

25 March 2011

Ms G Peck
Headteacher
Putnoe Lower School
Overdale
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK41 8EN

Dear Ms Peck

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 my colleague Stephen McShane HMI on 1 March 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

- You and the senior leaders are passionate about ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as possible, both academically and personally, and this underpins the ethos of the school.
- The school's commitment to nurturing principles is evident across all classes through the consistent use of an inclusive behaviour policy, the embedded nature of values and the celebration of each individual's talents. In addition, an imaginative curriculum excites pupils and inspires learning.
- Pupils are selected very carefully to attend the group. Professional knowledge of the pupils is underpinned by effective use of assessment tools to select pupils and to identify and tackle specific difficulties. There is close liaison with parents.
- The school uses tools, such as the Boxall Profile and Reintegration Readiness assessments, well to track pupils' progress in emotional and social development and to support the very carefully planned reintegration of pupils back into mainstream. This process makes effective use of cross-

school colleagues, such as the speech and language assistant, family liaison worker and learning mentor.

- Caring staff, consistency of expectations and high-quality nurturing mean that pupils are happy, feel safe and gain in confidence.
- Pupils remain very much a part of their mainstream classes and class teachers continue to have full responsibility for children's academic progress. This is monitored and tracked very well.
- Close liaison between staff, including planning the nurture group curriculum in conjunction with the mainstream classes, ensures that transition between the classes works well. As a result, nurture group pupils make good progress personally, socially, emotionally and academically.
- Parents and pupils are very positive about the difference the group makes and about the support it gives to families as well as to children.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- streamlining the current assessment and planning records so that they are sharper in identifying and targeting individual priorities
- making better use of the wealth of data to evaluate the overall quality of nurture group provision and identify the next steps for improvement
- establishing systematic monitoring to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning in the nurture group.

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

Sheena MacDonald
Her Majesty's Inspector