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Mrs G Beeson  
Headteacher  
Perry Beeches School  
Beeches Road  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
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Dear Mrs Beeson

### **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 Sheena MacDonald HMI on 8 December 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 agreement.

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

#### **Strengths of the nurture group provision**

- Pastoral care is at the heart of the school's work and this is especially effective with those pupils who face challenging circumstances. A strong commitment is evident to enable pupils to remain in school and avoid exclusion.
- A consistent, positive pastoral policy operates throughout the school. The regular, yet judicious, use of praise motivates pupils to live by the agreed and well-publicised code of conduct.
- The nurture group, which is led by three teaching assistants, has been in operation for the past six terms. They are trained appropriately, very dedicated and keen to develop and improve their work.
- Pupils attend the nurture group for three afternoons a week. They spend the rest of the time in their class or in their literacy and numeracy groups. Staff ensure that they do not regularly miss areas of the curriculum such as physical education or music and will provide other opportunities to help to develop these skills.

- Careful thought is given to the selection of those who attend the nurture group. Staff use appropriate assessment tools alongside their professional knowledge of the pupils to create groups which will benefit most from the support offered.
- There is regular communication between the nurture group staff and the class teachers, which helps with the pupils' smooth transition between sessions.
- The nurture group room is a bright and welcoming environment. Music is used to create a calm atmosphere. A clearly structured reward system helps the pupils to follow routines, and to concentrate on reaching their individual targets. Visual cues, such as photographs, help pupils to understand how to behave. The use of puppet dolls helps pupils to express clearly how they feel.
- The regular modelling of specific language is effective in extending pupils' ability to express themselves clearly and to increase understanding of themselves.
- The school's data indicate that most pupils who attended the nurture group during the last year made satisfactory progress in their social and emotional development. In addition, their improved learning skills enabled them to make satisfactory progress with their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents and carers of children who have attended or are currently attending the nurture group are very positive about their children's experience and progress. They communicated how much they valued the additional support. One carer commented, 'Every school should have an Oasis class.'

### **Areas for improvement, which we discussed**

- Assess more accurately the progress that pupils make, academically, socially and emotionally.
- Use regular assessments to assist with planning to ensure that pupils' personal and academic progress accelerates.
- Sharpen up the monitoring and evaluation of social, emotional, behavioural and academic provision to identify any areas for improvement.
- Consider how better to dovetail the academic content of the curriculum with the personal, social and emotional aspects.

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

Yours sincerely

**Linda Rockey**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**