

9 February 2011

Mr J McCormack
Headteacher
Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Primary School
Tout Hill
Wincanton
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Dear Mr McCormack

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 26 January 2011 as part of our survey of the use of nurture groups for pupils who are vulnerable to underachieving.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

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

Strengths of the nurture group provision

- There is a very strong whole-school nurturing ethos.
- The nurture group is intrinsic to the school and is seen as part of an intervention package.
- It is flexible to meet the needs of the individual child and offers relaxation, a forest school and creative activities.
- The nurture group is given high status in the school by senior leaders.
- The school makes good use of the Boxall profile to identify specific social, emotional and behavioural targets for the children.
- Provision is matched closely to these targets.
- The targets are used also by class teachers and this supports the children in lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations of children in the nurture group and engage well them in practical activities. As a result, lessons are fun and children enjoy school.

- The progress of children attending the nurture group is monitored thoroughly through bi-annual assessments of social, emotional and behavioural progress using the Boxall profile, assessments every six weeks of National Curriculum sublevels, and a progress-review meeting each term which includes a review of children's individual academic and personal and social targets.
- Children, parents and carers view the provision positively.
- Parents and carers appreciate that the school knows the family well and engages them in supporting their children.
- Parents and carers believe that, without the nurture group provision, their children would not have coped in class lessons.
- Parents, carers and staff identify key features of the success of the nurture group as giving the children time and space with more flexible boundaries than in a more formal lesson, building on their interests, enabling them to develop trust in an adult who listens to them and knows their 'bigger picture', and building their self-esteem through praise and rewards.
- Children develop a sense of security and independence through the clear structure and routines of the nurture group.
- Their integration into class is planned and supported carefully.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- monitoring the impact of the nurture group on children's attendance
- ensuring that all nurture group staff are aware of the children's levels in literacy and numeracy.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop 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 will be sent to your local authority.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater
Her Majesty's Inspector