



Family Links

Hot Tips from schools using the Nurturing Programme

(collated from Nurturing News, the newsletter for Oxfordshire schools, 2000-06)



Assemblies

☆ At St John Fisher R C School, the children and staff sit together in concentric circles – with a candle in the middle – for whole school assemblies.

☆ During singing assemblies at Dashwood School, jotting the names of enthusiastic singers on a whiteboard works a treat in terms of inviting wholehearted participation.



Circle time

☆ Y5 and Y6 pupils at Carswell Primary School in Abingdon held pictures of thought bubbles above their heads to connect their actions with their feelings when doing role play in a recent circle time session – a great way to develop emotional literacy.

☆ During the last St Ebbe's School residential, a special circle time was held every evening to celebrate the achievements of each day.

☆ Thoughtful use of a 'letter' on a magazine problem page as the stimulus for small-group discussion helped Y5 at Vaughan School, Harrow broach a sensitive issue during circle time.

☆ Teachers at St Ebbe's School have invested in gloves comprising five different finger puppets to ring the changes during Puppet Power.

☆ Hanborough Manor School staff find older pupils are keen to perform puppet shows to reinforce Programme language for the younger classes, having written the scripts themselves.



Classroom

- ☆ Children at Bishop Loveday Primary School each have a “well done” wallet. All adults in school award stickers for special achievements and when all the empty sticker spots in the wallet have been filled, the child earns an extra special gold sticker from the Head.
- ☆ Children at New Hinksey have a postcard each on which a gold star is stuck every time they use their personal power especially well; by collecting 20 stars, they earn a laminated “I use my personal power” badge.
- ☆ One way to make the classroom Time Out area a calming place is to do as a teacher at Church Cowley St James Primary School has done and instal a fish tank in that very spot.
- ☆ A Y1 class at Bayard’s Hill Primary School has an “I’m using my personal power to make a good choice” bracelet in the Time Out area; the children enjoy putting it on as a reminder. Our Worcester cascade team tells of a similar strategy working wonders in one of their schools, with badges instead of a bracelet.
- ☆ To mark the end of the school year, Y5s at St Barnabas School each took home a laminated card covered with praise and kind comments from the rest of the class – talk about making someone special!
- ☆ One teacher at St Mary’s C E Primary School in Banbury recognises good choices during small group work by simply putting a postcard stand holding a smiley face card on the table where she sees the most positive choices being made.
- ☆ To reinforce classroom dos and don’ts for visual learners, Croughton All Saints’ Primary School pupils are photographed with the school camera as they role play different scenarios; the photographs are then displayed next to the class rules.
- ☆ At St John Fisher every classroom has a ‘Friendship Corner’, where children are encouraged to sit and talk if they need to sort out a problem.
- ☆ Y5 pupils at Vaughan School are busy creating ‘Star of the Week’ books: a different child is chosen each week, his/her classmates write why they think s/he is a star and their comments are then published and presented to the ‘Star’.
- ☆ This is the term for transfer mornings, which Fir Tree use as an excellent opportunity for pupils to develop rules for their new classes with their new teacher, so that these can be up and running from day one of the new school year.
- ☆ The ‘cool-off corner’ is much sought-after by Y5 pupils at Church Cowley St James. Voile panels, a sandtimer, a cushion and a teddy cater for all comers – time out to calm down in style.
- ☆ One of Croughton All Saints’ Year 6’s favourite collaborative rewards is the opportunity to teach a lesson: whichever table group earns most raffle tickets for good behaviour one week, plans and teaches a lesson the following week. It’s not only the children who reap the benefits of this reward - the subject is chosen by the teacher and TA but the pupils do the rest!



Collaborative Reward Systems

☆ Innovative ideas for collaborative reward charts at St Peter's C E Primary School in Cassington include a 3-D collage of an open mouth with balloon tonsils and egg box teeth. Black caps covering the teeth are 'brushed' off as the class works towards its reward!

☆ If you're stuck for new collaborative classroom reward system ideas, why not try one of the following ideas, suggested during our Combined Cascade Training:

- add creatures to a pond display – earn the same number of nets as there are children in the class – go pond-dipping;
- 'grow' apples - 'Every apple on the tree is a good job done by me' – make toffee-apples;
- earn a footprint – teacher/TA sticks footprints to walls so that they lead to hidden treasure – enjoy the treasure, whatever it may be.

☆ At Sandhills County Primary School, a 'friendship garden' is growing in the entrance hall as each class completes its own single flower/plant reward chart and adds it to the whole school display.

☆ This term's whole school 2-D reward chart at Fir Tree Junior School in Wallingford is a picture of a target with a real basketball hoop alongside it. As the school gem jar fills up, a picture of a ball is moved ever closer to the centre of the target; when the jar is full and the ball has reached the centre, a child is invited to throw a real ball through the hoop at the school assembly. Then everyone sees it's time for the whole school reward...

☆ The 'Kindness Tree' at Queensway School, Banbury encourages the whole school community to be specific about praise. This 3-D hall display becomes leafier throughout the term as individual praise leaves are added. On each leaf is the name of the person praised, a brief description of what they did and the signature of the person who noticed.

☆ Children at Dashwood Primary School in Banbury stand in line beautifully at the end of playtime as they try to win for their class the school lining-up trophy – a big cup adorned with ribbons. The winners keep the trophy in their classroom until the next playtime...

☆ Lunchtime supervisors at Stanton Harcourt C E Primary School have made a success of their lunchtime raffle ticket reward system by tying it in with the whole-school collaborative 'field of sunflowers' display. Raffle tickets, given on the spot to reinforce good choices at playtime, earn points which in turn earn petals on the sunflowers.

☆ At Milton Primary School, the staff have a reward chart of their own in the staff room – a circle divided into sections. They write praise for each other in each section and, when the whole circle is filled in, take turns to bring in a delicious cake.

☆ One of Croughton All Saints' Y6's favourite collaborative rewards is the opportunity to teach a lesson: whichever table group earns most raffle tickets for good behaviour one week, plans and teaches a lesson the following week. It's not only the children who reap the benefits of this reward – the subject is chosen by the teacher and TA but the pupils do the rest!



Displays

☆ This term at Lawn Upton Middle School, corridor display boards are being changed weekly to reinforce Nurturing Programme themes, with teachers alternating responsibility for the displays.

☆ The past term's collaborative reward charts can be recycled to good effect, as at St Ebbe's where a colourful reward chart display in the hall reinforces the message that pupils pull together in every class.



Lunch time

☆ Lunchtime Supervisor Awards have been going strong for over a year now at Faringdon Infant School – children are proud to earn them by making good choices (being spotted doing so four times ensures a certificate for that child).

☆ Y5/6 pupils at St John Fisher join KS1 classes at the end of lunchtime to help them sort out any problems by using mediation skills in the classroom Friendship Corners.

☆ Vaughan School's lunchtime Calm & Quiet Club offers 8 children (and 2 adults!) a chance to develop social skills whilst playing with water, sand and playdough.

☆ Lunchtime supervisors at St Mary's, Chipping Norton – inspired by a St Leonard's teacher who used to use this idea at quiet reading time – sometimes play a CD at lunchtime to help the children gauge the 'right' volume for their chat. If the music can't be heard, they know they need to quieten down.

☆ Church Cowley St James' lunchtime staff use a tambourine rather than raised voices to get everyone's attention at lunchtime, so everyone's stress levels are kept low.

☆ Lunchtimes at Crowmarsh Gifford are being given a new lease of life as a result of the school council's dinner questionnaire, in which questions like "Would you like tablecloths/plates/bowls/the table set/napkins/pictures on the blackboard to show the food that day?" have got everybody thinking.



Miscellaneous

☆ Rose Hill School's successful bid for a lottery grant last year has led to the creation of a sensory room where all children can chill out when they feel the need.

☆ Visitors to West Oxford will recognise Y6 pupils by their red fleeces – a measure of not only their status but also their skill at persuasive letter-writing, since the original colour choice was blue!

☆ Pupils at West Oxford responded in droves to 'Bring Your Father to School Day' – and the dads seemed to enjoy it too!

☆ At Fir Tree's breakfast club, Manners the bear changes places each morning to sit with a child displaying particularly good table manners – a great way to reward these.

☆ Children at St John Fisher rave about their fruit bar, which offers a healthy alternative to salty and sugary snacks: children may buy fruit or fruit juice from kitchen staff mid-morning for just 20p each.

☆ The school council at Bartholomew School has sub-committees that include one for emotional health – a time-saving and effective way to manage all the issues that the council of a flourishing secondary school needs to address.

☆ At Bayard's Hill, kindness detectives play an important role in spotting (and rewarding) good behaviour all around the school.

☆ St Ebbe's recently commissioned a local artist to create a tree from copper piping, its leaves embossed with "words that mean a lot of us"; card leaves – the colours of which will change in line with the seasons – will be added to recognise individual acts of kindness and friendship.

☆ At John Watson, a Year 5 pupil focusing on using his personal power appropriately was invited to visit the nursery as a positive role model once he's achieved his target; wild horses couldn't have held him back!

☆ Children at Pegasus are getting used to having an in-house aromatherapist and offering each other hand and head massages. Staff have been known to indulge as well...



Outdoors

☆ Friendship benches in St John Fisher's playground are colour-coded to co-ordinate with house team colours.



Planning

☆ Rose Hill First School staff is finding it effective to use the Nurturing Programme in the Autumn Term, then maintain the structure and format of the Programme whilst also drawing in some SMILE activities during the spring and summer. (Do contact me if you are an Oxfordshire school but don't have a copy of our *Nurturing Programme-SMILE... Again!* framework document.)

☆ At Sandhills, TAs join in with all ten class sessions each autumn term, to get the academic year off to a good start.



Staff Nurturing

☆ Have you heard that at Church Cowley St James a holistic therapist is booked to visit once a week? He offers reflexology/aromatherapy massage at the incredible rate of £8 per session and is keen to build up a clientele.

☆ At Mabel Prichard, there's school-wide recognition that adults need Time Out too. If someone has had to handle a difficult incident, they're covered for long enough to get a cup of tea and a breather.

☆ How about starting up a nurturing box in the staff room? Staff at Pegasus drop messages of praise to each other into the box and the Link Teachers play postman, distributing them daily!

☆ At Cutteslowe, staff swap magazines via a basket in the staff room, saving money and sharing interests.

☆ Did you know that SS Mary & John staff start their weekly meeting with a brief circle time to tell each other something they've achieved that day?

☆ During a recent staff meeting at Lynams, the staff turned niggles on their head by saying "One thing that would nurture me is..."

☆ Fir Tree finds that a regular 'good news' slot at the beginning of staff meetings gives a positive start to discussion.

☆ Monday night is yoga night at Fir Tree – any of the staff who can make it are encouraged to join the class!

☆ Over in Bicester, staff at St Edburg's C E Primary School in Bicester are already queueing up to book in-house pedicures and foot massages with a multi-talented TA.