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Carol Green  
Executive headteacher  
Burston Community Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Green

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Burston Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 7 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- track pupils' achievements using targets for good or better progress for the academic year
- quickly complete the improvement plan with sufficient details to monitor improvements for the whole year
- include arrangements in the improvement plan for external partners to check the effectiveness of the actions taken.

### **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the Chair of the Governing Body, with three other governors and the school's improvement adviser from the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. Informal discussions took place with pupils to talk about behaviour. A sample of books was scrutinised alongside the

lead teacher to look at teachers' marking and pupils' presentation of work. The school improvement plan was evaluated.

## **Context**

The school remains in a hard federation with Tivetshall Primary School. You have been appointed as the permanent executive headteacher and share your time between both schools in the federation. Two of the three class teachers are new this term. One of the new teachers is the lead teacher, who is also the coordinator for special educational needs. Changes to the governing body include a new Vice-Chair, a new clerk, two new staff governors and new chairs for each of the committees.

## **Main findings**

Recognising that the inspection gave a clear way forward and that there is a big job to be done to make sure that pupils make good academic progress, you, the staff and the governing body wasted no time in getting started. Staff are working together enthusiastically towards commonly-agreed goals and the new term has started well.

Following the inspection, you and the governing body quickly prioritised improving pupils' behaviour, emphasising to staff and pupils the inter-relationship of behaviour and learning. Visitors and pupils say that behaviour has improved significantly. This happened because you made very clear the expectations on staff to implement the behaviour policy and quickly followed up any instances where this was not done properly. Pupils like the rewards and know exactly what is expected of them.

Greater delegation of leadership roles, such as for special educational needs and chairs of governors' sub-committees, means that you and the Chair of the Governing Body now have the time to focus specifically on strategic work and main priorities. Governors visit school more frequently, checking for themselves on improvements to teaching and pupils' achievements.

The improvement plan is not complete yet but, by putting a version in place for the short term, no time was wasted in getting on with the things that need to happen, such as improving pupils' behaviour and making sure new teachers can play a full part in the development. Coordinating the partnership plan with the improvement plan is effective in maintaining a focus on all developments alongside the things that need to improve most rapidly. However, in its current form, the improvement plan lacks the detail needed to sustain the current momentum. Additionally, the plan does not yet include arrangements for external partners to contribute to monitoring the school's work.

The improvement plan focuses appropriately on teaching and pupils' achievements, including raising the attainment of more-able pupils. In the past, teaching assistants have worked mostly with less-able pupils. You recognise that to make sure that they

play a significant role in supporting pupils of all abilities an audit of teaching assistants' skills needs to take place to identify any training required.

Having identified that some assessments of pupils' past performance are unreliable, you have made sure that current assessments are accurate. The assessments provide secure baselines but the tracking system does not yet identify specific targets for good or better progress for this academic year.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Together with the governing body, you welcome the challenge from the school's improvement adviser. The adviser maintains an appropriately close watch on the school's improvements and confirms the rapid start. The partnership of the two schools provides good opportunities for staff to work together and for pupils' to benefit from shared approaches to their academic and personal development.

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

Yours sincerely

Heather Yaxley

**Her Majesty's Inspector**