

14 January 2011

Mrs B O'Shea
Headteacher
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary
School,
Yardley Wood
Birmingham
B13 0EU

Dear Mrs O'Shea

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 7 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

- Senior leaders demonstrated a clarity of purpose and vision in setting up nurture group provision to address particular concerns. They were thorough in seeking advice and putting training in place to ensure success.
- Staff are well trained and passionate about the nurture approach. Many of the principles and approaches have been adapted to create a 'nurturing school' for all pupils with a strong commitment to developing good learning behaviour.
- The nurture group was established within the context of a caring school which knows its pupils and families very well and where communication between staff and home is regular, honest and effective. Parents and carers are very positive about the nurture provision and the impact that this has on their children. Pupils are also positive about their experiences in the Orchard class and are able to speak confidently about the progress that they and their friends made during that time.

- The initial and ongoing assessment procedures, alongside professional knowledge of the pupils, are used well to select pupils and to identify and tackle specific difficulties.
- The school pays careful attention to the inclusion of pupils who are receiving nurture support and they remain a full part of the school, taking part in assemblies and whole-school activities.
- Well-considered reintegration procedures and effective communication between staff have enabled pupils to make smooth transitions from nurture group to larger class groupings.
- The school's data indicate that the pupils who attended the nurture group made very good progress in their social and emotional development. Their improved learning skills have enabled them to make significantly accelerated progress with their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Monitoring by senior staff is rigorous. The governing body is involved in making key decisions and evaluating the group's impact.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed

- Use the assessment information and professional knowledge to identify more specific targets for success in order to more effectively evaluate the impact of the provision.

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

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector