

25 February 2011

Ms S Walker
Headteacher
Belmont Primary School
Belmont Street
Swadlincote
Derbyshire
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Dear Ms Walker

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 with Heather Yaxley HMI on 10 February 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

- Senior leaders, including governors, are thoroughly committed to the nurture group provision. As a result, it is an integral part of the school's provision and the principles extend across the school so that it provides a nurturing environment.
- The management of the group enables a relatively high number of pupils to access and benefit from the provision while also maintaining membership of their mainstream classes. This also aids the transfer of strategies and the wider use of the language of nurturing across the school.
- Staff are well trained and passionate about the nurture approach. All school staff receive training and visit the group so that they have a good understanding of the principles and practices. This aids their ability to identify those pupils for whom this provision is most likely to be effective.
- The school works closely with the local authority nurture team to provide training and coaching and to keep up with developments and best practice. They also liaise well with external colleagues to ease the transfer of pupils who may need more intensive intervention.

- Initial and ongoing assessments, such as Boxall profile, in conjunction with professional knowledge, are used well to select pupils and to identify targets and strategies to tackle specific difficulties. There are clear links between assessment, targets, personal plans and curriculum planning.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the difference the group has made to their children and about the support the school gives to their families as well as to their children.
- The children enjoy attending the group and are able to say how they are helped to develop strategies to improve their behaviour and relationships. The time that children spend in the nurture group has a lasting influence on their ability to put into practice the strategies they have learnt. For example, older pupils have individual support notebooks to help them remember the strategies when they are no longer in the group.
- The school makes good use of external expertise, such as Creative Partnerships, to enliven the nurture group curriculum while also developing interesting strategies to develop emotional resilience and personal skills.
- The school uses a straightforward and systematic method of gathering evidence and evaluating the effectiveness of their provision, particularly on pupils' personal, social and emotional development and attendance.
- The assessment and tracking evidence shows that the pupils who attend the nurture group make good progress in their social and emotional development and improve their attendance significantly.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- further refining the use of tracking information to evaluate the quality and longer-term impact of the provision with a sharper focus on pupils' attainment.

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