

30 March 2011

Ms M Fearn  
Headteacher  
St George's Infant and Nursery School  
St Peter's Road  
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Dear Ms Fearn

### **Ofsted 2010–11 survey inspection programme: nurture groups**

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and children, during my visit on 2 March 2011 as part of our survey of the use of nurture groups for children 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**

- The nurture group is an integral part of a whole-school approach to inclusion. The teaching methods and approaches used by the nurture group staff are also used more widely in classrooms by both teachers and learning support assistants. This provides consistent support for the children and helps them to develop self-confidence and to build trusting relationships with adults.
- The nurture group is part of a comprehensive range of provision and intervention in the school. Parents speak highly of the family support they have received when their children join. This reflects the school's commitment to strengthening the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- The small nurture group, named the Yellow Ted class, provides an emotionally secure setting where children spend two afternoons a week. The room is warm and welcoming and the staff provide significant early learning experiences which many of the children have missed. Activities are planned to complement those experienced in the mainstream class where children spend the majority of their time. Frequent and informal

dialogue is a feature of the communication between nurture staff and class teachers.

- The process used to select children for the nurture group is clear and thorough. Assessment of social and emotional development shows that most children make good progress. Helpful analysis of the Boxall questionnaires provides a picture of strengths and areas for improvement which then feed into individual targets for pupils.
- You are developing a system to track the academic progress made by the children in the nurture group and this has the potential to strengthen the assessment of overall progress. Reintegration is managed sensitively and support is provided for the children who return to their classes on a full-time basis.
- Parents are very positive about the nurture group support and speak movingly about the changes they have seen in their children's behaviour and attitudes. One parent spoke about feelings of helplessness and failure when her child would not settle in school. However, 'Yellow Ted's turned him around' and the change in his attitude has been 'unbelievable'. Parents are concerned about the move to the next schools at the end of Year 2 and the effect this may have on the progress their children have made.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:**

- developing a lead professional role to coordinate the range of school provision and support for children and families
- improving both the daily assessment of learning in the nurture group so that significant moments of learning are recorded and the system for formal information sharing of such information with class teachers.

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

**Maureen York**  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**