Case Studies: Nurture Outreach Service November 2014

Case Study 1 - Year 6 Boy

S was referred to the Nurture Outreach Service after he had experienced a permanent exclusion, a failed managed move and a term at The Aspire Academy. He began his current school in September 2014 at the start of Year 6. The school is a small village school and do not have wide experience of pupils with the intensity of needs of S. Transition funding has allowed the HLTA to be released to support S.

A member of the Brighter Futures Nurture Service has been providing support to the school and parents including assessment, advice, action planning, supervision and modelling strategies.

S began on a reduced timetable. A Thrive assessment was completed in September 2014 indicating very high levels of social and emotional need. The Headteacher and HLTA were involved in the Thrive assessment and Action Planning, and report finding the process, as well as the conversations around the assessment, very valuable. The staff feel they have greater understanding S’s behaviour and how to address his needs. An updated Thrive assessment indicates S has progressed significantly over a period of 6 weeks.

School have worked very hard to meet S’s needs and to develop a relationship with mum. Mum began her relationship with school cautiously, and found it difficult to share the experiences of her own parenting and the family history. As school’s understanding of S’s needs has developed, Mum has increased in her trust and openness with school, and has recently hand-written a letter to school sharing some of her own background; school is now able to understand more fully the family experiences, and can work more holistically with S. Mum’s trust in the school and in the Nurture Outreach Project has developed such that she has recently agreed to complete a ‘Home’ Thrive assessment. She reports that S now ‘feels wanted’ in school, and is happier. He talks about school at home, and about other pupils. Mum said that she feels that she ‘has her son back’.

S’s attendance has improved significantly. He remains on a part time timetable, however on a weekly basis is in school every morning including lunchtimes as well as two afternoons, as part of a reintegration plan. He is finding school very tiring. He is however sleeping better than he has done for some time, which results in mum having some time to herself in the evenings which she values greatly. Mum feels that the improved sleep is because S is trying so hard in school, but also because he is far less anxious than he has been in the past. S has said himself that he ‘feels more in control of himself’, is ‘starting to think things through’ and is ‘better with his emotions and feelings’. He recently completed a whole week at camp with the school; he had never before spent one night away from mum.

School continue to be optimistic about S’s progress but are realistic about the possibility of change and setbacks due to S’s experiences and educational history. S can be very uncertain about coming in to school, about change of staff and about leaving his mum. He is benefitting greatly from the relationship with the HLTA who acts as a key attachment figure for him in school, and she in turn benefits from the support offered by the Nurture Outreach Service in reflecting on the effects of her intense work with S on her own personal and professional life.

Case Study 2 - Year R (Reception) Boy

Nursery placement had concerns about R’s behaviour, they had several behaviour IEP’s for him, CAMHS were also involved and a CAF was in place. The paper work for transitional support had been filled in but never got sent to the local authority, as a result the school were not aware of the complexity of his needs until the last week of the summer term and there was no transitional funding in place. In the first few weeks in Reception R was very upset at the beginning of the school day, he would regularly hide under the table and refuse to follow instructions.

A referral was made to the Nurture Outreach Service two weeks into this academic year.The referral was quickly actioned and since then a Nurture Specialist from Brighter Futures has been providing staff with support through observation, assessment, advice and modelling strategies.

Through the observations it was clear that R was finding the transition in the morning into school particularly hard. Throughout the day he was showing signs of distress, upset and agitation. He was struggling to follow all the instructions and at times found it very difficult to sit still, focus, take part in the class activities. The staff were unclear how to respond. A Thrive base line assessment was completed and indicated that socially and emotionally R is at the developmental age of 2 years. Sharing the information from the thrive assessment was a helpful tool in explaining R’s needs and behaviour to the staff, it helped them to see that they needed to adjust some of their expectations of R and helped them to gain a greater understanding about his behaviour.

The Nurture service is providing strategies for staff and parents, for example, offering ideas around extending R’s emotional language and helping him to feel safe, recommending activities that the TA can use with him, using a safe space in the classroom, consistent approaches between home and school. It is early days but the strategies are proving to be effective in reducing the child’ distress and refusal behaviours.

A Tac meeting was arranged and a the Nurture Specialist advised the school to apply for emergency funding for 1:1 support.

Since the Tac the school has been granted Emergency Funding and will be employing a TA to support R each morning from November. This is a significant step forward in enabling the school to address R’s nurture needs. During this term the Nurture Service will continue to support the staff including the key worker around extending sensory play opportunities and emotional awareness. Towards the end of this term the Thrive assessment will be revised and will inform further planning.

**Some initial feedback from Schools on the Nurture Outreach provision.**

‘It is great that there is now a package of support for children with complex needs, rather than just the transition funding on its own. Sonia has been a great help to us so far and has been in regularly, as well as attending
meetings. The strategies and advice she has given us have been really useful
and it’s great that she is tailoring it to the needs of the individual child.
She is asking us what we need help with, which is great and the support is
proving to be very effective. Working with a Reception age child with complex
needs is very demanding and challenging and it’s great to have someone else
supporting the staff too. I definitely think this service is invaluable and
will hopefully result in good long term outcomes for these very vulnerable
children.’

Jenny Tombs, Assistant Head, Peasedown St John Primary School

‘All the support we have received from Brighter Futures has been fantastic. The very quick response, advice on strategies, and staff training on Nurture has been extremely helpful’

Julia McDonald, Assistant Head, Southdown Federation

‘Excellent – thank you. The support has been really useful’

Annie Spencer, Headteacher, Chew Magna Primary

‘The Nurture Service is providing us with clear strategies for the whole of our new intake using Thrive whole class screening to identify and address the emotional and social needs of all the children’

Kate Hinton, Deputy Head, St Saviour Infants