

Marjorie Boxall Quality Mark Award

Boxall Nurture Group®

Application guidance

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Accreditation

Schools / Special schools / Alternative provisions / Early Years settings / further education settings (Establishments)

The Marjorie Boxall Quality Mark Award (MBQMA) involves assessing the work of a nurture group against a set of quality standards. These standards are derived from the Six Principles of nurture groups and their clearly defined operational characteristics. These principles and characteristics have been instilled and refined over a number of years by those people most directly concerned with the growth of the nurture group model including the originator, Marjorie Boxall. The principles and characteristics are those contained in what has become known as the 'classic Boxall' model, which was trademarked in 2017 by nurtureuk, hereafter referred to as the Boxall Nurture Group®.

A key component cited in the Queen's University Belfast (2016) research into nurture groups and their impact and cost-effectiveness, is that the quality of delivery is vital to the success of the group. Nurtureuk provided all the training for the staff running the nurture groups in this study, with groups being run by the standards set by the MBQMA. Therefore a group that meets these standards and who have been officially and successfully assessed, can now carry the Boxall Nurture Group® registered trademark.

The nurture group model is now well established for children in Key Stages 1 and 2 with ever-increasing successful applications from Key Stages 3 and 4 and alternative provisions. (In Scotland this applies to Early Years, primary, secondary, specialist schools and alternative providers). Whilst it is recognised that there are inevitable differences in how the model is applied in different settings, the importance of close adherence to the Six Principles remains the same.

Other variant models are acknowledged by nurtureuk as 'good practice' but do not qualify for this particular, special award which is based on Marjorie Boxall's work and 40 years' experience of quality and effectiveness in the classic nurture group approach. The process of achieving the MBQMA ensures that there is an evidential base of good practice set against national standards, which is not only useful for inspections, but also planning, reviewing and reflecting on effective practices and the impact and outcomes.

Re-accreditation

Establishments who gain the MBQMA are required to be assessed for re-accreditation after three years.

There will also be an expectation that any areas identified for further development in the previous award allocation, will have been addressed, showing evidence of the impact.

Re-accreditation will consist of evidence which updates on the establishment information, assuring that the standards are maintained, evidence changes and developments, provides quantitative and qualitative progress of current and past children/young people and includes whole school training and developments. Particular strengths and good practice evolved in light of experience should be articulated, particularly in respect of achieving a nurturing ethos across the school, multi-agency working, planning, resource development, supporting parents, etc.

Criteria

Essential criteria
The establishment applying for the MBQMA must be a member of nurtureuk.
There must be two of the same members of staff working with the pupils at all times.
At least one member of the nurture group staff, currently working with the children or young people must have completed nurtureuk's Theory & Practice of Nurture Groups training course and passed the related assignment. It would be desirable for more than one member of staff per establishment to have completed the course.
The Boxall Profile® assessment tool must be used to refer children to the nurture group, inform practice and support the process of reintegration.
The nurture group must have been running for a minimum of two years prior to an application, with at least one certificated staff member working with the children or young people during this time.
There must be a minimum of six pupils in the nurture group for the majority of the time (with a maximum of 12 pupils).
In mainstream key stages one and two, the nurture group must run for a minimum of four half-day sessions per week with the same core group of children, with a fifth session for preparation,
In other settings the nurture group must run for a minimum of 20% of the timetable per week with the same group of children, with additional time for preparation and work with stakeholders. The input provided must be regular and sustained with evidence of successful outcomes as well as incorporating the Six Principles and practices of nurture groups.

Additional guidance for nurture groups run by support staff nurture practitioners

A teacher or senior leader in an establishment must be responsible for overseeing, supporting and co-ordinating the nurture group. In this situation the teacher should undertake the following duties:

- Spend regular time within the nurture group to support the nurture practitioners and gain knowledge of pupils to inform assessment and planning.
- Advise on strategies for individual children/young people within the nurture group where necessary.
- Carry out and contribute to school policies and procedures, including safeguarding procedures where appropriate.
- Oversee the activities and advise and collaborate with the nurture practitioners on delivering the curriculum, bearing in mind the individual needs of each child or young person.
- Meet regularly with the nurture practitioners to monitor daily individual records of the children or young people's progress and intended programmes of work.
- Liaise with outside agencies when necessary.
- Actively work with the nurture practitioners in partnership with parents to support and extend the work of the nurture group.
- Liaise with the nurture group staff, child or young person's class teacher, SENCo (where applicable) and attend regular reviews under the Code of Practice/Staged Intervention etc.
- Liaise with nurture practitioners to observe children/young people in alternative settings e.g. classes, playground and at lunchtimes and work together to develop strategies for managing these children in the nurture group and mainstream classroom.
- Participate in joint planning with the class teacher, nurture practitioners and school regarding IEPs etc.

During the application for the MBQMA, the teacher must demonstrate that he/she has developed a strong relationship with all the nurture group children or young people and the nurture practitioners. They should be able to show that they know the children/young people well, and be able to talk about their strengths, difficulties, progress and opinions.

There should also be an indication of the amount of time the teacher is involved with the group. This should be at least two to four hours per week, preferably with daily contact, but will vary according to individual circumstances, times of the year, settings etc. The ideal situation would be for the teacher overseeing the nurture group to have undertaken the Theory & Practice of Nurture Groups course, even if they are unable to complete the assignment. However, although this is recommended it is not part of the essential criteria.

Procedures

Establishments must send **Part One and Part 2 evidence** to mbqma@nurtureuk.org. You will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of your application and the timescales for moderation.

Your application will be moderated. If your application does not meet the essential criteria, then you will be informed.

Assuming that the essential criteria has been met, the establishment will be asked to submit part two and the supplementary evidence in the format required. Timescales will be provided.

All essential criteria need to be met, desirable is optional.

Standards

1. Whole-establishment management and staffing		Self-assessment	
Area and standards	Consider	Essential	Desirable
<p>1a. Is located clearly within the policies and structures of the school's continuum of special educational needs provision.</p> <p>Is taken full account of in school policies and is fully considered in their development and review.</p>	1a.1 Reference to the nurture group in behaviour, inclusion and special needs and staff support policies		
	1a.2 There is an additional policy relating to the nurture group		
	1a.3 The nurture group team work regularly with the SMT and mainstream colleagues to review school policies		
	1a.4 The nurture group policy has been reviewed within the last 12 months		
<p>1b. Promotes the active involvement of mainstream staff in the life of the nurture group</p>	1b.1 Protocols are evident for the involvement of other staff		
	1b.2 Evidence of whole establishment training relating to nurture group		
	1b.3 Staff are regularly invited to join with activities in the nurture group		
	1b.4 Appropriate staff show knowledge of nurture group routines and the reasons for them		
	1b.5 Staff are able to offer consistent expectations and routines across both settings		
	1b.6 Nurture group successes are celebrated in the mainstream and vice versa		
<p>1c. Is staffed by two adults of whom at least one has completed and passed the Certificate Course - The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups</p>	1c.1 Nurture group staff have completed the accredited certificate course with at least a pass grade		
	1c.2 Nurture group staff are never required to cover for absent colleagues		

	1c.3 The group does not run with temporary staff		
	1c.4 Visits by other children and adults are carefully planned		
1d. Is staffed by adults who have and promote a positive attitude towards parents/carers of all children and encourage their involvement in activities supportive of the nurture group programme	1d.1 Parents and caregivers are regularly invited to join in for nurture group activities.		
	1d.2 Staff support parents and caregivers to develop appropriate management and interaction strategies		
1e. Encourages multi-agency approaches to support children and parents	1e.1 Staff in the nurture group regularly discuss and support referrals to outside agencies		
	1e.2 Staff liaise with additional agencies where appropriate and support interventions wherever possible		

2. Attendance		Self-assessment
Area and standards	Consider	Essential
2a. Has a pattern of attendance whereby children/young people attend the group for substantial and regular sessions	2a.1 The timetable is clear	
	2a.2 Routines for collection from mainstream classes (where applicable)	
	2a.3 Evidence of planning	
2b. Offers short- or medium-term placements, usually for between two and four terms, depending on the child's specific needs	2b.1 Individual child/young person records	
	2b.2 Boxall Profile© assessments	
	2b.3 Minutes of termly admission and review meetings	

3. Assessment, resettlement and evaluation		Self-assessment	
Area and standards	Consider	Essential	Desirable
3a. Ensures that children/young people attending the nurture group remain members of a mainstream class where they register daily and attend selected activities	3a.1 Shared planning and target setting		
	3a.2 Termly regular admission and review meetings		
	3a.3 Clear communication between the nurture group staff and the mainstream staff		
3b. Ensures placements are determined on the basis of systematic assessment using the Boxall Profile and other appropriate diagnostic and evaluative instruments, with the aim always being to return the child/young person to full-time mainstream provision	3b.1 Clear selection and resettlement procedures		
	3b.2 Boxall Profiles® are completed termly		
	3b.3 Use of observation schedules/records to identify progress with behaviour, use of language, social interaction skills		
	3b.4 Individual resettlement plans exist with clear targets, strategies and responsibilities identified. Individual child/young person records		
3c. Is monitored and evaluated as to its effectiveness in promoting the positive social, emotional and educational development of each child/young person	3c.1 Boxall Profile® assessments		
	3c.2 IEP targets clearly linked to Boxall Profile® areas to be developed		
	3c.3 Use of Goodman Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire		
	3c.4 Access to all other available information and reports, e.g. parental and child/young person views, EP and other agency reports etc.		

4. Environment		Self-assessment	
Area and standards	Consider	Essential	Desirable
4a. Supplies a setting and relationships for children in which missing or insufficiently internalised essential early learning experiences are provided	4a.1 Room provides opportunities for early learning experiences		
	4a.2 Planning reflects how children's/young person's learning is understood developmentally		
	4a.3 A variety of stimulating activities are planned around individual needs with evidence of adult flexibility to respond to children/young people's needs in the here and now		
	4a.4 Positive relationships between adults and children/young people in which adults show interest in and enthusiasm for developing their learning needs		
	4a.5 The curriculum is explicitly interwoven into all learning experiences		
4b. Provides a warm, welcoming and educational environment, that incorporates aspects of both home and school and where children/young people are accepted and valued	4b.1 Emphasis on sharing social experiences often based around food, and developing recognition of emotions		
	4b.2 Children/young people's attendance and time keeping is seen to improve		
	4b.3 Predictable and stable daily routines are known and understood by the pupils		
	4b.4 Appropriate praise/reward is offered and children/young people are encouraged to value the efforts of others as well as their own		
	4b.5 Children/young people are able to describe the progression in their own learning		

5. Curriculum and activities		Self-assessment	
Area and standards	Consider	Essential	Desirable
5a. Ensures that the requirements of current curriculum guidance and legislative requirements are fulfilled	5a.1 Joint planning with appropriate staff		
	5a.2 Planning records indicate good knowledge of individual attainments and set appropriate challenges		
	5a.3 Classroom resources and routines allow for frequent incidental reinforcement of basic skills in numeracy and literacy		
	5a.4 A thematic approach is taken to the curriculum that starts with children/young people's direct experience and immediate environment		
	5a.5 Evidence of both adult and child/young person led activities		
5b. Provides opportunities for social learning through cooperation and play in a group with an appropriate mix of children/young people	5b.1 Selection of children/young people routinely considers the current dynamics of the nurture group		
	5b.2 School routines and rules and social and conversational behaviours are explicitly taught and reinforced in small incremental steps		
	5b.3 Individual and group planning accommodates the level of support required by each child/young person at that time and builds in opportunities for challenge that enable progression in the application of skills		
5c. Recognises the importance of quality play experiences in the development of children's learning	5c.1 Planning and support strategies show recognition of an individual's stage of play and aims to extend this		
	5c.2 Adults play regularly with the children, with similar age-appropriate activities for young people, modelling language, behaviours, emotional states and the use of equipment		
	5c.3 There is a broad range of play equipment available		

6. A nurturing approach		Self-assessment
<i>Area and standards</i>	<i>Consider</i>	<i>Essential</i>
6a. Offers support for children's/young people's positive emotional, social and cognitive development at whatever level of need the children/young people show, by responding to them in a developmentally appropriate way	6a.1 Children/young people are praised explicitly for all achievements	
	6a.2 Children/young people are not criticised for inconsistencies in their performance	
	6a.3 Staff are able to help children/young people regulate their more extreme emotional responses	
	6a.4 Staff provide experiences which challenge the child/young person's specific difficulties	
	6a.5 Staff model good relationships	
6b. Places an emphasis on communication and language development through intensive interaction with adults and children/young people	6b.1 Language is a central element of all nurture group activities	
	6b.2 Children/young people are explicitly taught the words for emotions and feelings	
	6b.3 The emotional literacy of all is supported and developed	
	6b.4 Adults are skilled at actively listening to children/young people	
	6b.5 Children/young people engage adults through conversation rather than behaviour	
	6b.6 Opportunities to model and practice interactional language are built into the nurture group routines	

Appendix one: frequently asked questions

It is important to note that the application pack has detailed and clear advice so please read the application pack carefully before looking at the frequently asked questions.

How do I apply for the Marjorie Boxall Quality Mark Award?

If you have completed the Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups course, your trainer will have emailed you the application pack following the training. This pack is also available on the nurtureuk website. Once the essential criteria are checked and met, send part one only to mbqma@nurtureuk.org.

Can you clarify the processes involved in the award?

Assuming that the essential criteria have been met, the establishment will be allocated an assessor, to whom the full file of standards and evidence (part two) should be sent to mbqma@nurtureuk.org.

The allocated assessor will review the application and the supporting documentation. The establishment will be notified of any further information required.

A mutually convenient date for a visit to your establishment will be arranged by the assessor. The assessor will discuss the requirements for the visit with you when they make contact to arrange the visit.

Following the visit, the assessor will outline the recommendations.

The assessor will moderate with senior members of nurtureuk, and a final decision will be made as to the outcome of the visit. The establishment will be informed of the final decision via an email from nurtureuk within 48 hours after the visit.

Should you be successful in your assessment nurtureuk we will send you a certificate and plaque. With your permission the award and this will also be celebrated on social media.

Each setting is invited to contribute photographs to a celebratory video prepared by nurtureuk.

Can you clarify the timescales for the application?

On receipt of part one of the application, the assessment timescales will be outlined.

How much does the award or reaccreditation cost?

The cost for both accreditation and re-accreditation is currently £495 + VAT (nurtureuk reserves the right to amend the charges at any time).

I am replacing a qualified nurture practitioner; can we finish our application as soon as I receive my certificate?

As long as the group has been running for at least two years, once you have passed your assignment, you can apply for the award.

What about confidentiality and GDPR?

Please ensure you remove any traces of names of pupils when submitting evidence. The only people who will read the evidence submitted will be yourselves and the assessor, who will ensure the information remains safe and will not share anything with any other person, unless a specific written agreement has been given from your school.

What if I have a problem with my application?

Please email: mbqma@nurtureuk.org and explain your issue, someone will help you following this.

Can I speak to someone if I have a question?

Yes, email mbqma@nurtureuk.org with your phone number and the question and someone will contact you to help.

I have lost my Theory & Practice of Nurture Group training certificate, what can I do?

To issue a replacement certificate you should email submission@nurtureuk.org with the following information:

- Name at the time of the training
- The venue of the training
- The name of the trainer/s
- The dates of the training
- Information regarding the date of submission and outcome of the assessment of the assignment.

Can my assessment date be amended?

Every effort will be made to accommodate you if this is necessary. Simply contact your assessor and liaise with them directly.

What happens on the day of the assessment?

There is an expectation that the assessor will spend half a day from 8.30am to 12.30pm online via Zoom. They will also expect to:

- Receive an itinerary of the day beforehand
- Have a virtual tour of the school, before the assessment day and a “live” short nurture group session, on the assessment day, your assessor will give you details on how to achieve this

- The virtual meeting should be with key stakeholders, which could include Head of Establishment, SENCo, mainstream staff, parents, children - your assessor will provide you with guidance for timings.

All of the above will be discussed in greater detail with the assessor beforehand.

What happens if the setting does not meet the criteria fully?

The essential criteria are there because this is an award celebrating excellence and therefore these standards are very important. If you are a primary school, you will be informed immediately if Part One of the application does not meet the essential criteria, before any assessment visit is arranged. If the standards are not met, there will be an expectation that you address this issue before applying again. All other settings are an adaptation of the primary model and therefore taken on individual merits. Your assessor will be in touch if they have questions regarding your adaptation of the criteria before arranging your assessment visit.