivered to NG staff. As a barrier focussed on NG staff communicating with others (and possibly feeling isolated) EPs could intervene to provide supervision for staff. Good supervision supports professionally competent practice and ensures that legal and ethical responsibilities to clients are met (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010) and EPs are frequently commissioned to support professionals from other agencies,
with multi-agency supervision existing as a growing area (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). Sanders (2007) suggested that a NG’s EP was also responsible for providing support for NG staff which helped. It would, therefore, seem that EPs would have a role in offering direct support to staff using the necessary therapeutic skills that can be applied across a range of settings and EP roles (Pugh, 2010).

EPs could also support staff to implement and explore issues around bullying related to NG attendance. Support could be offered to re-emphasise a ‘no tolerance’ approach to bullying and support with the reviewing of bullying policies. As this was a theme that emerged in both cases, it would be essential that the benefits of NG attendance outweigh the costs. Consultations with EPs may therefore offer a chance to review this and consider supportive ways to manage bullying concerns. Support could also be offered more directly for NG pupils in allowing, through consultations, scripts to be developed that they could use when asked or challenged by peers about their NG attendance. At a whole school level, the normalisation of small group intervention attendance could also be considered.

**Following NG attendance**

Sanders (2007) suggested in her research that the EP was reported to be helpful in contributing to quality assurance and research/evaluation skills are one of the core features of an EP’s role in children’s services (Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010). Given that measuring impact was notified as a barrier in both cases in this research this is a role that could be distinctive to that of an EP. Cameron (2006) suggests that one of the few professions to have the knowledge and skills in research design and data analysis, whilst being able to take a critical stance, is Educational Psychology. Arguably, these skills could be utilised effectively in supporting schools with NGs to measure their impact robustly. As cost benefits have also been raised (or cost implications) the EP could also provide support in completing evaluation projects and conveying findings to budget holders and providers.

As secondary school NGs have a limited evidence base, EPs could also use their research skills to increase the evidence base for this intervention in secondary schools (as suggested by Cameron, 2006). It is stated, however, that NGs in general are lacking in robust large scale randomised control studies as only few exist (e.g., Cooper et al., 2001) and again, EPs' research skills could be used to coordinate and complete such studies. It is argued that EPs' future must be an evidence-based one and if the future is going to be evidence based then the profession must be concerned with research (MacKay, 2002). Mackay (2002) also adds that EPs are “uniquely qualified to carry this research out” (MacKay, 2002, p 249).
5.8. Critique of the current research

5.8.1. Strengths of the study.

Given that young people’s views of their experience in the NG are relatively unexplored in the literature (Kourmoulaki, 2013), with only a few papers specifically stating the gathering of pupils’ views the data collection methods used in this study that emphasise hearing pupils’ views could be considered to be a strength. Views of SEBD pupils are not typically explored (as suggested for example by Davies, 2005) so the completion of this research may have also empowered pupils and ensured that their views were heard. The whole school support that facilitates the functioning of the NG is also considered to be an unexplored area (Kourmoulaki, 2013) which, again was a point of exploration in this current study and is also considered to be a strength in adding to the gaps in the literature.

The identification of NGs to be included in the study is considered to be particularly rigorous with a number of variables in place to ensure that ‘aberrant’ NGs were not selected. NGs were therefore chosen that had the QMA from the NGN. In addition, observations using a pre-developed observational schedule were completed to further determine that the NGs selected implemented the six principles of nurture. A robust methodology was also used and through the use of Yin’s (2009) case study design protocol, this ensured that each aspect could be replicated, if desired, using a range of data streams and sources of data collection. Effective validity also occurred during which findings were triangulated between data streams.

5.8.2. Reflection on the limitations of the study.

Throughout the planning and completion of the research, a reflective diary was kept. This allowed limitations to be considered to generate ideas for future research. Limitations discussed seemed to fall within two main areas: recruitment of participants and data collection methods.

Recruitment of participants

Given that the SEBD literature states difficulties engaging with parents of SEBD pupils it was decided that parents would not be recruited in this research due to time constraints. Upon reflection, after initial visits at NGs and looking through QMA documents it became apparent that NG staff liaise and aim to engage with parents on a frequent basis. Engaging parents into the research may, therefore, have been possible.

The use of members of staff from external agencies was also reflected upon and, whilst it was hoped that these views would offer an ‘unbiased’ response, there were sometimes gaps in their understanding of barriers and facilitators. When interviewing school staff it was also noted that the majority of staff interviewed were not in post when the NGs were initially developed, making it difficult to know what barriers were faced initially. Despite this,
however, they were able to provide responses about current barriers. Upon reflection it was also noted that views of mainstream staff were not gathered.

The number of participants used also limits the generalisation of these findings but, due to the exploratory design methodology used (Yin, 2009) replication is not necessarily the initial desired outcome. Ideally it was hoped that three schools would be recruited as cases but this seemed to be of great difficulty at the recruitment stage. Upon reflection it may have been useful to ease with the recruitment process by writing to Head Teachers or developing links with EP colleagues. This may have allowed for more cases to be included in the multiple case study design. During attendance at informal meetings and visits to NGs initially, it became apparent how busy NG facilitators are. Due to the support that they seem to provide to mainstream staff and the open-door policy that they offer for young people, NG staff seemed to have a limited amount of ‘free time’. Given case study designs involve an in depth exploration of a case, demands would have been placed on the already busy NG facilitators and so it was decided that it may have been unethical to pursue some contacts who had originally agreed to partake in the research.

Data collection methods

Collecting information from documents submitted for the QMA was originally included in the data analysis. Upon reflection, however, it was felt that this may have provided unreliable information about the NG and there was no opportunity for the researcher to have access to the raw data that was used to compose these documents. Although, written data were in a permanent form allowing verification and re-analysis of the data to be done if needed, consideration was given that these documents had been provided for a purpose (to achieve the QMA). Caution therefore needed to be taken and it was decided that the model of nurture would be described using the interviews/focus groups, observations and completed initial questionnaires instead.

Also, when completing observations, it was at times difficult to remain purely as an observer. As the nature of the NG is very inclusive and welcoming the researcher was often included into activities (e.g., snack-time) which may have changed the typical flow of the NG. It is also acknowledged that by undertaking observations, adds another dimension to the setting and NG facilitators may act differently as they know that they are being observed. The use of observations is, however, though be a useful form of data collection as it allows the researcher to have direct contact with the setting (Mertens, 2005) with Yin (2009) describes them as invaluable aids.

Similar to suggestions made by Sanders (2007) it could also be suggested that some aspects of this research are ‘impressionistic’ as it focuses on the interpretation of observations and perceptions of others. As suggested by Sanders (2007) these perceptions
are important and it would have been difficult to explore barriers and facilitators to NG implementation in any other way due to it being based on individual experiences. With regard to measuring the impact, however, measures such as the Resiliency Scales (Prince-Embry, 2005) or the Beck Youth Inventories (Beck, Beck, & Jolly, 2005) could have been used alongside interviews.

The validity and meaningfulness of the BPYP scores was also reflected upon following the analysis of these sets of data. Some deterioration was found in this study and similar findings were also presented by Cooke et al. (2008) and Eccleshall and Locke (2013). Whilst Eccleshall and Locke (2013) were able to reflect on the reasons why increases in Boxall strands may have occurred, it became apparent that this could not be done in this study. Had in depth case studies for each pupil been used, it may have been easier to understand these deteriorations but without this it is questionable how meaningfully the BPYP data are when individual pupil circumstances are unknown.

Finally, it may have been useful to ask more questions through the semi-structured interviews about perceived negative effects of NG attendance. Although some points were discussed in the interviews these points came through quite naturally through the open communication that had clearly been developed. Given that there is a dearth of discussion in the literature about perceived negative effects of NG attendance it may be that there may have been some unconscious bias about looking for evidence of the positive impacts of NG attendance when designing the data collection methods. Rival explanations could have been developed regarding this point and data gathering methods could have been linked to these rival explanations accordingly.

The linguistic abilities of young people questioned through the focus groups were also considered. On a couple of occasions some questions were asked that relied on abilities to reflect and consider what it was about the NG that the pupils found useful. Particularly when attempting to explore rival explanations (e.g., that attendance at a small group out of lessons rather than NG factors accounted for positive impacts), this relied on pupils’ abilities to reflect and discuss what it was about the NG that they enjoyed. At times, this proved to be difficult for the pupils which may have prevented some rival explanations from being considered fully.

5.9. Recommendations for future research

More research is required that goes beyond the exploratory nature of this study. As more classic NGs are developed in secondary schools, this may allow a large scale piece of research to be completed similar to that completed by Cooper et al., (2001) in primary schools. It would be beneficial to do this jointly with the NGN to avoid the recruitment difficulties that were experienced in this current research. Such research could also look
more specifically into the content of NG sessions and how the content of sessions fit into the overall aims of the delivery of NG sessions and outcomes achieved by pupils.

Future research may also consider effects made in more depth whilst considering how personal changes link to changes that can be made with accessing and achieving in the educational environment. Cooke et al. (2008) offer an interesting discussion about the developmental changes made through NGs and the impact that these changes can then have on cognitive development in the form of thinking and reasoning skills. They also argue that improvements in thinking and reasoning skills (such as higher order abstract thinking skills) will enhance access to the curriculum. Future research may, therefore, explore changes in cognitive development and progress made in accessing curriculum content.

Given that some findings have revealed that, whilst the general improvement made after the NG is maintained there is some relapse in performance in certain areas, it would be beneficial to complete a follow-up study or a longitudinal study that explores the long-term effects of attendance at a NG. For example, Farrell and Polat (2003) explored the long-term impact of attendance at a residential school on engagement with further education and employment. Research similar to this would be interesting to complete with NG pupils. Given the time scale of this research, this was clearly out of the remit of the current researcher but would be an interesting avenue to explore in future research. The use of a control group would also be beneficial.

The views of other stakeholders would also be interesting to obtain in future research including parents, mainstream staff and mainstream pupils. This may further unpick some of the incorrect perceptions and stigma attached to NGs mentioned in this research, allowing gaps and perceptions to be changed effectively.

Cost benefits would also be useful to explore, particularly if NGs are funded by the LA. In the schools used in this study, however, one school was an Academy and the other NG was funded from the school’s own resources. O’Connor and Colwell (2002) suggest that NGs can be cost-effective due to the vast majority of pupils remaining in mainstream, often without a Statement of Special Educational Needs although these findings are taken from a small sample size. Eccleshall and Locke (2013) also outline that NGs are stated as an effective use of Pupil Premium by Ofsted, so the financial benefits may be an essential and useful avenue to explore.

Given the rival explanations found regarding negative changes on the BPYP, research could also explore the use of the BPYP with a particular emphasis on the diagnostic strands which have shown some deterioration despite NG attendance (e.g., in this current research and by Cooke et al., 2008 and Eccleshall & Locke, 2013). Possible comparisons of BPYP scores with mainstream pupils in a control group could be completed to explore Cooke et al.’s
(2008) theory of the reflection of normal adolescent development. Although Eccleshall and Locke (2013) were able to offer an understanding of deteriorations in scores, other researchers may not benefit from this pupil insight and so the use of BPYP alongside other measures of emotional well-being, for example The Beck Youth Inventories (Beck et al., 2005) may be beneficial.

Finally, there is a dearth of literature relating to the perceived negative impacts of NG attendance and, given that stigma and negative perceptions were discussed in this research with pupils experiencing some bullying, further research could explore this rival explanation. It would be necessary to explore if NG attendance is causative in these bullying experiences allowing this to be addressed meaningfully to reduce the frequency of bullying for NG pupils. It may be, however, that NG pupils already appear vulnerable within the wider school and ordinarily experience bullying. With further exploration into this area, meaningful practice could be developed to allow NG pupils to engage and experience positive peer relations wherever possible by intervening to increase mainstream pupils’ knowledge and contact with the NG. Future research could also explore the other negative effects found in this study about feelings of sadness and loss. These constructs may benefit from further exploration to explore if feelings of loss are related to leaving the NG or are about the future, relating to a need to access more mainstream lessons again.
References


Appendix A

Outline of NGs

This Appendix includes information about the characteristics of NGs and the principles to which NGs should adhere.
The Characteristics of Nurture Groups (Cooper, Arnold and Boyd, 2001)

a) A Nurture Group is integrated provision. It is an agreed part of an LEA/school continuum of special educational needs provision, either as an integral part of an individual school or as a resource for a cluster of schools.

b) The curriculum includes the National Curriculum and takes full account of school policies.

c) All staff work towards the child's full return into mainstream classes.

d) Children attend the Nurture Group for a large part of each day or for substantial regular sessions. This can be on a short or medium-term basis, but is usually two to four terms.

e) Two adults work together modelling good adult relationships in a structured and predictable environment, where children can begin to trust and to learn.

f) It supplies a setting in which missing or insufficiently internalised essential early learning experiences are provided.

g) The emphasis is on supporting positive emotional and social growth and cognitive development at whatever level of need the children show by responding to them in a developmentally appropriate way.

h) There is an emphasis on language development through intensive interaction with an adult.

i) Social learning through co-operation and play with others is essential and the group is constituted with this in mind.

j) Staff involve parents/carers as early and as fully as possible and have a positive attitude towards them.
The six principles of nurture  (Taken from The Nurture Group Network (2012b))

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally
In nurture groups staff respond to children in terms of the children's developmental progress assessed through the Boxall Profile Handbook. The response to the individual child is ‘as they are’, underpinned by a non-judgemental and accepting attitude.

2. The classroom offers a safe base
The organisation of the environment and the way the group is managed contains anxiety. The nurture group room offers a balance of educational and domestic experiences aimed at supporting the development of the children's relationship with each other and with the staff. The nurture group is organised around a structured day with predictable routines. Great attention is paid to detail; the adults are reliable and consistent in their approach to the children. Nurture groups are an educational provision making the important link between emotional containment and cognitive learning.

3. Nurture is important for the development of self-esteem
Nurture involves listening and responding. In a nurture group 'everything is verbalised' with an emphasis on the adults engaging with the children in reciprocal shared activities e.g. play / meals / reading /talking about events and feelings. Children respond to being valued and thought about as individuals, so in practice this involves noticing and praising small achievements; ‘nothing is hurried in nurture groups’.

4. Language is understood as a vital means of communication
Language is more than a skill to be learnt, it is the way of putting feelings into words. Nurture group children often ‘act out' their feelings as they lack the vocabulary to 'name' how they feel. In nurture groups the informal opportunities for talking and sharing, e.g. welcoming the children into the group or having breakfast together are as important as the more formal lessons teaching language skills. Words are used instead of actions to express feelings and opportunities are created for extended conversations or encouraging imaginative play to understand the feelings of others.

5. All behaviour is communication
This principle underlies the adult response to the children's often challenging or difficult behaviour. ‘Given what I know about this child and their development what is this child trying to tell me?’ Understanding what a child is communicating through behaviour helps staff to respond in a firm but non-punitive way by not being provoked or discouraged. If the child can sense that their feelings are understood this can help to diffuse difficult situations. The adult makes the link between the external / internal worlds of the child.
6. Transitions are significant in the lives of children

The nurture group helps the child make the difficult transition from home to school. However, on a daily basis there are numerous transitions the child makes, e.g. between sessions and classes and between different adults. Changes in routine are invariably difficult for vulnerable children and need to be carefully managed with preparation and support.
Appendix B

Outline of literature from which propositions are drawn

UOA1: What model/models of nurture are delivered in secondary school with a QMA?

- The NG is part of a wider continuum of care (from Colley, 2009; Cooke et al. 2008)
- NG principles are followed with a designated room and two members of staff (Colley, 2009)
- NG sessions will be part-time e.g., three days a week (Colley, 2009; Cooke et al. 2008)

UOA2: What are the facilitators and how do they ease the creation/running of a NG in a secondary school

- NG will be embedded within whole school policies with a clear referral route (Colley, 2009);
- Adequately trained staff will run the NG (Colley, 2009; Cooke et al. 2008)
- Supportive structures within the school will exist e.g., senior management, clear communication (Cooper & Tiknaz, 2005; Garner & Thomas, 2011; Sanders, 2007)

UOA3: What are the barriers and how have they been overcome?

- Timetabling difficulties (Cooke et al., 2008; Garner & Thomas, 2011)
- Large number of pupils in need (Colley, 2009)
- Logistical issues e.g., room availability (personal theory)
- How have barriers been overcome - same as facilitators

UOA5: What are the benefits?

- Pupils have remained in mainstream (Colley, 2009; Iszatt & Wasilewska, 1997)
- Benefits in display of behaviour (Colley, 2009)
- Improved relationships (Sanders, 2007; Garner & Thomas, 2011)
- Emotional gains e.g., self-esteem, confidence (Cooke et al., 2008)
Appendix C

Data Gathering Methods

This Appendix includes the initial questionnaire developed by the researcher, the framework used when completing observations, questions used in semi-structured interviews and prompts used during focus groups.
INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for completing this questionnaire

**NG members**

How are the young people selected to be involved in the NG?  

Are there any young people who are not ‘accepted’ into the NG?  

How many members are in each group?  

**Monitoring**

Are any questionnaires completed as the child enters the NG? If so, which ones are used?  

How is the value of the NG measured?  

Are measures taken to explore the impact of the NG on the wider-school context?  

**Logistics**

Where do the nurture group sessions take place? Is this the same place for every session?  

How many sessions do the NG members attend in a week?  

How long are these sessions?  

How many people run the NG sessions?  

Who are NG facilitators?  

**Nature of the sessions**

Does the nurture group follow any key principles?  

Please give a brief description of what a typical nurture group session “looks like”  

**RESEARCH PROJECT**

A case study to explore models, facilitators, barriers and potential benefits of Nurture Groups in secondary schools with the Boxall Quality Mark Award
Guide for semi-structured interview with the NG Facilitator

*As the case study interviews can be a guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2009) it is not possible to establish all questions that will be asked prior to the semi-structured interview. The following questions will, therefore, be used as prompts to open further discussion.

Could you provide an overview of the NGs e.g., how many groups run and for which year groups?

1) Why did you manage to create a NG that would allow it to be accredited with the QMA and what were the aims of the NG initially? How did you manage to set up the NG?

2) What do you feel has helped the NG to run?

3) What are the main benefits that you have noticed across your school as a whole to having the NG?

4) What are some benefits you have noticed for individual members? If the NG would not have been present in the school, what do you think would happen instead?

5) What do you value most about the NG?

6) Were there any difficulties when setting up the NG? If so, what were they?

7) How do you feel/ or how do you think these difficulties were overcome?

8) Have similar difficulties existed when continuing to run the NG?

9) How do you feel you were able to overcome these difficulties?
Guide for semi-structured interview with a member of the Senior Management Team

*As the case study interviews can be a guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2009) it is not possible to establish all questions that will be asked prior to the semi-structured interview. The following questions will, therefore, be used as prompts to open further discussion.

1) Why did you, or other members of the Senior Management Team, feel that it was important to have a NG with a Quality Mark Award in the school and how was the NG originally set up?

2) How did you manage to create a NG that would allow it to be accredited by Nurture Group Network Quality Mark Award?

3) Were there any difficulties when setting up the NG in the school? If so, what were they?

4) How do you feel that you were able to overcome these difficulties?

5) Have similar difficulties existed when continuing to run the NG and how do you feel that you were able to overcome these difficulties?

6) What do you feel has helped the NG to continue to run?

7) What are the main benefits that you have noticed across your school, as a whole, to having the NG?

8) What do you think have been the main benefits for NG pupils?

9) What do you value most about the NG?
Guide for semi-structured interview with the Key Worker (member of an external agency)

*As the case study interviews can be a guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2009) it is not possible to establish all questions that will be asked prior to the semi-structured interview. The following questions will, therefore, be used as prompts to open further discussion.

1) Have you had any involvement with the NG or the NG staff?

2) If so, how was this arranged, if not, why do you think this was?

3) What do you think has helped the NG to continue to run in xxx school?

4) Do you know of any barriers that the school faced? How do you think these can be overcome?

5) What are the main benefits that you have noticed across the school, as a whole, to having the NG?

6) Has the presence of the NG affected the nature of your work in the school? If so, how does this compare to your work in schools without a NG with the QMA?

7) What are some of the benefits that you have notice for individual members of the NG?
Focus Group Prompts

Prompt questions for focus group with the young people

1) How long have you been attending the NG or how long did you attend the NG?

2) How often do you/did you attend the NG?

3) Does this mean that you have to miss any lessons? How do you feel about this?

4) Has anything helped you to be able to attend the NG?

5) What have been the best things about attending the NG?

6) What have you learned from attending the NG?

7) Would you recommend the NG to any of your friends?

8) Has attending the NG made school easier/better – if so, what?

9) Has anything made it difficult to attend the NG?

10) If there are any difficulties, has anything helped to overcome them?
## Coding Frameworks

### Herring’s (2009) Observation Schedule for the Six Key Principles of Nurture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area on observation schedule</th>
<th>Which of the 6 key principles of nurture observation focussed on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive affirmation about individual</td>
<td>3 – Development of self-esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Positive affirmation about task | 1 – Learning is understood developmentally  
3 – Development of self-esteem |
| Positive physical contact | 2 – Safe base (know how adults will behave; development of trust |
| Adult modelling behaviour | 2 – Safe base (know how adults will behave; development of trust  
5 – Importance of using behaviour to identify a difficulty or teach/develop different behaviours |
| Adult prompting/supporting to think about behaviour | 4 – Language encouraged to as discussion promoted  
5 – Importance of using behaviour to identify a difficulty or teach/develop different behaviours |
| Adult prompting/supporting to think about another person’s point of view | 4 – Language encouraged to as discussion promoted  
5 – Importance of using behaviour to identify a difficulty or teach/develop different behaviours |
| Adult prompting to think about past/present and future | 4 – Language encouraged to as discussion promoted  
6 – The importance of transition in children’s lives |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the 6 key principles of nurture observation focused on</th>
<th>Area on observation schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Learning is understood developmentally</td>
<td>Positive affirmation about task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support with tasks*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Safe base (know how adults will behave; development of trust)</td>
<td>Positive physical contact/interaction*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult modelling behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation of setting/activities*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Development of self-esteem</td>
<td>Positive affirmation about individual</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Positive affirmation about task</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 – Language encouraged as discussion promoted</td>
<td>Adult prompting/supporting to think about behaviour</td>
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<td>Adult prompting/supporting to think about another person’s point of view</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adult prompting to think about past/present and future</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 – Importance of using behaviour to identify a difficulty or teach/develop different behaviours</td>
<td>Adult prompting/supporting to think about another person’s point of view</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adult modelling behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adult prompting/supporting to think about behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – The importance of transition in children’s lives</td>
<td>Adult prompting to think about past/present and future</td>
</tr>
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Appendix D

Information and consent forms

This Appendix includes outlines of information read to participants during the recruitment phase, participant information sheets and consent forms.
Brief outline of the research to read to school staff via telephone

The research is:

- being carried out as a thesis topic as part of my training
- I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist with the University of Manchester meaning that I have an up to date CRB check
- I am interested in looking at NG provision in secondary schools
- I noticed that you have the QMA have you still got this?
- Outline the RQs
- Would hope to interview member of the senior management, NG facilitator, have a focus group with six pupils – all data kept anonymous and stored adhering to data protection act
- Research would commence around May 2013
Children’s Information Sheet

You are being invited to join a group that will happen in school (in the Nurture group kitchen area).

This group will involve five other members of the Nurture Group and me, Joanne. I am training to be an Educational Psychologist and am interested in what pupils think about attending the Nurture Group.

In the group:

- We will talk about the Nurture Group (but what you say will be kept private);
- I will record what we all say.

You do not have to stay in today’s group if you do not want to and you can leave at any time. A letter has already been sent home to ask for permission for you to be here.

Thanks, Joanne (Hilton).
RESEARCH PROJECT

A case study to explore models, facilitators, barriers and potential benefits of Nurture Groups in secondary schools with the Boxall Quality Mark Award

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Parent/Carer)

Dear parent/carer

You are being contacted to invite your child to take part in a piece of research investigating the design and usefulness of Nurture Groups within secondary schools. Before you decide if you would like your child to be involved, it is important for you to know why the research is being done and what it entails.

Who will carry out the research?
Joanne Hilton (A Trainee Educational Psychologist from the University of Manchester).

Criminal Records Check
The researcher has undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can therefore conduct research on school premises.

Why is the research being carried out?
Nurture Groups have been found to be effective in Primary Schools but limited published research exists for Secondary Schools. This research aims to investigate what the Nurture Group provision looks like as well as exploring some of the potential benefits. The research is also being carried out as part of my training requirements as a Thesis which contributes to a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester.

When and where will the research sessions take place?
The Nurture Group sessions will commence as planned within your child’s school. The research will involve an observation of a Nurture Group session after a questionnaire has been completed by the Nurture Group leader and a member of the Senior Management Team. This will not involve direct contact with your child and the aim of these observations will be to observe the process of the Nurture Group only. On another occasion, your child will be asked to take part in a focus group with other members of the Nurture Group to gather their views. School data will then be collated regarding your child’s attendance, behaviour and any exclusions.

Why has my child’s Nurture Group been chosen?
Your child’s Nurture Group has been chosen as it is a Nurture Group that is being run in a secondary school and it has been accredited with the Quality Mark Award from the Nurture Group Network.

What would my child be asked to do if they were to take part?
Your child would be asked to take part in a focus group that will last for approximately 45 minutes. Your child, and other members of the group, will be asked a range of questions to gather their views about the way that the Nurture Group is ran in school and if they feel that there are any benefits to attending the group.

How long will the research take?
The whole research project will take approximately 12 months (including data analysis and write up). The observations of the Nurture Group will occur over one session and the focus group will last for approximately 45 minutes.
What would happen to this data that is collected?
The focus group will be recorded on a Dictaphone and this will be transcribed on an encrypted computer. Afterwards the recording will be erased. Your child’s views from the focus group will be gathered together, analysed and discussed in the write up of the research project. Names of the participants and school will be changed to protect individual identities. As part of this data analysis, data will be shared with members of the researcher’s tutor group. This data will, however, only be shared after it has been anonymised. Anonymous quotes may be directly reported.

The collated data will remain with the University of Manchester’s research team for 5 years to allow the research to be published in the future. If the research is published it will be in a peer reviewed journal.

What happens if I do not want my child to take part or change my mind about their involvement?
You are in no way obliged to consent to your child being involved and if you decide that you do not consent, this will in no way affect your relationship, or your child’s relationship, with the school. If you have consented but later change your mind, you can request for your child to be opted out of the research at any time. This can be done by contacting the researcher.

Contact details
If you have any questions about the research the researcher and supervisor can be contacted at:
Email: joanne.hilton@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk (researcher)
Email: kathleen.tyldesley@manchester.ac.uk (supervisor)

Address: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion (ESI), School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, UK, M13 9PL.
Telephone: 0161 2753511 (Please leave a message with Jackie Chisnall- Programme Secretary)

What if something goes wrong?
You can contact the researcher or supervisor during or after the research if you wish to discuss anything related to the research. If there are any issues that you prefer not to discuss with the research team, please contact the Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator at “The Research Practice and Governance Co-ordinator, Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
Email: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk
Telephone: 0161 2757583 or 2758093
A case study to explore models, facilitators, barriers and potential benefits of Nurture Groups in secondary schools with the Boxall Quality Mark Award

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (NGF)

You are being contacted to invite you to take part in a piece of research looking at the design and usefulness of Nurture Groups within secondary schools. Before you decide if you would like to be involved it is important for you to know why the research is being done and what it involves.

Who will carry out the research?
Joanne Hilton (A Trainee Educational Psychologist from the University of Manchester).

Criminal Records Check
The researcher has undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can therefore conduct research on school premises.

Why is the research being carried out?
Nurture Groups have been found to be effective in Primary Schools but limited research exists for Secondary Schools and this research aims to investigate what the Nurture Group provision looks like as well as exploring some of the potential benefits. The research is also being carried out as part of my training requirements as a Thesis which contributes to a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester.

When and where will the research sessions take place?
The research sessions will commence within your school. The research will involve an observation of a Nurture Group session after a questionnaire has been completed. Semi-structured interviews will then be held and a focus group will be organised with six members of the Nurture Group. Documents held relating to the Nurture Group will also be read, with key pieces of information being recorded. Data collected regarding the children will also be collated anonymously, once parental consent has been obtained.

Why has my school’s Nurture Group been chosen?
Your school’s Nurture Group has been chosen as it is a Nurture Group for secondary pupils and has been accredited with the Quality Mark Award by the Nurture Group Network.

What would I be asked to do if I were to take part?
You would be asked to complete a short questionnaire about the design of the Nurture Group. After this I would also observe a Nurture Group session and take photographs of the Nurture Group room (without young people being in the room). Finally I would ask you to take part in a semi-structured interview that would take place in your school and would last approximately 45 minutes.

How long will the research take?
The whole research project will take approximately 12 months (including data analysis and write up). The observations of the Nurture Group will occur over one session only. The semi-structured interview will last for approximately 45 minutes.

What would happen to this data that is collected?
The data collected through the questionnaire and observations will be used to describe what a model of nurture looks like in secondary schools with a nurture group that has the Quality Mark Award. Written notes will be made during the observations and questionnaire data will be collated. Interview data will be recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed. Once
transcribed, the recording will be erased. Names of the participants and school will be changed to protect individual identities.

The data will be analysed and written up as part of the research project. As part of this data analysis, data will be shared with members of the researcher’s tutor group. This data will, however, only be shared after it has been anonymised. Anonymous quotes may be directly reported.

The data will remain with the University of Manchester’s research team for 5 years to allow the research to be published in the future. If the research is published it will be in a peer reviewed journal.

Exceptions to anonymity
If you reveal any child protection concerns the researcher would have a duty to report this following child protection guidelines. This will be discussed with you and it will be agreed who will be told.

What happens if I do not want to take part or change my mind about being involved?
You are in no way obliged to consent to being involved and if you decide you do not consent this will in no way affect your role, responsibilities or relationship with school staff, for example management staff. If you do agree to participate and later change your mind, you can withdraw at any time by contacting the researcher.

Contact details
If you have any questions about the research the researcher and supervisor can be contacted at:
Email: joanne.hilton@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk (researcher)
Email: kathleen.tyldesley@manchester.ac.uk (supervisor)

Address: Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion (ESI), School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, UK, M13 9PL.
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Telephone: 0161 2757583 or 2758093
RESEARCH PROJECT

A case study to explore models, facilitators, barriers and potential benefits of Nurture Groups in secondary schools with the Boxall Quality Mark Award

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (SMT)

You are being contacted to invite you to take part in a piece of research looking at the design and usefulness of Nurture Groups within secondary schools. Before you decide if you would like to be involved it is important for you to know why the research is being done and what it involves.

Who will carry out the research?
Joanne Hilton (A Trainee Educational Psychologist from the University of Manchester).

Criminal Records Check
The researcher has undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can therefore conduct research on school premises.

Why is the research being carried out?
Nurture Groups have been found to be effective in Primary Schools but limited research exists for Secondary Schools and this research aims to investigate what the Nurture Group provision looks like as well as exploring some of the potential benefits. The research is also being carried out as part of my training requirements as a Thesis which contributes to a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester.

When and where will the research sessions take place?
The research sessions will commence within your school. The research will involve an observation of a Nurture Group session after a questionnaire has been completed. Semi-structured interviews will then be held and a focus group will be organised with six members of the Nurture Group. Documents held relating to the Nurture Group will also be read, with key pieces of information being recorded. Data collected regarding the children will also be collated anonymously, once parental consent has been obtained.

Why has my school’s Nurture Group been chosen?
Your school’s Nurture Group has been chosen as it is a Nurture Group that is being run in a secondary school and has been accredited with the Quality Mark Award by the Nurture Group Network.

What would I be asked to do if I were to take part?
You would be asked to complete a short questionnaire about the design of the Nurture Group. After this I would also observe a Nurture Group session and take photographs of the Nurture Group room (without young people being in the room). Finally I would ask you to take part in a semi-structured interview that would take place in your school and would last approximately 45 minutes.
How long will the research take?
The whole research project will take approximately 12 months (including data analysis and write up). The observations of the Nurture Group will occur over one session only. The semi-structured interview will last for approximately 45 minutes.

What would happen to this data that is collected?
The data collected through the questionnaire and observations will be used to describe what a model of nurture looks like in secondary schools with a nurture group that has the Quality Mark Award. Written notes will be made during the observations and questionnaire data will be collated. Interview data will be recorded on a Dictaphone and transcribed. Once transcribed, the recording will be erased. Names of the participants and school will be changed to protect individual identities.

The data will be analysed and written up as part of the research project. As part of this data analysis, data will be shared with members of the researcher’s tutor group. This data will, however, only be shared after it has been anonymised. Anonymous quotes may be directly reported.

The data will remain with the University of Manchester’s research team for 5 years to allow the research to be published in the future. If the research is published it will be in a peer reviewed journal.

Exceptions to anonymity
If you reveal any child protection concerns the researcher would have a duty to report this following child protection guidelines. This will be discussed with you and it will be agreed who will be told.

What happens if I do not want to take part or change my mind about being involved?
You are in no way obliged to consent to being involved and if you decide you do not consent this will in no way affect your role, responsibilities or relationship with school staff, for example management staff. If you do agree to participate and later change your mind, you can withdraw at any time by contacting the researcher.

Contact details
If you have any questions about the research the researcher and supervisor can be contacted at:
Email: joanne.hilton@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk (researcher)
Email: kathleen.tyldesley@manchester.ac.uk (supervisor)
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What if something goes wrong?
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RESEARCH PROJECT

A case study to explore models, facilitators, barriers and potential benefits of Nurture Groups in secondary schools with the Boxall Quality Mark Award

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (External Agency)

Dear xxxxx

You are being contacted to invite you to take part in a piece of research looking at the design and usefulness of Nurture Groups within secondary school. Before you decide if you would like to be involved it is important for you to know why the research is being done and what it involves.

Who will carry out the research?
Joanne Hilton (A Trainee Educational Psychologist from the University of Manchester).

Criminal Records Check
The researcher has undergone a satisfactory criminal records check and can therefore conduct research on school premises.

Why is the research being carried out?
Nurture Groups have been found to be effective in Primary Schools but limited research exists for Secondary Schools and this research aims to investigate what the Nurture Group provision looks like as well as exploring some of the potential benefits. The research is also being carried out as part of my training requirements as a Thesis which contributes to a Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester.

When and where will the research sessions take place?
The research sessions will commence within xxxx (or an alternative preferred location). The research will involve an observation of a Nurture Group session after a questionnaire has been completed. Semi-structured interviews will then be held and a focus group will be organised with six members of the Nurture Group.

Why has this school’s Nurture Group been chosen?
XXX’s Nurture Group has been chosen as it is a Nurture Group that is being run in a secondary school and has been accredited with the Quality Mark Award by the Nurture Group Network.

What would I be asked to do if I were to take part?
You would be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview that would take place in xxxxxx (or an alternative preferred location) and would last approximately 45 minutes.
How long will the research take?
The whole research project will take approximately 18 months. The observations of the Nurture Group will occur over one session only. The semi-structured interview will last for approximately 45 minutes.

What would happen to this data that is collected?
The semi-structured interview will be recorded on a Dictaphone and this will be transcribed on an encrypted computer. Afterwards the recording will be erased.

The data will be analysed and written up as part of the research project. Names of the participants and school will be changed to protect individual identities. As part of this data analysis, data will be shared with members of the researcher’s tutor group. This data will, however, only be shared after it has been anonymised. Anonymous quotes may be directly reported.

The data will remain with the University of Manchester’s research team for 5 years to allow the research to be published in the future. If the research is published it will be in a peer reviewed journal.

Exceptions to anonymity
If you reveal any child protection concerns the researcher would have a duty to report this following child protection guidelines. This will be discussed with you and it will be agreed who will be told.

What happens if I do not want to take part or change my mind about being involved?
You are in no way obliged to consent to being involved and if you decide you do not consent this will in no way affect your role, responsibilities or relationship with school staff, for example management staff. If you do agree to participate and later change your mind, you can withdraw at any time by contacting the researcher.

Contact details
If you have any questions about the research the researcher and supervisor can be contacted at:-
Email: joanne.hilton@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk (researcher)
Email: Kathleen.tyldesley@manchester.ac.uk (supervisor)

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Telephone: 01612753511 (Please leave a message with Jackie Chisnall- Programme Secretary)

What if something goes wrong?
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Email: Research-Governance@manchester.ac.uk
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RESEARCH PROJECT

A case study to explore models, facilitators, barriers and potential benefits of Nurture Groups in secondary schools with the Boxall Quality Mark Award

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (External agency and SMT)

If you are happy to participate, please complete the following form and return it to Joanne Hilton, Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion (ESI), School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, UK, M13 9PL.

I confirm that I have read the attached Information Sheet and understand the nature of the research or have had the opportunity to gain further information

I understand that the research will be written up and submitted to academic staff at the University of Manchester

I understand that I will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview

I understand that the semi-structured interview will be recorded on a Dictaphone and the conversation will be transcribed

I agree that any data collected may be published in academic books or journals and quotes that I make can be used anonymously

Signed ……………………………

Date ………………
RESEARCH PROJECT

A case study to explore models, facilitators, barriers and potential benefits of Nurture Groups in secondary schools with the Boxall Quality Mark Award

PARENT/CARER CONSENT FORM

If you are happy for your child to participate, please complete the following form and return it to xxxx at your child’s school. Alternatively, a completed copy can be sent to Joanne Hilton, Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology, Educational Support and Inclusion (ESI), School of Education, Ellen Wilkinson Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, UK, M13 9PL.

I confirm that I have read the attached Information Sheet and understand the nature of the research or have had the opportunity to gain further information

I understand that the research will be written up and submitted to academic staff at the University of Manchester

I understand that a Nurture Group session will be observed, photographs of the room will be taken (without my child being in the picture), school data will be collated and my child will be asked to be involved in a focus group

I understand that the focus group will be recorded on a Dictaphone and the conversation will be transcribed

I agree that any data collected may be published in academic books or journals and quotes that my child makes can be used anonymously

Signed ……………………………
Date ……………
Appendix E

Examples of time 1 and time 2 Boxall Profile for Young People histograms
Appendix F

Example of a full transcript highlighted for each RSQ

Post it note = green
Yellow RQ 1 (description)
Blue RQ 2 (barrier)
Green RQ 2 (facilitator)
Pink – RQ 3 (effects)
R = Researcher
I = Interviewee

Data were coded for RQ1 if they focused on the delivery of the NG. This included any comments about the setting, the members, processes of referrals, activities and principles.

Data were coded for RQ2 if they focussed on the facilitators or barriers to implementation. Barriers included any difficulties mentioned to setting up or running the NG and facilitators included any form of input or support that alleviated barriers.

Data were coded as RQ3 if they involved discussions about effects or outcomes of attending the NG. This included both positive and negative effects on the pupils, staff or the school to having a NG.

R: So if you could just start by providing a bit of an overview about the nurture group because I know that you have pupils from year seven and pupils from year eight as well is that correct?

I: Yes

R: So roughly how many groups have you got the moment?

I: We've got four groups, at the moment we've got two year seven groups which have just started because we left them for the first half term just to find their feet and settle in and allow us to try to identify the kind of states and then we start them in groups after we have done Boxall, observe them in classes after that first couple of weeks. So yes we've got two year seven groups, a year eight group which is a continuation group and a year eight group which is ready for resettlement so by the end of this half term at Christmas that will be their final session and they will be ready to go back into school.

R: Brilliant, so in terms of the year eight group are there any pupils who have been identified through year seven by school staff who might think the NG might be beneficial?

I: Yes there are, we can sort of add people in for each group, we could have up to 6 people but we usually start with around 4 to start with so that additions can be included. There are two girls who are currently under investigation, just in briefing this morning the form tutor mentioned that the girl was having friendship issues, she's very withdrawn, very quiet, she is very vulnerable so we decided that we need to Boxall her and see if she needs a bit of help from the NG so that is one of the tasks that I have done this morning, identifying subject teachers who can then do Boxall profiles for her and they have gone out this morning.

R: So the year seven group then, I noticed in the file, they are usually identified at primary school?

I: They can be, sometimes they are, I go to the year six teacher meetings when they come up to the high school so that they know what the service is and I give them Boxalls, they go back to school and fill those in. It gives a sort of guideline, an idea of the type of children that we are looking at but it doesn’t always work out that the children who they have sent Boxalls for would be candidates for here. For some children they are very much under the spotlight
in their primary setting so that has an advantage because the teachers and teaching assistants know them well, but sometimes they come to high school and enjoy the anonymity and feel that they can just cope and integrate into their groups, it varies really but we do get an idea from the primaries and then go from there.

R: So in terms of the pupils, you just mentioned candidates, what sort of pupils, in terms of their presenting difficulties would you usually say, “yes, they would benefit from the NG” so you mentioned before about the pupil who was withdrawn and was not sharing her problems.

I: We have produced a little document that is available on the website that we send out to the staff members and it can be a variety of things, and may manifest itself in aggressive behaviours, abusive sort of behaviour. Candidates that we do find more difficult to spot are the ones that become more withdrawn and quiet and a bit insular so it varies from that kind of hot tempered, antisocial type of behaviour to withdrawn, antisocial behaviour.

R: And within your groups would you say that you have a mixture of pupils at the moment?

I: Yes how we group them is by looking at their Boxall’s and looking at which strand of development they need to be working on so we make our group from that so that we haven't got a group of children with only the same areas of development because they need to learn from one another and they often have areas of development in common but we try to mix up as much as we can but also I would look at the sort of interactions that they have in school well depending on the types of children that they are because we have had two boys who in school were told to stay from each other because you're not getting on we purposely put them together here so that in a controlled environment they could develop their relationship.

R: And how did that work out?

I: Initially it was difficult, we did say to them we’re not saying you need to be friends but we are saying that you need to try to understand each other and develop that tolerance but it has developed into a friendship.

R: Yes I like the idea of developing tolerance, because you do need that don’t you to get on to function successfully socially?

I: You do because to just avoid somebody, in certain situations you can do that, but in other situations you have to learn to get on with people who you don’t really like.

R: Brilliant I feel that you’ve given me a good overview so now I understand how the nurture group runs and how pupils are identified and put together in groups. Now I know that you were not around when the nurture group was initially developed but I guess it's still relevant in terms of the aims of the nurture group now, so what would you say are your main aims of the nurture group?

I: I think initially, well one thing that I think about is one thing that people say to me when I tell them that I run the nurture group in XXX high, people say do they need a nurture group like that in XXX high? And I would say the children that need nurture..... they stand out in our school more so than perhaps another school that doesn’t have a nurture group because a lot of the children that are here are from very privileged backgrounds, they are very well looked after and so the children who find themselves not in that position do notice that quickly so I think as an aim for the group the idea was to help to allow the children to feel valued, to give them skills in order to interact effectively and to provide them with a safe, secure place because some of the children don't really have that at home. That was telling actually in a group that we had earlier on this week when we were saying about, we asked the question how that you feel when you feel secure? And several people said that they feel secure at home but one person said that they only feel secure at school so it is providing that setting with reliable adults, a safe place, somewhere that they can come and know somebody will help them and not judge them and have a very open and trusting relationship.
R: And I guess those pupils then who need that, without the nurture group what you think would have happened if the nurture group wouldn’t have been available for them?

I: I think that that can depend on the individual. Last year we had one boy who, within days of starting at high school they were already looking at a reduced timetable, putting in an application for the PRU his behaviour was violent and he really struggled to settle in. I think if he wouldn't have been able to come here he would no longer be at our school I think it is as simple as that but then you also have other children who I think they would just flounder and then I think it tends to manifest itself in bad behaviours, we're looking at NEET and exclusions and that sort of thing and I think that some of those more vulnerable children as well there is possible exploitation, and thinking of one girl in particular who all the girls within her family have gone down as sexually inappropriate route at a very young age and for her I'm hoping that we've given her enough self-respect and also enough support to know that, should that kind of option be available, she has got the courage and the self-confidence to be able to turn it down.

R: In terms of the running of the nurture group then, what do you think has helped the nurture group to run in XXX high?

I: Really it has been down to senior leadership, [the Head and Deputy] and they are totally 100% supportive of the work that we do, they are very generous with the budget that they have given us so we have not had to worry too much about that, it doesn't curtail the activities that we do too much and they just get it, they understand it and they understand why it is important for our school so that is really superb because I know that whatever decision I make they will back me and help me so yeah SLT is just fab.

R: And I noticed in the file some of the observations that staff in the school did, mainstream teachers, would you feel that you've got the support from them as well?

I: I think so obviously there is a turnover of staff within school and I think one of the things that we found difficult, because we are an outstanding school, the staff body are very passionate about their subject area and I think that they really want to ensure that all the kids are in their lessons and getting what they need from that subject so I do sometimes have a bit of some objections, why has this child been out of my lesson so many times but I keep really strict records about how often pupils miss lessons and I always respond with why these need to come to nurture what is happening and I think they have an overall nurturing ethos but I think perhaps some people just need reminding from time to time because for some children they are not in their lessons because they just can't cope so we are getting them to a point where they can cope and yes they are missing some lessons on the way but, obviously if they've got assessments or tests then they will attend their lessons rather than coming here but it's finding that balance and being assertive about the value of the nurture group.

R: And what would you say helps you to have that assertiveness?

I: I really try hard to be happy cheerful and polite and friendly with people and try to keep people in my good books but then if I have to re-address an issue I will do that but in as nice a way as I can possibly do because I have to stand my corner. It isn't very often and it certainly isn't all the time it is more just a reminder and I can understand, because I think it's important that the pupil comes here just as much as they think it's important. Conversely there are some people who think 'thank goodness that child isn't in my lesson'.

R: And I guess like you say you are very passionate about the nurture group and like you've just said you feel like they need to be here, but it sounds like you're understanding where they are coming from too. What would you say then are the main benefits that you've noticed across the school as a whole to having the nurture group?

I: I think from what people tell me and what I have experienced, generally that feeling of confidence and feeling that they do fit in, they are confident to make friends, they are confident to put their hand up in lessons they know who they are a bit more as a person and
I think the fact that they feel supported and they have got that backup and the young man I was told you about before, he said to me, “I know that you have supported me when I didn’t deserve you” which perhaps makes him appreciative and grateful for the work that people have done so that sometimes makes him think ‘ahh I won’t do that’ because I don’t want to disappoint whoever so I think it’s that feeling of confidence and we’ve got time to talk through feelings, to put strategies into place; we can take every day at a really slow, steady pace and keep going over things with children because sometimes you do have to go over the same things a few times but it just gives them the chance to learn. I mean I think initially when they first come and transition can be quite hard for some children, just the use of a planner can be really difficult because they haven’t done it before, they don’t understand personal organisation, that is something that we do with the year sevens a lot.

R: Would you say that there are any benefits in terms of pupils who haven’t been in the nurture group as a whole is?

I: Yes definitely because I think that that behaviour in lesson has improved again thinking about a young man he was very difficult, because he had struggled with transition and was quite aggressive and unpleasant to children and following the nurture intervention somebody who had been in school said he is back to how he was when he was in juniors so I think it was just that he needed that reassurance and a bit of TLC but I think it does go into the wider community and I think that it helps other children to realise that you don’t just have problems with your literacy, your numeracy or your history or whatever and there are other issues that children struggle with so I do think it develops that understanding. There are perhaps groups of children who don’t understand the intervention that we have and again that will be an ongoing issue and something that will always need to be addressed because some pupils are kind and some pupils aren’t but I also think that teachers who look at children and say, “I don’t know what to do with them” will come and say, “What shall I do about this child?” again, just this morning, I had a discussion with the form tutor and said we have noticed in nurture that this, this and this seems to work and she said, “Brilliant I’ll pass that on and make sure all staff know what works for him” and that is a good way to support the staff.

R: Brilliant and I guess not just for the pupils in nurture but strategies like that may work with other pupils as well who aren’t in nurture. So we’ve probably covered this anyway but the next question looks at individual benefits of the nurture group so you have mentioned about feelings of confidence, feeling supported and for some individual pupils it was actually about staying in the school. Can you think of any other benefits?

I: I think the nurture group allows us to create a little unit so when they are in their group they stay in their group for a reasonable amount of time so it builds relationships that they perhaps would not have had. We often say it is like being a good family you need to look out for each other and help each other so there is that layer of support.

R: And then in terms of what you value most about the nurture group?

I: I think timetabling really is our biggest issue because we are lucky that our situation stays fairly stable within the environment, I can’t think of anything else that is too much of an issue.

R: And in terms of the timetabling issue I know that you mentioned before about being assertive with staff and telling them about the nurture group. How else do you manage to overcome a timetabling issue?
I: We just tried to, I record all of the lessons that they miss which again that is something that I learned to do because I was having to flick back through timetables to see when people were missing what, so yes doing that and recording that has been really helpful and having it on the staff area of the school website so staff can check up, because it should be on the register that they are here at nurture, but if they are not too sure they can check the timetable to see where people would be and we reassess the groups every term just to make sure that people are in the right place and that relationships are working well and we always move the group timing so that they are not always missing the same lesson. I guess it wouldn’t be fair or legal or beneficial if they were missing the same lesson all of the time so we vary when they come and obviously when children get into year seven and year eight they are settled for certain subjects, so are now in different bands so they have very different timetables and just because children are in one form, doesn’t mean that they have the same lessons.

R: So the last questions were about setting up the nurture group but I guess that’s quite difficult to answer and then continuing to run. It seems that there’s only been that timetabling issue because you have got that support from senior management haven’t you? so maybe some aspects that have been an issue for some schools won’t be for you.

I: The only other issue that really happened this week, where one parent has refused to let their child attend, she sent me a really aggressive email, she was a very angry lady so I rang her and decided to write down some appropriate responses to her issues and I rang her up and she ranted aptly for about 15 minutes and there was one piece of feedback that I felt was useful and that was about the form tutor was not aware that he had been attending which I sent out an email with the groups and the timetables as attachments but I perhaps needed to list the children on the front of that so that was something I said that I would take on board but she was insistent that her son did not need to come to the group and that, despite the pupil behaviour log saying otherwise, his behaviour was impeccable and that he couldn’t learn anything from the other children that were in the group. So we have sort of left it that he will not attend the group and I will ring her in the new year and see how he is getting on. So that was a bit of a shame really and she was invited to come here today for the coffee morning but she also declined to do that so that was a bit of an issue but I think possibly that will come up from time to time.

R: Overall would you say that parents are usually willing to allow their child to attend?

I: Yes definitely and with one boy’s mum and grandma, probably about this time last year, because she was concerned about whether he needed to come or what the intervention was about but they came, had a look round we sat and talked about all the types of things that we do and how they would benefit him and they were absolutely fine and perhaps they had some misconceptions before about what it was for but no she was absolutely fine and really supportive.

R: So to overcome some of those misconceptions you’ve obviously got a range of strategies so you have the coffee mornings where you give out information?

I: And we also, we have parent’s evening we will encourage students’ parents to make an appointment which is also a chance to feedback to parents, we also attend the open evening for prospective parents of children who are going to come to the school that they can come and talk to us and find out more about it and we hand out leaflets so, again, to help to communicate, it is on the website as well so people can see it there but I think face-to-face communication and getting people to come here and see what it is like is really the best way.

R: And you mentioned that you’ve got a group ready for resettlement. How is it usually decided when a group is ready to resettle back into mainstream?

I: I think you just know when they are ready, they are just doing everything right, they just seem to turn a bit of a corner and you know they follow all of the routines, they are comfortable with everything and is just at that point when everything flows and it’s really comfortable and you think they are ready to go back. So at that point then we would be
looking at the Boxall and that child again and ensuring that they can transfer the skills from nurture group into the school environment because I think it is very well doing it here when it is relaxed and comfortable and it is very secure but then transferring the skills into school when it’s a bit more rough-and-tumble, it is a different environment altogether. We Boxall them and if the Boxall comes back that yes this is all fine, then we have a resettlement project that will take about half a term to complete and it is very much reflective activities so what have we learned? Where have we come from? What are your current areas of development? tips for coping in school, then the children that they've worked with in their group make comments about them and say what their qualities are and that is written down so it is something that they can take hold and put away in a drawer and on a bit of a down day they get it back out and think "ah, yes". We put photos of all the different activities that they do and then these are what people have said about them, well-organised, takes care of the people, excellent team member, good friend, so they can look back on that and look again about what people think of me. We do quite a lot of bread making so we have a recipe in there and this one, these add the qualities and the things that he has developed in himself. So all the things that he has got better at and these are the things that they just need to work on. A recipe for Smarties cookies, tips for coping in school how you can get by, all the things you can do to make people want to be friends with you and be a good class member and then an open-door policy so we give them an appointment card to say you can come back whenever you want to if you’re having a bit of a down day, come back and see us.

R: And that open-door policy, and other services within the school, will they often be referred to those services?

I: Possibly, it depends on the individual. So some people, they find they are ready to cope. For those who have underlying things in their home life that haven’t gone away they might benefit from always having somebody to talk to and the support structures work together really and there is a crossover because for Rachel she knows that she can come here because I know a lot of her situation, she can talk to me about that but then she can also go to the counselling service and they also understand. So she has got various different ports of call.

R: And you know usually when Rachel was attending nurture was she also accessing counselling as well?

I: Yes definitely that was alongside and most of them get to a point where they will really share private information because we work a lot on confidentiality and being that tight unit and not spreading any information that you hear. That hasn’t really been a problem apart from one boy, he didn’t understand and that did cause a bit of a problem but other than that it has not been an issue and they are able to support each other but if you need that one-to-one then that is there as well. And for someone like Stacey she will just call in and say, “I need to talk to you about something” and that is okay as well.
Appendix G

Example of extracts and initial codes for collated transcripts for RQ3 (Case Study 1)

Highlighted Code:

Blue: Focus group
Pink: SMT
Green: NG Facilitator
Yellow: Key Worker

Positive effects

1. Improved concentration

Get less distracted

I don’t mess about, I don’t get distracted

Me: and the group has taught you how to do that?

yes

Can concentrate when in NG

Me: and you think that you can get your head down when you are in the elements group?

Nat: yes

2. Improved behaviour

Improved behaviour

Have you learnt anything? Child: how to improve your behaviour

Child: make my behaviour better

Child: I haven’t been getting loads of referrals

NG pupils no longer trigger behaviours in other pupils

but there are a group of students who would have been triggering some of those behaviours much further up the school so when you look at those students that trigger those behaviours now, they are not our nurture group students they’re either students who have got extreme problem or there’s a whole family background thing so the nurture group kids have them and not lost them in a whole raft of ways if that makes sense.

Student behaviour is corrected

to mould or correct students behaviours.
3. **Improved social skills**

**Developed social skills**

They may have developed better social skills and more confidence and self-esteem, positive interaction skills have been taught.

When I was down there this morning one of the little lads says, “good morning Sir” and he is a nurture group student and I know that he will interact like that around the school but that is because he has been taught to interact like that in the nurture group.

**Work together better in a group**

How they work together as a group now.

4. **Development of relationships**

**NG provides trusting relationships to be formed with staff**

You’re working in small groups children get to know you and get a chance to speak to you and trust you.

**Creates opportunities to talk to an adult about family problems**

Child: not really because if they’ve got really bad problems like with your family and stuff you can come and talk to Miss but if they are not really big problems then you can just get on with it yourself.

**Development of friendships**

Child: well I had friends in the nurture group.

5. **Able to stay calm**

**Pupils appear calmer after losing their temper upon visiting the NG**

When a student has lost their temper or not access something and they go down to nurture you can physically see them calm and collected themselves when they’re taken to the area and back into that room and is a chance to just re-gather your thoughts and then they can move back out.

**Learnt to walk away when annoyed**

Child: distract myself, just take myself away from whatever situation I am in, So like at home if my sister annoys me, I’ve finally got my own room so if I wanted to get privacy I can just walk away but otherwise if I walked away my brother could walk in at any time when I wanted to be alone.

6. **Managing anxiety**

**Taught a child to not think about anxieties at unnecessary times**

Child: it taught me not to think about it at unnecessary times.

**NG helped pupils to manage their anxieties**

Being able to stop the anxiety.
7. Skills are generalised into mainstream

**NG pupils can use skills learnt back in mainstream**

I think that even when the nurture groups go to mainstream lessons they’ll sometimes say to their peers don’t do that can offer support to other students which I think they do really

**Positive behaviour is generalised into mainstream lessons**

they learn skills here that they know are appropriate behaviour so they go out to mainstream if they’re with kids and they’re messing about they’re less likely to get involved if they do get involved they know ways of stopping themselves from getting involved

**Ng qualities are generalised by students out of the NG**

the really interesting bit always is for me when they step out of the nurture group they carry on take those nurture qualities out of the group with them

8. **Academic gains**

**Able to be academically successful**

Now you still get, it’s a school, it’s an 11 to 18 school and hormones got as much to do that in some cases but we still get those incidents but with that particular group of students nowhere near as much and what you see is, what we get is as they get up a school they are integrated into school life at points where it is really really important so they can be academically successful

**Improved academic ability**

academic ability

**NG pupils are successful**

they are successful so ultimately it doesn’t matter about me and maz

**Children may be performing better in class**

and I would have thought that that helps the primary school teachers to feel better about sending the children here. So I think that it will help that relationship with the primary school.

9. **Helps pupils needs to be recognised**

**The NG helps a school to recognise emotional and psychological needs in pupils**

But to me if a school is recognising emotional and psychological needs it says something about, it must recognise them mustn’t it? I think it helps a school to do that but I don’t think that it is essential
Appendix H

Photographic evidence of thematic analysis process
### Appendix I

**Examples of instances when the six principles of nurture were observed in Case 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the 6 key principles of nurture observation focussed on</th>
<th>Area on observation schedule</th>
<th>Example during observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Learning is understood developmentally</td>
<td>Positive affirmation about task</td>
<td>“Wow! You did great then”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Wow, wow, wow that was amazing then”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“you’ve done lovely work”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support with tasks*</td>
<td>NG Facilitator counts down/uses visual timetable to allow pupils to know how long they have on the task.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher uses white board to demonstrate examples of answers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“I’m going to give you one minute to do this and you can talk to the person next to you”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Check that it makes sense when you read it back”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Safe base (know how adults will behave; development of trust)</td>
<td>Positive physical contact/interaction*</td>
<td>NG Facilitator touched a pupil’s back when they showed her a cut on their finger.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Have a good lunch chaps!”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NG staff interacting with pupils naturally and positively (e.g., when a pupils said, “Thanks Miss”, the teacher answered with “you’re welcome”).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“It’s OK, I just said that Katie could put her head down on the desk as she is feeling a bit sick”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“It’s ok Sweetheart”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adult modelling behaviour</td>
<td>“Miss would you mind sitting with Katie?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation of setting/activities*</td>
<td>Home-like environment (e.g., soft furnishings, chocolate bars given as rewards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Development of self-esteem</td>
<td>Positive affirmation about individual</td>
<td>“You’ve given some great answers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Wow, Jack, how thoughtful?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Thank you for sharing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive affirmation about task</td>
<td>“I’d like to compliment you all for showing Joanne how well you can all work”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4 – Language encouraged as discussion promoted | Adult prompting/supporting to think about behaviour | “I was given points out there, fantastic”
“What you’ve done all four? Fantastic, bring them here”
“You’ve done lovely work”
“Wow, lovely writing”
“Wow, wow, wow, this is amazing” |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                                                | Adult prompting/supporting to think about another person’s point of view | “How are people feeling today then?”
“I think that what you are doing might be winding him up a bit”
“Who else feels sad? Would you feel sad in her position?” |
|                                                | Adult prompting to think about past/present and future | Discussions about the weekend.
“Wow, will you take photographs on your holiday and bring them in?”
“Think about all of the positives from yesterday” |
| 5 – Importance of using behaviour to identify a difficulty or teach/develop different behaviours | Adult prompting/supporting to think about another person’s point of view | Completion of Circle Time during which others’ feelings were discussed. |
|                                                | Adult modelling behaviour | “Miss, would you mind sitting with Katie?” |
|                                                | Adult prompting/supporting to think about behaviour | “Let’s see who is working, who can I give points to?”
“I’m wondering if you need to move because you look as though you are winding people up”
“Just try to concentrate and focus” |
| 6 – The importance of transition in children’s lives | Adult prompting to think about past/present and future | Discussions about the weekend.
“We’re going to do a relaxations activity next”
“I’ll give you three minutes to do this” |
Examples of instances when the six principles of nurture were observed in Case 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which of the 6 key principles of nurture observation focussed on</th>
<th>Area on observation schedule</th>
<th>Example during observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Learning is understood developmentally</td>
<td>Positive affirmation about task</td>
<td>“No that’s good!” (when a child answered how they were feeling).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support with tasks*</td>
<td>Prompts to complete task successfully (e.g., “have you issued everyone with a job?”)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Observations also noted visual prompts in the room e.g., a tidy up visual timetable.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questions asked to support successful completion of the task (e.g., “what do we do with the tiger during Circle Time?”, “I wonder what comes next?”).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“We need to work as part of a team.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – Safe base (know how adults will behave; development of trust)</td>
<td>Positive physical contact/interaction*</td>
<td>NG Facilitator helped a child to pull a jumper over his head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“That sounds like fun!”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NG staff interacting with pupils naturally and positively (e.g., a child entered and said, “Hi Honey, I’m home!” to which the NG Facilitator answered with, “Does it feel like home?”)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adult modelling behaviour</td>
<td>“thanks Mary” (when NG Facilitator passed on some documents)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation of setting/activities*</td>
<td>Home-like environment (e.g., soft furnishings, slippers, breakfast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – Development of self-esteem</td>
<td>Positive affirmation about individual</td>
<td>“you should be proud of yourself” (when a child had cut up a loaf of bread).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Yes, I’d agree with you, that’s fair enough”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive affirmation about task</td>
<td>“That was a really good game, it was really nice”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“That’s excellent cutting”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 – Language encouraged as discussion promoted</td>
<td>Adult prompting/supporting to think about behaviour</td>
<td>“you’re getting a bit distracted, just try to focus on what we are doing”.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What makes a good leader?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 – Importance of using behaviour to identify a difficulty or teach/develop different behaviours</td>
<td>6 – The importance of transition in children’s lives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult prompting/supporting to think about another person’s point of view</td>
<td>Adult prompting to think about past/present and future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of Circle Time during which others’ feelings were discussed.</td>
<td>Discussions about the weekend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult prompting to think about past/present and future</td>
<td>Use of visual timetables to complete tasks and structure the time in the NG (e.g., Tidy up routine).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussions about the weekend during breakfast. “Ok, let’s start with talking about how we are feeling”.</td>
<td>“What would be next I wonder?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult modelling behaviour</td>
<td>“Mary, we’ll let you start” “Thank you”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We’re doing Circle Time now so we all have to be listening”</td>
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Appendix J

Examples of quotes to support basic themes for Case Study 1

Research Question 1: Thematic network 1.1: A structured home within school to meet your needs

This network had four organising themes and 10 basic themes.

Organising theme: Well prepared

Basic theme: The NG is part time and temporary

This theme explained that the NG was a temporary and part time provision:

They attended, we tried to get them to come in everyday but it doesn’t always work like that, so we tried to get them in everyday at least for an hour, so they tend to have five hours a week with us [NG Facilitator].

because they have to come out of nurture at some point they can’t stay there all of the time [Key Worker].

I was only in [the NG] for a few months [Pupil].

Basic theme: The NG is organised and structured

we do like we’re tight with our planning [NG Facilitator].

I think paperwork wise aswell everything is quite tight, we’ve got things quite regimented, almost a bit anal sometimes but at least it keeps us, it makes sure we are doing everything that we can and is clear then and it is clear for the staff that come in [NG Facilitator].

if they weren’t referred in y7 and they were only referred in y8 then it would just be an internal referral from a member of staff and it would get completed by pastoral manager [NG Facilitator].

when I came four years ago I had my training and that’s when it became more like it is now more structured, we implemented a lot more of the paperwork and it became more formal and things [NG Facilitator].

we found out that we will be leaving nurture, I will be leaving at around Easter [Pupil].

Organising theme: A nurturing and supportive base

Basic theme: A home-like environment

I haven’t really been in, well I pop in to say hi and it is quite chilled place compared to the [other parts of school] [Pupil].
I'll visit every day [when I leave] just to nip in and to tell her how my day is going [Pupil].

so that when it doesn't go right the nurture group is a comfort blanket for them [Head Teacher].

so the nurture group is a safe place for those students [Head Teacher].

We are a bit more formal because we have the table cloth and we all sit around the table and they haven't got to leave the table at much time until twenty to one for example because we want everyone to wait until everyone has finished before they leave the table. Where as in chill zone it's a bit more like sit and eat your dinner and then get on and do what you want to do so it's a bit more informal in there [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: NG is supportive

but Miss gets it because she has got a niece and nephew around that shouldn't stop talking about them and she understands but if you don't want to talk about it you can email her and keep it private you can write a little statement [Pupil].

and if you don't want to talk about it and she asks you what is wrong I think if you don't want to talk about it you can just say to her I don't talk about it [Pupil].

we are gradually getting there so I have seen conversations with staff and heads of department in the nurture group about how to support students [Head Teacher].

Organising theme: Embedded into the wider system of support

Basic theme: Support for NG staff

Conversations happen with [NG Facilitator], and [the director of inclusion] and [my Vice Principal] and she is in charge of student support, they take a strand of stuff and conversations go through them and they pick up line management [Head Teacher].

Funny you should say that because I was thinking about that and we had some visitors in from Whitesands who I met on a course about NGs ……so they came to visit me yesterday [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: fits into wider school

we also have the sports rings in school for all the social emotional stuff anyway that is run through all subjects really well cos we're already doing all that stuff in our planning anyway [NG Facilitator].

I pop into mainstream lessons and its random I'll just turn up at mainstream lessons just for them to realise that I am there whether I'm here or out there with them [NG Facilitator].

We get VIVOs (the school reward system) in there you can buy stuff with them, like you can buy things off websites [pupil].
Basic theme: embedded within wider school support systems

we might, sometimes what we might do is, we’ve got a TA level 3 who does a lot of social communication and language small group work so sometimes I might re-integrate them out via Lisa, just because it's a different approach, it's smaller groups, it might be one-to-one or an adult to two or three children, it's less intense it’s only maybe half an hour or twenty minutes, maximum of an hour a week so sometimes I’ll maybe say look Lisa I’ve got someone who’s ready to go out but they just need something but maybe not me, you know it’s a change of person as well and then she’ll so some bits with them [NG Facilitator].

Well it’s not in the same room as it was originally, she’s moved rooms couple of years ago it was in a different room, and mean the other room was all right I don’t think the very different revisit a of both the same size but it is now located nearer to services similar [Key Worker].

Yes the NG forms a strand of need for a group of students and so what we are trying to do with our Pastoral Provision is take it to its next level to build up specialist strands of provision, ASD, emotional or behavioural mental health and it’s the same principle as the nurture group [Head Teacher].

Organising theme: A child-centred approach to meet a range of needs

Basic theme: Child-centred

it’s been a metamorphosis into its current state which is sort of mix and match of both really based on student needs [Head Teacher].

Well [the number of session is] dependent on the reason why you are in [Pupil].

we’ve got a young boy at the min who didn’t start with us until Jan this year so cos he didn’t start until Jan he’s only done two terms so he will roll over to year 8 and do another two terms if he needs it [NG Facilitator].

if Joe Blogs comes in and is irate or anxious or upset I have the freedom that I can sit and bash it out with those kids, you know share experiences [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: Range of social, emotional and behavioural needs

you can speak to the children and they know that they can get a drink when they want at home or they can get up and wander around, they can play on the computer when they want, go to bed when they want, so when they come to school and somebody’s saying sit in that chair and listen to me they’re like why? And they can’t cope with it [NG Facilitator].

They might have been at risk of bullying as well because they were quite vulnerable [NG Facilitator].

they were quiet with the social skills being so lost [NG Facilitator].

Macey: they decide when you are coming in and I didn’t like know anyone so they put me in for confidence [Pupil].

but then you’ve got the others who don’t understand and shout out and it comes out in negative behaviours [NG Facilitator].

xx has got quite big problems with people, he gets annoyed [Pupil D].
and I was actually afraid of stuff dying in my family so every morning I was thinking that I would see my cat dead and it passed away on February 12th; it’s been a few months now [Pupil].

**Basic theme: Variety of activities**

and there was this other one where we went to the beach for the day [Pupil].

it was good because at the start we did relaxation and people think oh relaxation but you get proper into it and then it just starts and you [Pupil].

every single lesson we got asked what did we do at the weekend [Pupil].

and I know that there is a formality about it, it is not without rules, you know they are still being taught how to manage boundaries and rules which is important things up quite a lot of people could be doing in in there [Key Worker].

they hold a little thing at the end of the year like they give out prizes and a certificate and you have a picnic with other students [Pupil].

**Research Question 2: Barriers: Thematic map 1.2: ‘Filling gaps in knowledge to change perceptions with the necessary resources’**

For this global theme three organising themes were used and ten basic themes.

**Organising Theme: Gathering essential resources was difficult**

**Basic Theme: Funding**

*We’ve not had lots of money given to us in fact.......funding’s been tight [NG Facilitator].*

funding is a difficult one, trying to get the funding to put things in place and improve [NG Facilitator].

so we can start funding things that are more expensive so like a camera that we have never been able to buy [NG Facilitator].

**Basic Theme: Time is an issue**

*And even yesterday I had two free periods yesterday that I lost because I had a girl in who I was basically training up on a NG [NG Facilitator].*

yes if I was missing learn to learn it was alright but missing RE because I had a good teacher I didn’t want to leave them [pupil].

**Basic Theme: Set up difficult**

*Because it takes a while, it took me a good 18 months for things to start evolving and go why have I never done this. I didn’t put my referral forms in place for a while and then I*
look back and think why did I never have a referral form but then nobody ever suggested that [NG Facilitator].

Erm from a head’s point of view looking at secondary I would say our current room and for a while we weren’t really working with somewhere that allowed it to be what it needed to be [Head Teacher].

the other thing which was the major thing was getting the right member of staff to lead it and ..........so the two things were the physical space and the right member of staff [Head Teacher].

trying to develop the room [was hard] because the room is tiny and it is a funny shape [NG Facilitator].

Organising Theme: Perceptions of NG can be difficult to break down

Basic Theme: Perceptions of NGs

it scared me at the start because I thought I got sent to Miss XXX that’s my head of College and if we get more than two referrals each week we get a detention and then you can get put in isolation [Pupil].

the edges were getting blurred with other things they were getting blurred with inclusion and whilst it’s in the inclusion area, its separate to choose the inclusion, it’s is a self-contained bit [Head Teacher].

The only other difficulties I would say are staff thinking that it is just for those who aren’t academic [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Reluctance of staff to engage

I don’t get a sense that teachers engage with it, and mean teachers pop in and have a chat about what they are doing and how they are and teachers are so busy that maybe it’s easy for them to know it’s there but not to interact with it [Key Worker].

but it is that lack of interest because they have not got that sort of passion that we have got [NG Facilitator].

But there are staff out there, and don’t get me wrong it is minimal, but they don’t agree with it and they are never going to agree with it. And some won’t change [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Gaps in communication

And I can’t possibly go out to all of the teachers that are in school [NG Facilitator].

They don’t access the resources as much as we would like them to but they are there [NG Facilitator].

I don’t know how many staff managed to do that I think Mary has tried to reach out that often people are so busy you can try as much as you want but it often doesn’t happen does it [Key Worker].
Basic Theme: Stigma

yeah and this one lad, he actually left [the NG] because he didn't want to come to
the lessons because he was getting teased [pupil].

Organising Theme: Knowledge of who the NG is for and what it involves

Basic Theme: Gaps in understanding

there wasn’t an understanding about what the rationale was for having a nurture
group and what it was trying to achieve [Head Teacher].

yeah [I was nervous about going] because I didn’t know what to expect [pupil].

Some don’t even know what nurture is which upsets me a bit, I had a member of
staff last week who said what is nurture? Well why have you never come and
asked? Because you will have taught kids in this room [NG Facilitator].

so there were a lot of times when teaching staff saw it as a naughty room, an SEN
[Head Teacher].

I think that [the NGN trainers] focus too heavily on the Boxall profiles, the
neuroscience and attachment theory and they don’t quite tell you what a nurture
group is about in my opinion [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: NG members

I’m not saying this was but if I was to look back and look at it before I came I think
probably having a clear idea of the children that you’re bringing – you know talking
to the other staff in other nurture groups that seems to be a bit of an issue so I think
in the early days, trying to educate staff about the sort of children [NG Facilitator].

so I think the initial issues are children to select [NG Facilitator].

grouping, I think the grouping is really difficult.[NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: It may be difficult to measure impact

and you know when you subject it to modern day evaluation procedures it might be
quite difficult so I don’t know how they are measuring get but I’m guessing that there
must be some sort of evaluation and I guess that could be quite qualitative really
rather than quantitative [Key Worker].

RSQ2 – Facilitators – Figure 1.3.: The NG and expertise are valued in a supportive
environment

Three organising themes and eight basic themes were developed and grouped together to
create this global theme.

Organising theme: An accepting and valuing environment

Basic theme: School ethos

Well yeah it helps you but I think a lot of it is to do with the ethos of the school, I
thought we were and always have been a very inclusive school in terms of our
outlook you know, our ethos is ‘the best in everyone’ and I’ve worked in five schools
and I have to say and this is the one that I can genuinely say that I think that this lives itself or was living in itself in practice anyway [Head Teacher].

So you’ve got S which is schools to think about, P which is your personal qualities, O which is your opportunity to develop, R is relationships to develop, T is team working and they all have bits under them. So in school these are competencies that we all have to follow. So everybody’s planning, regardless of what subject you’re in, has to incorporate the SPORTS rings. Yeah [they are throughout the school] and that’s heavily linked I think to SEAL and that. So that was in place before we did a nurture group so having that really helps and links in quite well [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: Pupils views of attendance

I had, because I just want to get it over with what I was going through and I thought that it was the thing to help me and it did [Pupil].

and I was missing some of my not so good lessons [to come here] [pupil from focus group].

Basic theme: Changing perceptions of nurture

there were a lot of times when teaching staff saw it as a naughty room, an SEN room that’s broken down and is breaking down but the reason why it is breaking down is the outreach of the nurture group teacher [Head Teacher].

well they introduce you to the room at breaks and stuff so like they say you are going to come on this break and they show you five minutes before the break when nobody is in and show you this and the chill out zone [Pupil].

Basic theme: Resources available

We are also arranging a conference that we are hopefully going to try to run in school and hopefully local schools will come who have NGs and we are hoping that will be a money earner for us because we can charge them and that will be some money back into us for our nurture pot [NG Facilitator].

Yeah and the room is important, that’s important you know since I’ve been doing a counselling have been quite envious of the room [Key Worker].

So I think really when [the QMA assessor] came in she saw that we were well resourced [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: NG facilitator is valued

I think she kind of valued what I was saying she appreciated that id been on the training [NG Facilitator].

we elevated Mary to subject leader status so she was on a par with all the middle leaders team [Head Teacher].

Organising theme: A supportive and interactive environment

Basic Theme: Communication with staff

Yes and know that Mary has tried to reach out to teaching staff, you know she will send emails to staff and invite them down and arrange open evenings [Key Worker].
When on the central computer system we have something called share point on the intranet and on there all the vital paperwork documents so they are all on their for the staff to access, we keep them in the loop, we put things in the bulletin so staff are informed [NG Facilitator].

sometimes it's very easy for teaching staff to relinquish any accountability for them and so because they do some support work in nurture they basing well because they're there they're not my problem, and that's taken a while to break down and I think it only by pushing we got to the point we're actually they have got to have conversations because you are still accountable for them [Head Teacher].

I spoke to the director of inclusion and we bashed around some ideas [about how the NG could be changed] [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Relationships

My year 8 group, by year 8 they tend to know each other quite well anyway so you don’t tend to have any problems [NG Facilitator].

I were alright for the first lesson because I knew that some of my friends were there and I was missing some of my not so good lessons [Pupil].

[Staff] will email if they have questions. And there are some staff who you have a better rapport with who are more likely to ask you those questions. [NG Facilitator].

When on the central computer system we have something called share point on the intranet and on there all the vital paperwork documents so they are all on their for the staff to access, we keep them in the loop, we put things in the bulletin so staff are informed. They don’t access the resources as much as we would like them to but they are there and they know they can pop in here whenever they want [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Support for NG staff and pupils

Yes I would say so because [the director of Inclusion] is still on board, management are on board [NG Facilitator].

Most staff are on board with it [NG Facilitator].

I got to see it on the open evening when I first came [Pupil].

Miss used to come to pick us up [Pupil].

Organising theme: Expertise and qualities allow it’s facilitation

Basic theme: Knowledge base

the next steps to that than were to look at what was out there currently that was tackling those kind of issues so obviously we went and did a bit of a look at nurture groups that were established somewhere and did the usual online research but from my perspective it went a little bit wider really which was to look at how other agencies were working with students and we want to capture what we wanted to capture from how they were working so we just did a bit of a best practice trawl and many shaped itself into our first incantation of how we thought it would be [Head Teacher].

by speaking to other people and by reading up and getting information from the nurture group network – I just sensed that it wasn’t right [NG Facilitator].
Well the principles like I said fairly straightforward ones we kind of knew what we wanted to do we knew why we wanted to do it so we were on the short footing because you had a rationale for wanting to do it essentially [Head Teacher].

Basic Theme: NG Facilitator skills

I think that Mary has been really proactive about how she has gone about [having conversations with staff] so I think that has been one of the major players [Head Teacher].

and you know Mary also has two very good teaching assistants, well she did have two she now has one that works with who is equally as strong and equally as outward facing in speaking to people rather than waiting for people to come to them [Head Teacher].

I mean you have met Mary and we are really fortunate we recruited her [Head Teacher].

we consciously went out for a primary school trained member of staff because we had seen everything that was coming through and best practice was in primary school [Head Teacher].

she is really polite and pleasant always [Pupil].

RESEARCH QUESTION 3 – Positive Effects - Thematic Network 3.1: ‘An inclusive and positive school experience’

Organising theme Benefits for the wider school

Basic Theme: Helps emotional needs to be identified

But to me if a school is recognising emotional and psychological needs it says something about, it must recognise them mustn’t it? I think it helps a school to do that but I don’t think that it is essential [Key Worker].

Basic Theme: Positive message about school

the choice that the school is making a sending out a message that we do care about people settling into school and we don’t have to do this but we are doing this because we want to do it, it sends out a positive message to people in the school and outside the school [Key Worker].

Organising theme: Greater emotional well-being

Basic theme: Emotional needs can be met

so the nurture group has provided a place for them to congregate so is a good way for me to, because if a child is struggling in year seven then they could either be in the nurture group are not in the nurture group and the ones that people perceive will struggle will be in the nurture group. And without the nurture group let’s pretend that it wasn’t there for a minute, it might be hard to me to reach the year sevens [Key Worker].

Basic theme: Resilience

so I taught myself to ignore people like that so I just ignore them if they say things about me [Pupil].
and it helps you with death and things, because I was so close to my Nana and then she passed on and I was absolutely gutted and I felt suicidal and it was horrible and I couldn’t stop crying and the day I came back into school in January I was heartbroken a lot so they put me back in front couple of weeks and a helped me get over it and she’s watching me which was really nice [Pupil].

but they’ve got through school being here and having the support we gave them probably helped them to cope [NG Facilitator].

**Basic theme: Increased confidence**

we’ve seen a rise in students who are going on school trips and partaking in things because I think what we’re doing is giving them the confidence and the self-belief that they can do it [NG Facilitator].

about the self-belief you know they can cope because they learn to have some self-belief they may not be particularly bright but they may think you know if I can achieve [NG Facilitator].

When you meet the pupils and I think you’ll clearly see a confident group of students and the whole alliance of that confidence links to self-esteem all about self-perceptions [Head Teacher].

[the thing that I’ve learnt is] confidence [Focus group].

**Basic theme: Greater emotional regulation**

when a student has lost their temper or not access something and they go down to nurture you can physically see them calm and collected them self when they’re taken to the area and back into that room and is a chance to just re-gather your thoughts and then they can move back out [Head Teacher].

[NG children have been] able to stop the anxiety [NG Facilitator].

[I’ve learnt to] distract myself [when I’m annoyed] and just take myself away from whatever situation I am in [Pupil].

**Organising theme: Positive school experience**

**Basic theme: Experience of success**

I think the fact that children are praised for everything it’s so so positive [NG Facilitator].

I was kind of happy [to leave] because I have got through it and I know that I have achieved something by doing it because I know by leaving that I have achieved my goal [Pupil].

Now you still get, it’s a school, it’s an 11 to 18 school and hormones got as much to do that in some cases but we still get those incidents but with that particular group of students nowhere near as much and what you see is, what we get is as they get up a school they are integrated into school life at points where it is really really important so they can be academically successful [Head Teacher].

**Basic theme: Experience of school**

but it’s clearly got the spirit and the people in it because the children themselves are enjoying going and I’m sure they are performing better in class [Key Worker].
got and it is right because the kids are happy, the students are happy [NG Facilitator].

Organising theme: A sense of belonging to engage positively

Basic Theme: Able to be included in mainstream

[If the NG was not in place] I think we would have lost so many of our students early down the school that they would not even have had a chance when time came around as ........ six or seven years ago we were still losing chunks of kids who were becoming NEET who weren't seen in school ........ attendance wasn't good [Head Teacher].

the students that come here probably would be excluded some of them so the fact that were not excluding them we know its having an impact [NG Facilitator].

we’ve seen a rise in students who are going on school trips and partaking in things because I think what we’re doing is giving them the confidence and the self-belief that they can do it [NG Facilitator].

well usually I didn’t used to join in with English activities after school but I did say George and the dragon in year 8 and we performed it in town [Pupil].

the really interesting bit always is for me when they step out of the nurture group they carry on take those nurture qualities out of the group with them [Head Teacher].

Basic Theme: Security

if they didn’t have a safe haven to go to at breaks and lunch times and things they might have been a target for bullies being quite vulnerable [NG Facilitator].

if it wasn’t there is pupils would be quite vulnerable really [Key Worker].

they come out with some of their personal issues resolved and I think school would have been a much harder journey for them [Head Teacher].

Basic Theme: Formation of positive relationships

I look back and a lot of them still hang around together they’ve formed friendship groups through being in nurture [NG Facilitator].

the children can offer support they can then feel that it’s not a big problem, they’re supported [NG Facilitator].

yeah because I don’t really have that many friends so I would go in there to get more communication and stuff [Focus group].

you’re working in small groups children get to know you and get a chance to speak to you and trust you [NG Facilitator].

well I had friends in the NG [Focus group].
Basic Theme: Behavioural gains

[I've learnt to] make my behaviour better……..I haven’t been getting loads of referrals [Focus group].
I don't mess about, I don't get distracted [Focus group].
but there are a group of students who would have been triggering some of those behaviours much further up the school so when you look at those students that trigger those behaviours now, they are not our nurture group students [Head Teacher].

Research Question 3 – Negative Effects - Thematic Map 3.2: Feeling of loss and disconnection from peers

Organising theme: Peer effects
Basic theme: Bullying

I have rubbish friends, I get teased about the group [Pupil].
yeah cos they think it’s for like disabled kids, like special needed people [Pupil].
I keep on getting bullied because they keep saying it’s for special needs [Pupil].
Yeh this guy got proper shouted at because they were making people feel like they didn’t want to come in anymore because he was getting teased [Pupil].

Basic theme: Isolated from peers

But they are kind of isolated from mainstream to so it makes it difficult then, you know I wonder what the mainstream people think about the pupils in nurture [Key Worker].

Organising theme: Loss may make transition harder

Basic theme: Creation of a loss situation

yes and I think the loss as well ‘cos you are creating a loss situation, you may be easing the loss at 10 to 11-year-olds when joining secondary school but you’re just postponing the loss when they comes out of nurture because technically they will go through a loss and a grieving process when they are no longer in nurture [Key Worker].

The only bad thing is about leaving because it can be really emotional because I must admit it is a bit upsetting when you are leaving [Pupil].

Nat: I won’t be happy [to leave] [Pupil].
Zach: I won’t be happy because I will be doing rubbish lessons [Pupil].
feel sad because I can't get my head down on my own [Pupil].
Basic theme: Transition after the NG may be harder

I don't know if it makes it more difficult when you finally do come into mainstream does nurture make it easier or harder [Key Worker].

It might not always be easier, they may have developed better social skills and more confidence and self-esteem, but they still have to go out into the mainstream don't they? [Key Worker].
Examples of quotes to support basic themes for Case Study 2

Research Question 1 - Thematic map 2.1: ‘A structured home in here to meet your needs out there’

Organising Theme: A supportive child-centred approach to meet needs

Basic theme: Range of activities with different aims

We learnt how to ride a new bike [Pupil].

We go cycling [Pupil].

we played a game [Key Worker].

The best things are the trips in the summertime [Pupil].

We do quite a lot of breadmaking [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: Home-like environment

I was invited for breakfast.........when I went for breakfast I think xxxx was allowed to invite somebody and he asked me if I would like to go with him which was lovely [Key Worker].

you take your shoes off and put slippers on which all the children do [Key Worker].

We wear slippers [Pupil].

it didn't feel like you’re in school it felt so different [Key Worker].

at Christmas time when they cook Christmas dinner and invite staff over [Deputy Head].

an open door policy so we give them an appointment card to say you can come back whenever you want to if you’re having a bit of a down day comeback and see us [NG Facilitator].

for someone like xxxx she will just call in and say I need to talk to you about something that is okay as well [NG Facilitator].

but actually [school is for them] and this is part of that big arm that school can put around you isn’t it [Deputy Head].

Basic theme: Child-centred

It depends on the kids needs really so if they’re not really good at working in groups then we would make sure they do lots of group work [Deputy Head].

and we’ve got time to talk through feelings to put strategies into place we can take everything day really slow steady pace and keep going over things with children
because sometimes you do have to go over the same things a few times but it just gives them the chance to learn [NG Facilitator].

but it is that sorted if you need that one-to-one than that is there as well [NG Facilitator].

At one point I was coming every day [Pupil].

Yes [I started coming more but then that reduced] [Pupil].

I started coming at the end of Year 6 because I had some problems then [Pupil].

Basic theme: KS3 pupils with a range of needs

because he had been excluded from other children for so long and that sort of because in his junior school he hadn't been in contact with other children very much his parents said that the last year of junior school he was more or less spent outside the headmaster’s office on his own …….he wasn’t allowed breaks and lunches with his friends so we was a very lonely boy when he got to Holmfirth [Key Worker].

and a lot of the time his frustrations were in the beginning to throw and kick and scream everybody because he didn’t know anything different [Key Worker].

it can be a variety of things, and may manifest itself in aggressive behaviours, abusive sort of behaviour [NG Facilitator].

so it varies from that kind of hot tempered, antisocial type of behaviour to withdrawn, antisocial behaviour [NG Facilitator].

I have OCD and ADHD ……..I get distracted a lot and have to keep things next to each other [Pupil].

Yes [we have pupils from year seven and pupils from year eight] [NG Facilitator].

he needed that reassurance and a bit of TLC [NG Facilitator].

Organising Theme: Embedded within the wider school with a focus on generalising skills

Basic theme: Focus on pupils after nurture

that is written down so it is something that they can take hold and put away in a drawer and in a bit of a down day they get it back out and think "ahh yes" [NG Facilitator].

and these are the things [in the resettlement pack] that they just need to work on [NG Facilitator].
[We include] tips for coping in school, how you can get by all the things you can do to make people want to be friends with you and be a good class member [NG Facilitator].

that they have got but is also about communication and working together and thinking about who you are working with, not losing your temper, and things that they learn it treehouse that we can carry on doing outside [Deputy Head].

Basic theme: Embedded in other systems of support

the support structures work together really and there is a crossover [NG Facilitator].

Yes definitely [she was accessing counselling] alongside [NG Facilitator].

Even the gardens out there, Audrey who runs the gardening project which again is part of what extended services offer to kids, they might be NG kids or they might be kept to a little bit older and struggling in some classes can come and do a little bit of therapy [Deputy Head].

so it gave is really strong evidence and we did that hand-in-hand with evaluating all the strands of extended services [Deputy Head].

Basic theme: Contact with staff in the wider school

[The NG Facilitator] would come to the meetings and say about how well he was doing in the nurture group……..she was always at the meetings as well so she could always put her point of view across as well [Key Worker].

just in briefing this morning the form tutor mentioned that the girl was having friendship issues [NG Facilitator].

I also think that teachers who look at children and say I don’t know what to do with them will come and say what shall I do about this child [NG Facilitator].

this morning I had a discussion with the form tutor and said we have noticed in nurture that this this and this seems to work and she said brilliant I’ll pass that on and make sure all staff know what works for him [NG Facilitator].

Organising Theme: Carefully structured and planned

Basic theme: Carefully planned and organised

we start them in groups after we have done Boxall [NG Facilitator].

to be decided that we need to Boxall her and see if she needs a bit of help [NG Facilitator].

we observe them in classes after that first couple of weeks [NG Facilitator].

by the end of this half term at Christmas that will be their final session and they will be ready to go back into school [NG Facilitator].

I would look at whether there is, the sort of interactions that they have in school as well depending on the types of children that they are [NG Facilitator].
obviously they’ve got assessments or tests then they will attend their lessons rather than coming here [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: Part time attendance
they come out as mainstream school and they go there for an hour or two hours [Key Worker].

I came three or four times a week [Pupil].

I came once or twice a week [Pupil].

Basic theme: Ongoing attendance and provision
I’ve been coming for nearly a year [Pupil].

when they are in their group they stay in their group for a reasonable amount of time [NG Facilitator].

yes [the NG has been running for six years] [Deputy Head].

Basic theme: Group composition is planned
we can sort of add people in for each group [NG Facilitator].

we start with four so that additions can be included [NG Facilitator].

Yes how we group them is by looking at their Boxall’s and looking at which strand of development they are need to be working on [NG Facilitator].

we haven’t got a group of children that only the same areas of development ..............they often have areas of development in common but we try to mix up as much as we can because they need to learn from one another [NG Facilitator].

Research Question 2 – Barriers - Thematic network 4.3: Finding the belief, knowledge and support in the wider environment

This global theme explained the barriers to implementation and included three organising themes and nine basic themes.

Organising theme: Belief in the NG

Basic Theme: Funding Concerns
the year before last there was a cut in school budgets think by 10 or 20 [Deputy Head].
Basic Theme: Engagement with the NG

here will be staff who have worked here for a very long time and know it exists but will not have necessarily been in the room [Deputy Head].

some parents have had a bad experience of school and are uncomfortable about school generally for lot of the students of nurture group parents that’s probably a key issue, that’s not something you could ever fix [Deputy Head].

[a parent] was invited to come here today for the coffee morning but she is declined to do that [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Perceptions of the NG

There are perhaps groups of children who don't understand the intervention that we have and again that will be an ongoing issue and something that will always need to be addressed because some pupils are kind and some pupils aren’t [NG Facilitator].

one parent has refused to let their child attend she has sent me a really aggressive email, she was are very angry [NG Facilitator].

[a parent] was insistent that her son did not need to come to the group and that despite the pupil behaviour log saying otherwise his behaviour was impeccable……..and that he couldn’t learn anything from the other children that were in the group [NG Facilitator].

the same in all schools with any sort of intervention or small group, there is a bit of making staff see the bigger picture [Deputy Head].

occasionally there will be a grumpy member of staff and it will probably normally be a maths teacher [who does not want a child to miss their lessons] [Deputy Head].

Basic Theme: Difficult to measure long term impact

and you can’t measure the long-term impact until five or 10 years down the line when they are hopefully working not in jail or having babies are whatever it is that might of happened to them otherwise [Deputy Head].

Organising theme: Understanding of how the NG can meet pupils’ needs

Basic Theme: Identifying group members

Candidates that we do find more difficult to spot the ones that you become more withdrawn and quiet and a bit insular [Key Worker].

Candidates that we do find more difficult to spot the ones that you become more withdrawn and quiet and a bit insular [NG Facilitator].
Basic Theme: Lack of understanding

[pupils and some teachers] they don’t actually understand what it means to be in NG [Pupil].

and it’s important that the kids don’t see it as a place where naughty or stupid kids go, there is a lot of mystique around treehouse amongst the students that is hard to break down but is getting them to know what treehouse is [Deputy Head].

there might be parents who are reluctant to let their kids come here because they may not know much about it [Deputy Head].

There are perhaps groups of children who don’t understand the intervention that we have [NG Facilitator].

with one boy’s mum and grandma probably about this time last year because she was concerned about whether he needed to come or what the intervention was about……..[NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Difficulty with group composition

then people in my group like Jack who I don’t like so it’s like I don’t like this group I don’t want to stay. Can I get a change of group? No. Ahhhh [Pupil].

in fact there were two pupils in the class one being the child who I was supporting and another one and they really didn’t get on and mean really disliked each other, they both went to nurture group and they couldn’t go to nurture group together because that’s how much they dislike each other [Key Worker].

Initially it was difficult [having two pupils in the same group who did not get on] [NG Facilitator].

Organising theme: Connection in the wider environment

Basic Theme: Gaps in communication

it can be isolated in bigger schools well such as James in Mary being over here all the time by themselves [Deputy Head].

one piece of feedback that felt was useful and that was about the form tutor was not aware that he had been attending [NG Facilitator].

yeah think I have also had someone call my mum saying that I have been skiving off school when I was at NG because I missed period one and two [Pupil].

no not teachers, pupils and they don’t believe me because when I miss homework I think with IT I missed two homeworks in a row because of the NG and then I told him I was in the NG the first time and he didn’t believe me the second time so he gave me a detention for it [Pupil].

Basic Theme: Continuing to nurture after the group

it’s hard to [ensure pupils feel that school is a place for them] and keep that going as much once they’ve left nurture group [Deputy Head].
I think it is very well doing it here when it’s relaxed and comfortable and it is very secure but then transferring the skills into school when it’s a bit more rough-and-tumble it is a different environment altogether [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Timetabling issues

*timetabling really is our biggest issue [NG Facilitator]*.

Basic Theme: Have to keep up with mainstream

*I missed a lot of PE but we did miss some history too [Pupil].

catching up on work and you’ve got to work a lot harder [Pupil].

Yes [I had to be at the same point in your work as the rest of the people in my group] [Pupil].

**RESEARCH QUESTION 2 - Facilitators -Thematic map 2.2: ‘An Understanding and supporting environment where engagement occurs’**

Organising Theme: communication with others

Basic Theme: Information is offered to improve understanding

*we also attend the open evening for prospective parents of children who are going to come to the school that they can come and talk to us and find out more about it [NG Facilitator].

then that’s a case of working with the parents to help them to understand what treehouse is……it was just about inviting them in, getting into a conversation with them in breaking down the barriers [Deputy Head].

We have produced a little document that is available on the website that we send out to the staff members [NG Facilitator].

*I go to the year six teacher meetings when they come up to the high school so that they know what the service is [NG Facilitator].

Basic Theme: Communication with school staff

*yes because at the front at the beginning when I had a bit of a rough start there was an email that went round from Mr Banks so [the teachers] kind of understood [Pupil].

[the teacher] looked at the register again and then it had a little note on it saying NG and then he took [the detention] back [Pupil].

and having it on the staff area of the school website so staff can check up, because it should be on the register that they are here at treehouse, but if they are not too sure they can check the timetable to see were people would be [NG Facilitator].

I record all of the lessons that they miss which again that is something that I learned to do because I was having to flick back through timetables to see when people were missing what so yes doing that and recording that has been really helpful [NG Facilitator].
I really try hard to be happy, cheerful and polite and friendly with people and tried to keep people in my good books [NG Facilitator].

Diane will write a lovely, eloquent email to them if needs be, I'll pop round to see them to tell them to stop being ridiculous [about pupils missing lessons] [Deputy Head].

**Basic Theme: Engagement with parents**

then that's a case of working with the parents to help them to understand what treehouse is … it was just about inviting them in, getting into a conversation with them in breaking down the barriers [Deputy Head].

we set it up so that Mary and Katel who is Acting Headteacher just having a coffee morning during which the parents are invited to come in, not any reason other than chatting a biscuit and it breaks down their fears and we can hear [Deputy Head].

It's really important to have empathy for the parents and acknowledge that they might not have had the best experience of school themselves [Deputy Head].

they came had a look round we sat and talked about all the types of things that we do and how they would benefit him and they were absolutely fine [NG Facilitator].

we also, we have parents evening we will encourage students parents to make an appointment with also it is a chance to feedback to parents [NG Facilitator].

**Basic Theme: Others are invited to the NG**

but I think face-to-face communication and getting people to come here and see what it is like is really the best way [NG Facilitator].

the staff were invited over and there is an ongoing programme trying to get staff over here to realise what goes on [Deputy Head].

but actually once they see what a wonderful space this is an atmosphere it is, who wouldn't want their kids to come here [Deputy Head].

**Organising theme: pupils are supported to attend**

**Basic Theme: Measures in place to support attendance**

the way that they have done it now is a lot better because instead of having the card on the front of your planner they put a sticker on the inside so when you have got your planner out [other pupils] don't know that you go to the NG [Pupil].

we reassess the groups every term just to make sure that people are in the right place [NG Facilitator].

When [NG facilitators] showed me round and told me what it was [Pupil].
Basic Theme: Impact of lessons missed aims to be reduced

we always move the group timing so that they are not always miss think the same lesson. I guess it wouldn’t be fair or legal or beneficial if they were missing the same lesson all of one particular subject the time so we vary when they come [NG Facilitator].

well I used to have support on Fridays and we didn’t come to treehouse on Fridays so it kind of help that I had support so she can have helped me to work even harder [Pupil].

Organising Theme: An empathic and supportive environment

Basic Theme: Support for NG staff from the wider school

the fact that treehouse is part of a team it’s almost like a department [Deputy Head].

we have meetings as an extended services team to talk about shared issues and how we can work better department [Deputy Head].

James and Mary both have supervision with the rest of the team to talk about issues [Deputy Head].

supervision has been really important just to make sure that the right support has been put in place for the pupils [Deputy Head].

Basic Theme: Empathy and understanding of others’ views

I can understand, because I think it’s important that the pupil come here just as much as [other teacher think it’s important] for them to be in their lessons [NG Facilitator].

It’s really important to have empathy for the parents and acknowledge that they might not have had the best experience of school themselves [Deputy Head].

Basic Theme: Supportive school ethos

and it’s just the ethos of the school really …… it must come from Andy because he’s been here for 10 years so pretty much it’s probably reflective of him [Deputy Head].

and I think he was probably a bully before because he had been excluded from other children for so long and that sort of because may be in his junior school if you walk past someone and knocked into them it was always David’s fault where is at this school it was more “well let’s sit down and talk about it”, sort out what actually happened and what went wrong [Key Worker].

Basic Theme: Support from school and management

a lot of it comes from Clive really seeing the value of it and supporting it so much he is committed to it working [Deputy Head].

the message about the NG doesn’t just come from me it so strongly from Clive and the rest of the leadership team [Deputy Head].
Really it has been down to senior leadership, they are totally 100% supportive of the work that we do …..I know that whatever decision I make they will back me and help me so yeah SLT I just fab [NG Facilitator].

**Basic Theme: Resources available**

I don’t know how [the Head] does it but he makes sure within the school budget that the finances are there [Deputy Head].

they are very generous with the budget that they have given us so we have not had to worry too much about, it doesn’t curtail the activities that we do too much [NG Facilitator].

we are lucky that our situation stays fairly stable within the environment [NG Facilitator].

**RESEARCH QUESTION 3 - Positive effects - Thematic Network 2.4: ‘Nurtured to make gains’**

Four organising themes and eleven basic themes were grouped to make this global theme.

**Organising theme: Effects for the wider school**

**Basic theme: Wider school support**

If you’re in a group, if you’ve got somebody who before NG couldn’t work in a group and now knows how to work in a group, everybody benefits [Deputy Head].

I had a discussion with the form tutor and said we have noticed in nurture that this this and this seems to work and she said brilliant I’ll pass that on and make sure all staff know what works for him and that is a good way to support the staff [NG Facilitator].

[The NG Facilitators] have trained form tutors into some of the techniques they’ve used over here, like circle time [Deputy Head].

**Basic theme: Positive message**

I like what it says about the school [Deputy Head].

but it says a lot that we do so much to try to not let them fall through the cracks [Deputy Head].

**Organising theme: Improved emotional well-being**

**Basic theme: Improved self-awareness**

they know who they are a bit more as a person [NG Facilitator].
I took responsibility and thought I can’t keep doing this and had it drilled into me [Pupil].

Basic theme: Increased confidence

[I have learnt] to be more confident …… well if somebody asks you a question, I used to be really shy and not answer the question……. If they just ask me, I would say it now [Pupil].

helps me because of stuff like I can put my hand up now and talk to the teachers if I can’t figure out what to do [Pupil].

there have been lots of occasions where students who have been in the nurture group I have seen change from year 7 to year eight, they’re are a bit more confident, they can take a leadership role in groups [Deputy Head].

generally that feeling of confidence [NG Facilitator].

they are confident to make friends [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: Resilience

and the nurture group just helps with all those types of things (knowing how to act with other people, have conversations and cope with everyday life) [Key Worker].

we are getting them to a point where they can cope [NG Facilitator].

Yes because it has kind of taught me to put my hand up and even if I am wrong it is not the end of the world [Pupil].

Basic theme: Emotional regulation

if they hadn’t been to the nurture group they would still be doing that but because by going to the nurture group they have taught them to answer calmly and stay calm [Key Worker].

they helped him so much with dealing with his anger and things like that in out lessons as well [Key Worker].

they can manage their temper better [Deputy Head].

Organising theme: Nurtured to belong

Basic theme: Feeling supported

they are actually safe come across here and sit and talk to us and we’ll sort things out and knowing those staff are around was a big thing [Key Worker].

and I think the fact that they feel supported and they have got that backup and the young man I was told knew about before he said to me I know that you have supported me when I didn’t deserve you which perhaps makes him appreciative and grateful for the work that people have done so that sometimes makes him think or "I
wont do that” because I don’t want to disappoint whoever so I think is [NG Facilitator].

yes because it helped me settle in before I actually came to High School [Pupil].

all of the people here [helped me settle in] [Pupil].

Basic theme: Sense of belonging

I think the nurture group allows us to create a little unit [NG Facilitator].

feeling like there is a place that is for them……. they felt that school was a place for them [Deputy Head].

and they do very much see here as somewhere that is for them [Deputy Head].

feeling that they do fit in [NG Facilitator].

Basic theme: Feeling safe

I think there is somewhere for those children to go as like a release [Key Worker].

That they had felt nurtured [Deputy Head].

it made me feel a lot more safer in a way and settled in [Pupil].

I’m not saying that he did that before [told the truth] but I don’t know if he felt safe that he could tell the truth and even if he didn’t tell the other people I think he would always tell them in the nurture group, he really enjoyed it, it did him the world of good [Key Worker].

Organising Theme: Positive engagement with school and others

Basic theme: Enjoyable experiences

it gives them chance to talk and express themselves and have a bit of fun sometimes [NG Facilitator].

missing history was the best feeling ever [Pupil].

obviously the kids in their class that do come here more are more effective, happier, hard-working in lessons so they are not going to affect their work.[Deputy Head].

NG is my favourite lesson [Pupil]

We have a lot of laughs [Pupil].

Basic theme: Ability to form friendships

it builds relationships that they perhaps would not have had
but NG helped us to build up a really good friendship [Pupil].

R: [when we do baking] well we build friendships [Pupil].

once he learned [those social skills] they accepted him so that was good [Key Worker].

and er of boy he would talk and listen instead of screaming and lashing out with his fists [Key Worker].

confidence to vocalise your feelings because before I would not talk to anyone and I would bottle it up and pounding explode a bit, whereas now I can kind of talk about it [Pupil].

if you’ve got somebody who before NG couldn’t work in a group and now knows how to work in a group, everybody benefits [Deputy Head].

Basic theme: Positive engagement with school

they are confident to put their hand up in lessons [NG Facilitator].

you know they follow all of the routines [NG Facilitator].

Yes definitely because I think that that behaviour in lessons has improved [NG Facilitator].

it’s helping me to stay focused [in lessons] [Pupil].

the children they would end up with exclusions if it wasn’t for the nurture group and learning those skills in year seven lets them go on and get through their full education [Key Worker].

we had our first lot leave school last year. None of them were permanently excluded and there were some awkward customers there [Deputy Head].

RESEARCH QUESTION 3 - Negative effects – Thematic Network 2.5: ‘Emotional, peer and academic effects to NG attendance’

Organising Theme: Bullying

This organising theme was made up of one basic theme. This theme summarised pupils’ experiences of bullying due to their attendance at the NG.

Basic theme: Bullying

people at break might pick on me if they find out that I go to NG calling me stuff like I’m a s**z [Pupil].

then they will take the mick out of me and call me a s**z [Pupil].

they used to just like as I said bully me, something like a s**z [Pupil].
Organising Theme: Sadness

Basic theme: Sad about missing lessons

I felt sad because I was missing History [Pupil].

Organising Theme: Consequences for missing lessons

Basic theme: Detentions

sometimes teachers think that you are skiving and I’m going to use Mr Mason as an example. He used to, when I was in treehouse period three when I should be with him when I came back for the next lesson he used to shout at me asking where was I? And asked me to stay at the end of the lesson and then shouted at me for where I was and he used think I was skiving the lesson [Pupil].

I’ve had seven detentions because I didn’t get the homework and didn’t ask anyone about the homework so I’ve had detentions for not asking [Pupil].

Basic theme: Have to work harder

Because I had to work harder [Pupil].

they put pressure on you [Pupil].

catching up on work and you’ve got to work a lot harder [Pupil].

Basic theme: Late marks

then I found out that you get late marks which would have ruined my perfect attendance [Pupil].

Basic theme: Missed tests

I’ve missed the test twice [Pupil].