

Serco Inspections  
Colmore Plaza  
20 Colmore Circus Queensway  
Birmingham  
B4 6AT

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T:** 0121 679 9160  
**Direct email:** antony.grace@serco.com.



4 October 2013

Mrs Marion Murphy  
Executive Headteacher  
Surlingham Community Primary School  
Walnut Hill  
Surlingham  
Norwich  
NR14 7DQ

Dear Mrs Murphy

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Surlingham Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 3 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school's plans are not having sufficient impact. The school should take further action to:

- make clearer the leadership of teaching and learning, in order to give the executive headteacher more opportunities to evaluate the impact
- increase the frequency and rigour of lesson observations, in order to give staff more feedback about how to improve their teaching
- share the best teaching that exists in the school and in others, to make sure that pupils in all years make equally good progress as a result
- involve all staff in providing examples of progression in the subject they lead, in order to raise expectations of pupils across the curriculum
- apply new policies consistently well, for example marking, in order to give pupils more information about how to raise the standard of their work, including presentation and handwriting
- pursue the review of governance and its recommendations.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, I held meetings with you, the assistant headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, a parent governor and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school action plan, reviewed monitoring records, scrutinised a sample of teachers' marking, and visited classes to see pupils and staff at work.

## **Context**

Since the inspection, a new teacher has joined the school to replace two part-time teachers. The school continues in federation with Rockland St Mary Primary School which shares the same executive headteacher and governing body.

## **Main findings**

You have produced a series of action plans that show how the school intends to address the areas that require improvement. The plans are detailed, include clear success criteria, milestones to help measure progress and a wide range of activities to promote improvement. However, the school's actions have not had the impact expected by October. The quality of teaching is not improving quickly enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school. Pupils' attainment, although improved, is still not as high as it should be.

Although the roles and responsibilities of senior staff across the federation have been made clearer, the critical job of improving teaching and learning is still too dependent on your leadership. This is problematic given that you are the executive headteacher of two schools. Lessons are not being observed sufficiently regularly for you to know if the 'non-negotiable' expectations of staff are being applied well, or quickly enough. Your analysis of teachers' planning, programme of learning walks, tracking of pupils' progress and scrutiny of pupils' work provide valuable information, but not quickly enough to move the school to good. For example, the new marking policy is still not showing that pupils are able to improve their work as a result of consistently clear feedback. This includes further challenges set for more able pupils.

There is not enough evidence that staff are setting high expectations of teachers and pupils in the subjects they coordinate, leading improvements and measuring the impact. Expectations of pupils are limited by what the more able pupils in the school can do; staff are not using examples of good practice in other schools locally and nationally, to raise aspirations across all subjects. The teaching that requires improvement shows that strategies to spread the best practice in school are proving slow to take effect. For example, some lesson activities are suitably varied to meet the needs of pupils at different stages in their learning, others are not. Nevertheless, some of your new policies provide a good basis for wider improvement. For example, your new policy to display learning objectives for the day on classroom doors is making it easier for pupils, parents and carers to get involved in evaluating progress.

The governing body is keen to help the school secure a 'good' judgement at the next inspection. However, the external review of governance has not been completed or reported. Although this has not prevented governors from supporting the school, it has limited their preparedness to challenge the school, for example through further training, if required. Governors have suitable plans to use the expertise of a new governor with experience of early years education to help get this aspect of the school to good.

Ofsted will carry out another visit before the end of term, to monitor progress, provide further support and challenge the school until the next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school draws on support provided by the local authority that is valued by the school, for example visits by a 'county headteacher' and a literacy specialist. However, the local authority does not know the school and federation well enough to tailor support to the school's specific needs and evaluate its impact.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**