

1 December 2010

Mr H Martin
Headteacher
Yew Tree Primary School
Birchfield Way
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West Midlands
WS5 4DX

Dear Mr Martin

Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: nurture groups

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit with Linda Rockey HMI on 9 November as part of our survey on the use of nurture groups for pupils who are vulnerable to underachieving.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to a national report. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributors or contributing institutions but individuals and institutions will not be identified in the main text without your consent.

This letter summarises our discussion at the end of the visit.

Features of good practice

- Senior leaders are thoroughly committed to the nurture group provision. They have a clear vision and philosophy for it and see it as something which is at the heart of the school's work with vulnerable pupils. Together with their staff they have expanded many of the nurture group principles to create a 'nurturing school' for all pupils.
- The nurture group is well established and has evolved successfully over time. The two nurture group staff have been leading and running the provision together for many years. They are trained well, very dedicated and have continually developed and improved their work. They work very effectively with other key staff, such as the special educational needs coordinator and the family support manager, to ensure that pupils receive the range of support that they need.
- Staff carefully select pupils to attend the group. They use appropriate assessment tools and their professional knowledge of the pupils to create groups that will benefit from the support offered.

- Pupils remain a full part of the school and of their main class while attending the nurture group. Importantly, they attend registration and assemblies and spend half of each day with their class.
- There are clear procedures for communication between the nurture group staff and the class teachers which assists the pupils' smooth transition between sessions.
- The nurture group classroom is a bright, welcoming and carefully designed environment. Music is used to create a calm atmosphere. Visual cues, such as photographs, help pupils to understand the structure of their day and how to behave. They also assist pupils to express how they feel.
- A clearly structured reward system helps pupils to follow routines, such as coming in calmly from break time, and to concentrate on reaching their individual targets.
- The nurture group staff consider the needs of the pupils carefully and plan a range of appropriate tasks that meets both their academic and social needs. The continual emphasis on language development is highly effective in extending pupils' ability to express themselves clearly and to increase their understanding.
- The school's data indicate that the pupils who attended the nurture group during the last year made very good progress in their social and emotional development. Their improved learning skills have enabled them to make accelerated progress in their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents of pupils who had attended or are currently attending the group were overwhelmingly positive about their children's experience and progress. They valued enormously the additional support that they received from nurture group staff last year through the Friday meetings, and regret that, because of a temporary lack of space, this is no longer taking place.

Area for improvement, which we discussed:

- consider collating the wealth of valuable information that the school holds about the personal and academic progress of this group of pupils to be able to analyse successes and identify potential areas for further development.

I hope that this visit has been useful in the further development of this aspect of the school's work.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King
Her Majesty's Inspector