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Schools chief drops in at Millom Infants

Published at 10:42, Saturday, 17 October 2009

CHILDREN got the chance to talk to a government minister when she visited their school.

Pupils at Millom Infant School met Diana Johnson yesterday.

Schools minister Ms Johnson was joined by the town's MP Jamie Reed.

The two Labour MPs spoke to the teachers and officials from Cumbria County Council about the school's nurture group. It helps the social and emotional development of a select group of pupils. Headteacher Pauline Lambert said: "The visit was requested by Jamie Reed when he did a speech to parliament about nurture groups.

"We were very excited about the minister coming. I think she was impressed with the way we are running the group. She had a good look around and talked to the children and the staff. Jamie has been very supportive."

The MPs were joined by acting Millom regeneration boss Roland Woodward, the county council's head of schools and learning John Swainston and Wendy Roden, coordinator for the county council's West Cumbria learning innovation programme.

Ms Johnson, who is MP for Hull North, said: "Millom Infants is a delightful school to visit.

"The nurture group is an excellent example of how to help children who have issues with confidence.

"Hearing from Jamie Reed in the House of Common I wanted to see for myself. I am pleased and have been very impressed with what I have seen."

The visit marked the release of the national Cambridge Primary Review which calls for formal lessons to be scrapped for children under six.

The review was published yesterday.

It says five-year-olds should continue to learn through play rather than through timetabled lessons, a method used in nursery schools.

Ms Johnson added: "I am disappointed with the Cambridge review.

"It is very outdated. Another review was published in, I think, April, by Jim Rose, who is very well renowned in education.

"What Jim Rose says is the government basically tells schools how to teach.

"It talks about giving schools more freedom and flexibility."