

NURTURE PORTRAIT 2016/17

The nurture
group network 
helping children and young people to succeed

A snapshot of the social emotional and behavioural difficulties experienced by pupils in the UK



Nurture Group Network

NURTURE PORTRAIT 2016/17

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NURTURE PORTRAIT 2016/17

The Nurture Group Network (NGN) works to ensure that every disadvantaged or disengaged child has access to a nurturing intervention to equip them with the skills and resilience they need to make the most of learning and school. NGN predominantly supports schools in teaching children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Through early nurturing interventions, they develop vital emotional and social skills to better cope with the school environment.

Since its inception, NGN has been using the Boxall Profile (a teacher-led assessment developed in the 1970s by educational psychologist Marjorie Boxall) to measure pupils' social emotional and behavioural difficulties. By making the Boxall Profile available online in 2015, the organisation has been able to gather anonymised data from children and young people in the UK for more than two years. The first edition of the Nurture Portrait was published last year and compiled findings obtained from more than 4,700 Boxall Profiles collected in 2015/16.

The Nurture Portrait 2016/17 sees a boost in terms of both numbers and quality of data. This year, more than 29,000 children and young people were assessed using the Boxall Profile Online. Further, with the launch of the Boxall Childhood Project in February 2017, 26 schools have contributed whole class or whole school data, thus providing a representative sample of pupils and allowing us to make a clear estimation of the levels of social emotional and behavioural difficulties in the UK.

This second edition emphasises the importance of measuring all pupils' social emotional wellbeing and highlights the benefits it can bring to both pupils and schools. By adopting a graduated approach to nurture, schools are better equipped to support and answer the needs of all their pupils, providing every child the chance to succeed.

CONTENTS

Who we are/What we do	4
Nurturing approach	5
Boxall Profile	6
Boxall Profile Online	9
Findings from the Boxall Profile Online	10
Boxall Childhood Project	13
Recommendations	18



NGN IN 2016/17 IN NUMBERS

1,829

teachers and staff
trained

545

delegates
attended conferences
and events

27

awards presented
to outstanding nurture
groups or nurturing schools

2,000+

nurture groups
across the UK

WHO WE ARE

The Nurture Group Network is a charity aiming to break cycles of low achievement by ensuring that an unequal start in life does not mean an unequal chance to engage with learning. NGN works to promote the use of nurturing principles in education, ensuring that every disadvantaged or disengaged child has access to a nurturing intervention allowing them to develop the skills and resilience they need to make the most of learning and school.

WHAT WE DO

EARLY INTERVENTION

We help thousands of nurture groups in schools across the United Kingdom develop children's and young people's social and emotional skills, build resilience and help form healthy attachments to school.

TRAINING & CONSULTANCY

We deliver training and consultancy support to teachers and schools applying nurturing principles across their work.

RAISING AWARENESS

We organise conferences and campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of nurture, motivating practitioners and policy makers to apply nurturing principles.

IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

We gather, analyse and use evidence to evaluate and improve the nurturing approach, influencing decision makers in educational policy and relevant bodies to plan service provision and inform further research.

NURTURING APPROACH

The concept of nurture highlights the importance of social environments – who you're with, and not who you're born to – and its significant influence on social emotional skills, wellbeing and behaviour. Children and young people who have a good start in life are shown to have significant advantages over those who have experienced missing or distorted early attachments. They tend to do better at school, attend regularly, form more meaningful friendships and are significantly less likely to offend or experience physical or mental health problems.

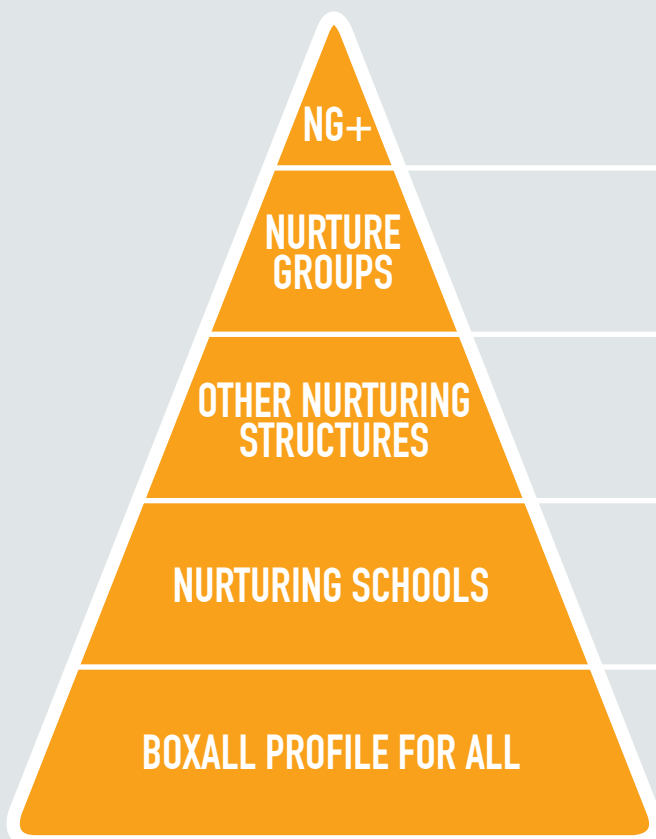
The nurturing approach offers a range of opportunities for children and young people to engage with missing early nurturing experiences, giving them the social and emotional skills to do well at school and with peers, develop their resilience and their capacity to deal more confidently with the trials and tribulations of life, for life.

A GRADUATED APPROACH TO NURTURE

NGN campaigns for all schools in the UK to adopt a graduated approach to nurture, so that all children and young people can benefit from nurture and can receive the appropriate level of support they need.

The Nurture Pyramid is the model NGN has adopted to map out the levels of support schools can provide to help children's and young people's social emotional wellbeing, from a universal reach at the bottom tier to one-to-one targeted interventions for the most vulnerable children and young people at the very top. NGN offers services and interventions to support teachers and schools across all five tiers of the pyramid.

THE NURTURE PYRAMID



NURTURE GROUPS + for the most vulnerable children and young people: providing one-to-one attachment interventions and therapies alongside a nurture group intervention. **Boxall Nurture Hub®**

NURTURE GROUPS for children and young people with significant social emotional and behavioural difficulties: providing a structured and targeted intervention as part of a small group of pupils. **Boxall Nurture Group®**

OTHER NURTURING STRUCTURES, where nurture groups are not feasible or needs are sub-threshold. **Nurture ABC™, Mindfulness, Wellbeing Toolkit, MAPA**

NURTURING SCHOOLS, where nurture principles are embedded across the whole school and all pupils are systematically assessed using the Boxall Profile. **National Nurturing Schools Programme**

BOXALL PROFILE FOR ALL, for schools who recognise the importance of pupils' social emotional wellbeing and conduct universal screenings of pupils' social emotional and behavioural difficulties. **Boxall Childhood Project**

BOXALL PROFILE

OVERVIEW

The Boxall Profile is a teacher-led assessment of the social emotional and behavioural difficulties of pupils. Children and young people lacking early nurturing experiences commonly exhibit challenging behaviours such as acting out or social withdrawal that prevent them from successfully engaging with teachers and peers, often leading to failure in learning.

The Boxall Profile provides entry points into the child's world, allowing teachers to think about what lies behind the difficult behaviour and understand what the child's real needs might be.

Once missing skills are identified, staff can put in place targeted and individualised interventions to help the child or young person develop the skills they are lacking.

The **Boxall Profile 2017** can be used to assess primary school children (from three to 11), and the **Boxall Profile for Young People** to assess secondary school young people (from 11 to 18).

The tool is divided into two sections, each including 34 questions:

- **DEVELOPMENTAL STRANDS**, that measure aspects of the child's **cognitive, social and emotional development** that influence how well a child is able to learn and function in the classroom.
- The **DIAGNOSTIC PROFILE**, that measures the child's **challenging behaviours** that prevent successful social and academic performance. These behaviours are (directly or indirectly) the outcomes of impaired development in the early years and can be resolved once the necessary social and emotional skills are acquired.

1970s

An early version of the Boxall Profile is developed by the educational psychologist Marjorie Boxall and consists of 150 questions.

Early
1980s

The assessment is radically simplified and is divided in two sections, the Developmental Strands and the Diagnostic Profile.

1984

The tool is standardised and used to assess children of primary school age.

1998

The tool is renamed Boxall Profile.

RE STANDARDISATION OF THE BOXALL PROFILE

In summer 2017, NGN completed a restandardisation of the Boxall Profile to ensure that the norms against which children are assessed are up-to-date and relevant for pupils currently in schools.

The Boxall Profile 2017 was standardised based on data obtained from a sample of 487 British children aged between four and 11, attending primary schools from Reception to Year 6.

Restandardisation helps us ensure that:

- The norms are up-to-date and correspond to the range of skills displayed by competently functioning children currently in primary schools
- The sample of children is representative of the children assessed by teachers and professionals, in particular that all primary school years are represented



INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Child and young person

Every child's social emotional wellbeing is monitored and difficulties are identified early, allowing individual needs to be met and preventing minor issues from escalating into more complex behavioural or mental health difficulties.



CLASSROOM LEVEL

Teachers

Teachers assessing their whole class using the Boxall Profile are empowered; they become aware of difficulties hindering pupils' success, they can adapt their teaching to maximise learning and they are able to provide support using whole class nurturing strategies.



WHOLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Senior leadership teams and head teachers

Senior leadership teams have an overall understanding of the levels of need across the whole school, giving them the opportunity to intervene early if required and allowing them to have a long-term approach when allocating resources and planning interventions.

2010

The Boxall Profile for Young People is created based on the Boxall Profile and is designed to assess pupils of secondary school age.

2011

The concurrent validity between the Boxall Profile and the Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is established.

2015

Both versions of the Boxall Profile are made available online at <https://boxallprofile.org>

2017

The Boxall Profile for children is restandardised and the Boxall Profile 2017 is published.

TIMELINE

TOWARDS A UNIVERSAL SCREENING OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS

The Boxall Profile has traditionally been used by teachers and professionals to assess pupils they suspected were having social emotional or behavioural difficulties. However, all pupils can benefit from being assessed.

NGN recommends schools to conduct **universal screenings** using the Boxall Profile – assessing whole school populations rather than focusing on a minority of pupils. Universal screenings can have a positive impact across all school levels.

USING WHOLE CLASS OVERVIEWS OF BOXALL PROFILES TO INFORM TEACHING

Class teachers who assess all their pupils can create whole class overviews of the Boxall Profile.

Using class overviews, teachers can **see at a glance the overall social emotional and behavioural difficulties of their class**. Class overviews are a key component of the nurturing teacher's toolbox; they allow teachers to:

- Identify all **vulnerable children** with high levels of need who would require targeted support
- Highlight **children experiencing minor difficulties** that can be addressed directly in class or during group interventions
- Gain insight into **whole class dynamics** that emerge as a result of common difficulties among children

An example of class overview is provided below. Each row represents one child, and each column corresponds to one strand of the Boxall Profile (from A to J for Developmental Strands; from Q to Z for Diagnostic Profile). Green cells indicate that the child is scoring within the norm for that strand; orange cells indicate a score below the normal range of scores.

A **summary of individual children's needs** is provided in the last two columns, with 'Dev' giving the number of Developmental strands for which the child is outside the norm, and 'Diag' showing the number of Diagnostic strands for which the child is outside the norm. High 'Dev' and 'Diag' scores (8 and above) highlight children who experience high levels of social emotional and behavioural difficulties.

A **summary of the class needs** is given in the last row of the overview. There, the number of children scoring outside the norm is given for each strand, highlighting difficulties commonly experienced by the class. For example, 12 children score below the norm for Strand J ('maintaining internalised standards') and only four have difficulties with Strand C ('connecting up experiences').

EXAMPLE OF CLASS OVERVIEW

Child ID	Gender	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	Dev	Diag	
46157	M	20	12	12	20	8	12	16	20	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
40710	F	20	12	12	20	8	12	16	18	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
48353	F	18	11	12	13	6	9	14	16	5	7	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	5	2	
63995	F	20	12	12	20	8	12	16	20	8	8	0	3	1	0	4	2	1	2	0	0	0	5	
25608	F	10	5	3	7	3	5	10	9	3	6	11	0	2	2	1	6	2	0	0	0	10	6	
34166	F	20	12	12	20	8	12	16	20	8	8	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	
82083	M	20	12	12	18	6	12	16	20	8	5	0	8	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	0	2	2	
31933	M	20	11	12	20	8	12	16	20	8	7	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
34366	M	10	12	10	19	7	11	16	18	8	8	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
44896	M	19	12	12	20	8	12	16	20	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
44620	F	20	12	12	19	7	12	16	16	8	7	0	1	1	0	3	1	2	0	0	2	1	4	
55152	F	18	11	11	19	7	11	15	20	7	6	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	
84748	M	16	11	9	19	7	11	13	17	6	4	1	2	0	0	0	2	6	3	0	2	3	4	
89173	F	19	12	12	20	7	12	16	20	8	6	0	3	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	
36290	F	17	12	10	17	6	11	16	17	8	7	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	3	1	
61647	F	17	10	10	14	5	11	14	17	7	6	2	4	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	5	4	
53388	M	16	9	9	12	7	6	12	18	8	5	0	1	0	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	6	2	
54036	F	20	12	12	20	8	12	16	20	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
66757	M	19	12	12	19	8	10	13	19	8	6	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	0	
78429	M	18	12	12	19	8	10	13	19	8	6	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	
59969	M	14	8	6	12	6	8	10	16	5	6	8	0	0	3	0	3	2	0	0	3	10	5	
12794	M	20	12	12	20	8	12	16	20	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
83732	F	10	5	6	11	4	9	12	12	5	4	3	3	7	4	1	7	7	4	3	2	10	10	
49705	F	10	8	6	14	4	8	9	12	5	5	6	5	6	7	4	5	6	4	5	3	9	10	
67201	M	15	12	11	18	8	8	14	15	8	8	2	2	0	1	0	6	5	0	2	2	3	7	
		9	5	4	6	8	9	5	11	5	12	6	8	5	8	7	12	10	5	3	6			

BOXALL PROFILE ONLINE

More and more schools across the UK are becoming aware of the importance of promoting pupils' social emotional wellbeing. However, although there has been significant progress in recent years, only 15% of schools conducted universal mental health screenings in 2016/17.¹

The Boxall Profile Online has gained a lot of popularity during the academic year 2016/17. More than 150 schools were part of the National Nurturing Schools Programme and started using the Boxall Profile Online to assess their pupils. In addition, 40 schools were also taking part in the Boxall Childhood Project since February 2017, thus contributing to the increase in the number of users and Boxall Profiles completed.

BENEFITS OF USING THE BOXALL PROFILE ONLINE

The Boxall Profile has been available online since November 2015. By completing Boxall Profiles online, teachers and professionals are able to:

ASSESS & IDENTIFY NEEDS – allowing them to have a better understanding of pupils' needs and social emotional difficulties

SET TARGETS & STRATEGIES – teachers can set individualised, achievable targets and define strategies to support the development of missing skills and gaps in early development

BROWSE RESOURCES – an inventory of practical tools is available for staff to browse and identify what resources could be useful according to the targets set

TRACK PROGRESS – helping staff review pupils' difficulties, measure progress and identify what strategies have been working or not

To support teachers and schools towards assessing their whole pupil population, we added a new functionality in summer 2017:

CREATE CLASS OVERVIEWS – allowing teachers to see at one glance the needs of their class, highlighting children requiring targeted support and identifying groups of pupils with common difficulties

IN NUMBERS

29,048

children and
young people
assessed



increase
compared to
2015/16

7,833

registered
users



increase
compared to
2015/16

Try the Boxall Profile Online at <https://boxallprofile.org>

1. Marshall, L., Wishart, R., Dunatchik, A., & Smith, N. (2017). Supporting Mental Health in Schools and Colleges. Department of Education.

IN NUMBERS

22,965

pupils
assessed in
the UK in 2016/17

16,879

children
aged 3 to 10 assessed
using the Boxall Profile

6,086

young people
aged 11 to 18 assessed
using the Boxall Profile
for Young People

69%
boys



31%
girls

FINDINGS FROM THE BOXALL PROFILE ONLINE

By examining the Boxall Profiles completed online, we can not only gain insight into the social emotional and behavioural difficulties currently experienced by pupils in the UK, but also gain a better understanding of how schools currently use the Boxall Profile Online.

In the UK, the Boxall Profile is the most popular tool employed by schools to measure the wellbeing and mental health of pupils. However, many schools adopt a targeted approach (measuring only pupils with clear difficulties) rather than a universal approach (measuring all pupils)² and this tendency is reflected in the way the Boxall Profile Online is currently used.

CURRENT FOCUS: BOYS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The majority of pupils assessed this year were in primary schools rather than secondary schools.

Teachers also predominantly assessed boys rather than girls. This tendency is likely due to boys displaying externalising behaviours that may come across as more challenging and difficult, thus drawing the teacher's attention more easily compared to internalising difficulties more frequently experienced by girls.

This gender bias in using the Boxall Profile prevents staff from identifying the potential social emotional needs of female pupils, in particular internalising behaviours that frequently remain unnoticed by teachers.

A universal screening of pupils using the Boxall Profile would give schools the opportunity to identify the social emotional needs of every child or young person, regardless of their gender, age or difficulties experienced.

2. Ibid.

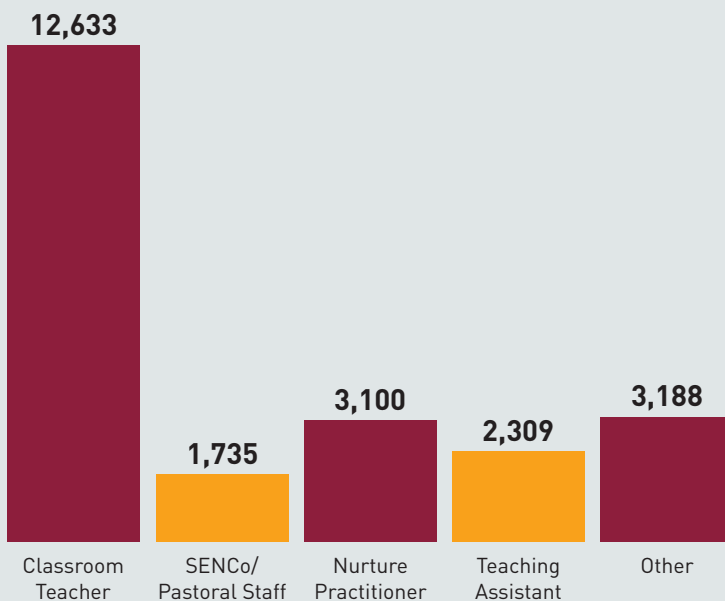
INVOLVING CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN THE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF PUPILS

The Boxall Profile has been traditionally used by nurture practitioners to identify pupils who would benefit from a nurturing intervention, helping them identify missing skills and plan targeted support.

Nevertheless, we see in 2016/17 that most Boxall Profiles were completed by classroom teachers, highlighting the shared interest nurture practitioners and mainstream class teachers have about the social emotional wellbeing of their pupils.

By completing Boxall Profiles, class teachers are given the opportunity to understand and support children's social and emotional needs, and have a chance to make the classroom a more inclusive and safe place for children experiencing difficulties.

MAIN ASSESSOR

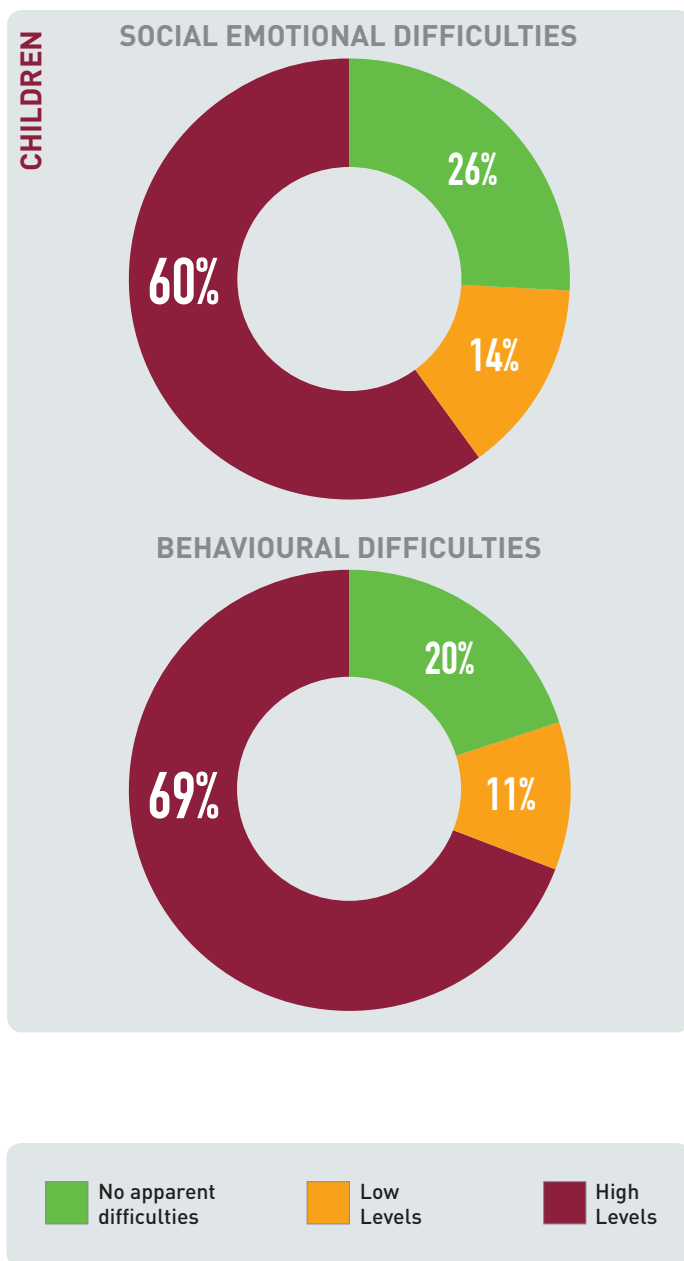


SNAPSHOT OF SOCIAL EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES IN 2016/17

CHILDREN'S NEEDS

60% of children assessed in 2016/17 had high levels of social emotional difficulties, and 69% had high levels of behavioural difficulties.

Social emotional difficulties were at 80% and behavioural difficulties were at 89% in the year 2015/16. This drop in the percentages can be explained by the fact that many primary schools across the UK have started using the Boxall Profile as a universal screening tool rather than as a targeted assessment of pupils, in particular schools taking part in the National Nurturing Schools Programme.



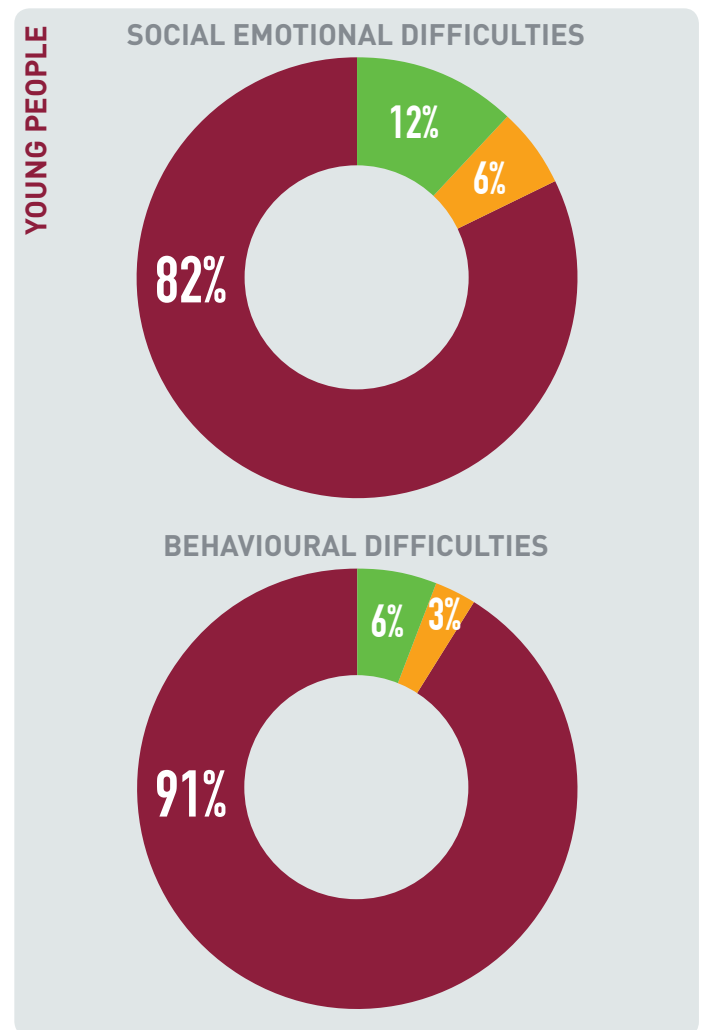
YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

82% of young people assessed were identified as having high levels of social emotional difficulties, and 91% had high levels of behavioural difficulties.

These results are very similar to last year's data, and reflect the ongoing tendency secondary schools have to focus on pupils with clear difficulties rather than the whole school population.

However, secondary schools would benefit as much as primary schools from conducting universal screenings of pupils' social emotional needs. Wellbeing difficulties experienced during adolescence can have a lifelong impact, with 50% of mental health problems being established by age 14.³

By measuring all pupils' wellbeing, secondary schools can provide early support, thus preventing minor issues from escalating and developing into more severe mental health difficulties.



3. Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. (2005). Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62 (6) pp. 593-602. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593.

BOXALL CHILDHOOD PROJECT

WHAT IS THE BOXALL CHILDHOOD PROJECT?

In February 2017, NGN launched the Boxall Childhood Project to research the benefits of using the Boxall Profile for all children and young people in schools.

40 schools and educational institutions from Barking and Dagenham, Halton and Wigan are taking part in this two-year pilot project and will be assessing their pupils once a term, for four terms.

The Boxall Childhood Project will allow NGN to provide recommendations and strategies for schools interested in conducting universal screenings. The data will also enable government, local authorities and policy makers to make more informed decisions regarding the social emotional and behavioural difficulties of pupils in the UK.

DATA CHARACTERISTICS

In the summer term 2017, a total of 6,083 children and young people were assessed as part of the Boxall Childhood Project.

26 primary schools completed whole school or whole class Boxall Profiles. Compared to England's average, these schools had a similar percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health or care plan (3%), but had a higher percentage of pupils who were eligible for free school meals (37% vs 24.7%) and a higher percentage of pupils whose first language was not English (26% vs 20.5%). All results must therefore be interpreted while keeping in mind this context.

In total, **5,414 children were assessed.** Pupils were aged between three and 10, and an equal number of girls and boys were assessed. The majority of pupils were assessed by class teachers.

14 additional schools completed 669 Boxall Profiles in a targeted manner (eg focusing on pupils with difficulties). This data is not included in the analysis as this sample would not be representative of the overall pupil population.

IN NUMBERS

40

schools
trained in
spring 2017

26

schools
completing whole class or
whole school assessments
in summer 2017

5,414

children
assessed using a
whole class approach

53%
boys



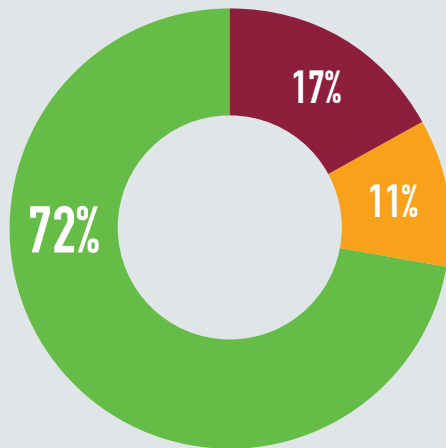
47%
girls

FINDINGS

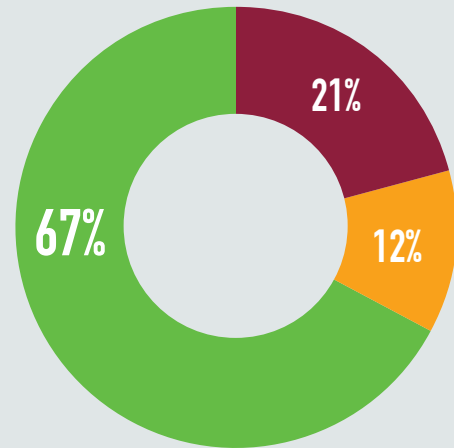
In the 26 schools taking part in the Boxall Childhood Project:


- **1 in 6** children have high levels of social emotional difficulties
- **1 in 5** children have high levels of behavioural difficulties

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES



BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES



 No apparent difficulties

 Low Levels

 High Levels



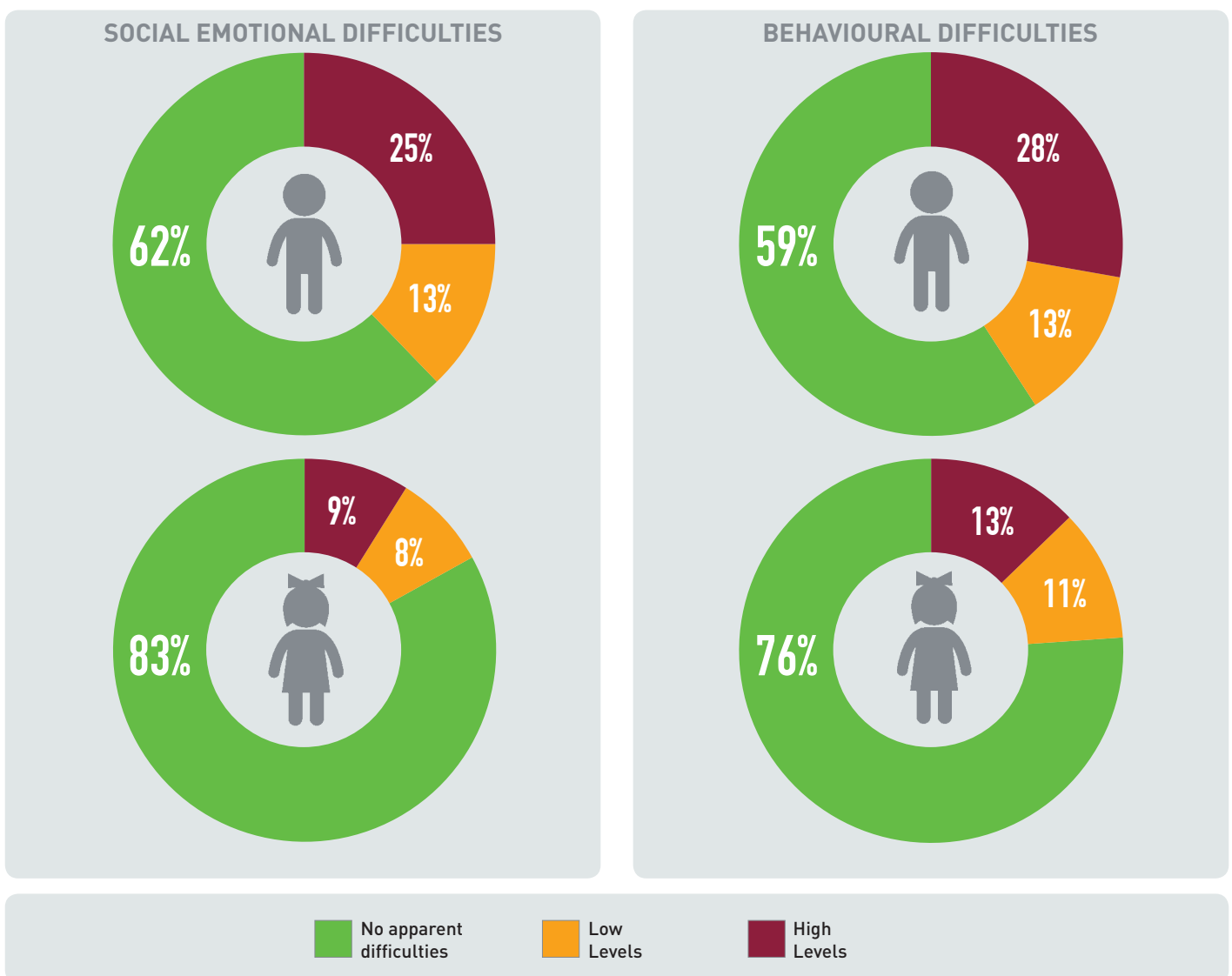
GENDER DIFFERENCES

Compared to girls, boys are almost three times as likely to have high levels of social emotional difficulties, and twice as likely to have high levels of behavioural issues.

Research suggests that social norms surrounding gender differences in early years, both at home or in preschool, may impact girls' and boys' developmental trajectories differently.⁴

Girls are encouraged from an early age to regulate their emotions, recognise others' emotions and be compliant. However, it is generally seen as more socially acceptable for boys to display aggressive or disruptive behaviour and be noncompliant and as a result, less emphasis is put on them to develop social and emotional skills.

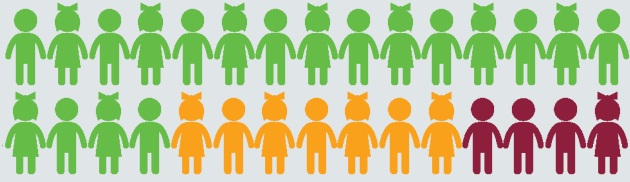
Gender differences initiated by social norms in early years might be one reason why boys have more social emotional and behavioural difficulties once they reach school age and beyond.



4. Garner, P. W., Mahatmya, D., Brown, E. L., & Vesely, C. K. (2014). Promoting Desirable Outcomes Among Culturally and Ethnically Diverse Children in Social Emotional Learning Programs: A Multilevel Heuristic Model. *Educational Psychology Review*, 26(1), 165-189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-014-9253-7>.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN A CLASS OF 30 PUPILS?

An average class of 30 pupils will have:



19 children with no apparent needs

7 children with one type of difficulty (either social emotional, or behavioural)

4 children with high levels of needs in both domains (commonly one girl and three boys)

There is an overlap between social emotional difficulties and behavioural difficulties, and many children who have issues in one domain will also experience issues in the other.

2/3 of the class is also doing well, and there is a lot we can learn from this.

- What underlies the social emotional wellbeing of these pupils?
- What insights can we learn from these children, and how can we apply those learnings to support pupils with difficulties?
- How can teachers facilitate peer learning between children doing well in certain areas and those lacking certain skills?

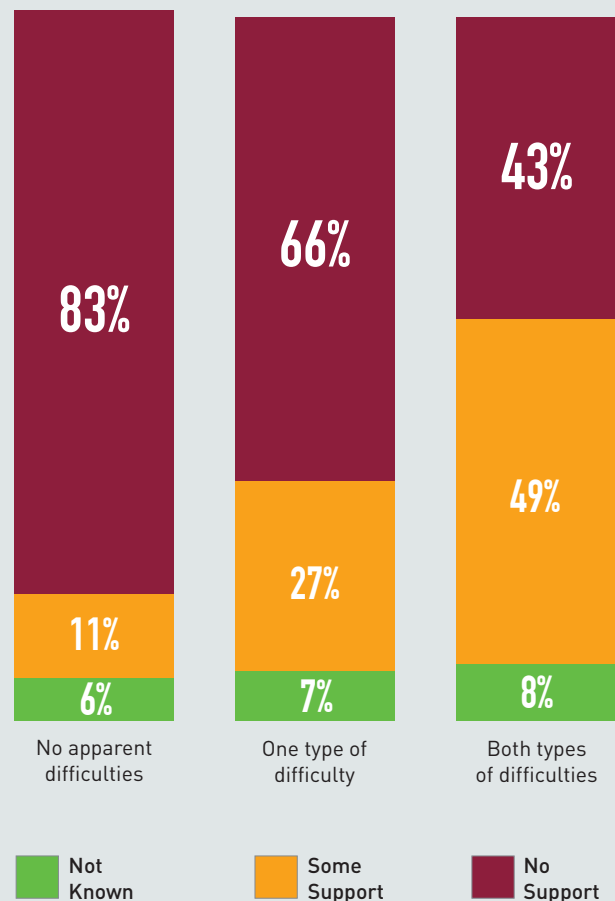
SUPPORT PROVIDED TO PUPILS

Teacher reports show that **43% of children with high levels of social emotional and behavioural difficulties do not access any form of wellbeing or mental health support** – either at school or outside.

Many reasons can explain why these vulnerable children do not receive support: schools may not be aware of the scale of difficulty experienced by these children, they may not have the financial resources to provide help, or the expertise required may not be available in the school and community.

Children (as well as their families and their teachers) are therefore left to deal with difficulties alone and are at risk of developing more severe wellbeing or mental health issues as time goes on.⁵

WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROVIDED TO CHILDREN



5. Weare, K. (2015). What works in promoting social and emotional well-being and responding to mental health problems in schools. London: National Children's Bureau.

COMMON DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY PUPILS

The Boxall Profile is divided into two sections, one focusing on the social emotional difficulties and one measuring the behavioural issues of pupils. Each section is further divided into 10 strands, providing insight into a particular social emotional skill (strands A to J) or behaviour (strands Q to Z).

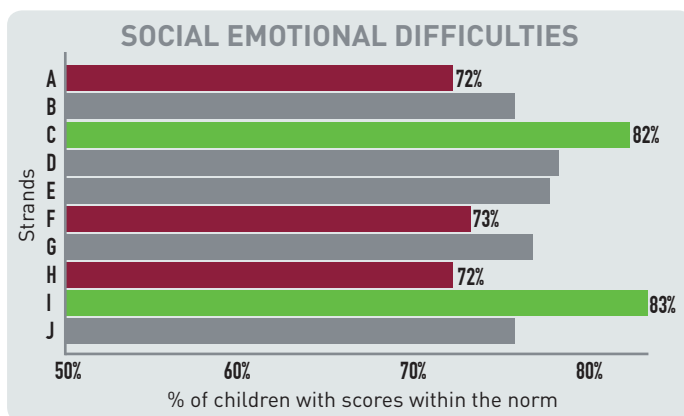
By exploring individual strands, we can gain insight into the difficulties commonly experienced by children, irrespective of whether they have overall high levels of difficulties or no apparent needs.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES

Children are most frequently struggling with:

- **giving purposeful attention**, for example being able to listen when the teacher is talking to the class (**Strand A, with only 72%** of pupils scoring within the norm)
- **feeling emotionally secure** (**Strand F, 73%**) eg asking for help when needed, or valuing one's work
- **accommodating to others** (**Strand H, 72%**) eg sharing and taking turns when playing with toys

Children have fewer difficulties **connecting up experiences**, for example communicating with coherence a simple train of thought (**Strand C, 82%**) and **responding constructively to others** (**Strand I, 83%** eg offering help to a peer if needed).

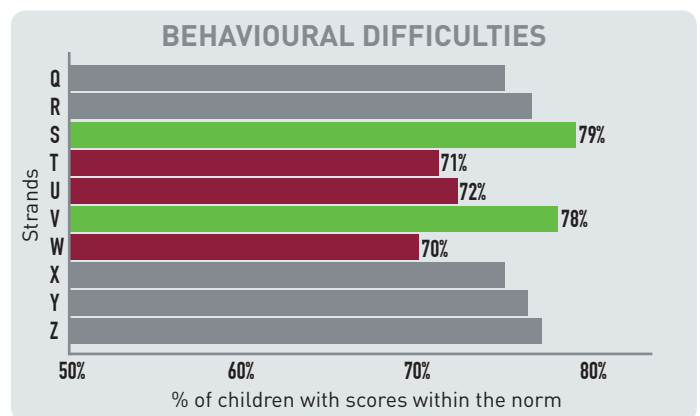


BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES

In terms of behavioural difficulties, children are particularly struggling with:

- **displaying inconsequential behaviour**, for example behaving erratically or inappropriately (**Strand T, with only 71%** of children scoring within the norm)
- **craving attachment and reassurance**, eg repeatedly seeking approval from the teacher (**Strand U, 72%**)
- **having an undeveloped/insecure sense of self**, eg not being able to tolerate small imperfections in one's work, or not being confident about what one is meant to do (**Strand W, 70%**)

Children display less frequently behaviours such as making **undifferentiated attachments** (**Strand S, 79%**) for example clinging to objects or getting over-excited when praised, and **avoiding/rejecting attachment** (**Strand V, 78%**), eg lacking trust in the teacher.



WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE FINDINGS?

These findings highlight that teachers are managing a spectrum of needs on a daily basis which impact how well children are able to learn and function in the classroom. Teachers need adequate training and practices to manage those needs effectively.

In addition, although many difficulties are experienced by children with overall high levels of need, children who are generally doing well in class can also display issues, for example having minor developmental gaps in a few skills. These pupils are frequently those who do not get picked up by teachers, and as a consequence do not receive any form of support.

Universal screening ensures that every child's needs are identified and addressed early, preventing minor gaps in social emotional skills to develop into more complex issues that become harder to resolve as time goes on.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MEASURING THE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF ALL PUPILS

The Nurture Group Network along with many other organisations believes that understanding the social, emotional and mental health needs of all pupils should be a vital aspect of education.

Schools conducting universal screenings of pupils' wellbeing will be able to identify and respond as early as possible to pupils' needs, before they escalate and develop into more complex behavioural or mental health difficulties.

Better understanding of needs will lead to better delivery of appropriate support and will in turn lead to improved academic attainment, behaviour, attendance and reduced numbers of exclusions.

The systematic assessment of social emotional and behavioural needs will further support school leadership and local government when allocating resources and planning interventions.

ADOPTING A GRADUATE APPROACH TO NURTURE AND WELLBEING

A whole school approach to wellbeing is increasingly accepted as the most effective approach to promoting children and young people's mental health. That includes support for students and staff, working across the curriculum and involving pupils, governors and parents. It means provision for developing the wellbeing and resilience of everyone and targeted support for those who have significant difficulties. This can only happen with senior leadership commitment, staff development and a supportive culture.

The National Nurturing Schools Programme is a programme that allows staff to develop personally and professionally while embedding a nurturing culture throughout their schools, enhancing teaching and learning, promoting healthy outcomes for children and young people. This is achieved by focusing on emotional needs and development as well as academic learning in a whole school environment.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS THROUGH TEACHER TRAINING

The school environment can be extremely stressful for both pupils and staff, which in turn can lead to poor emotional wellbeing and mental health of all involved. Due to their privileged relation with pupils, teachers can play a key role in answering pupils' social and emotional needs.

Teacher training should empower teachers to support the wellbeing of their pupils. Teachers should be equipped with a better understanding of the importance of social emotional wellbeing and need effective tools to help them make social and emotional learning a part of everyday classroom activity.

Teachers need to be aware of nurturing principles and whole class nurturing interventions that can help them effectively manage and answer children's emerging social emotional and behavioural needs, thus allowing them to deliver quality first teaching.



ABOUT THE NUTURE GROUP NETWORK

The Nurture Group Network (NGN) works tirelessly to promote access to education for all. With increasing numbers of children and young people affected by social, emotional and behavioural difficulties inhibiting their progress and limiting their life chances, NGN has developed a range of interventions and support to give disadvantaged children and young people the opportunity to be the best they can be.

Whether it is delivering certified training, supporting whole school or authority-wide nurturing schools or promoting evidence-based research, NGN is providing quality support and resources to make nurturing provision a reality for pupils across the UK and beyond.


Visit our website for more information about the Nurture Group Network


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