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23 June 2021

Alison Walker  
Headteacher  
Robinswood Primary Academy  
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Gloucester  
Gloucestershire  
GL4 6HE

Dear Ms Walker

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Robinswood Primary Academy**

Following my visit with Heather Barraclough, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) and Marie Thomas (HMI), to your school on 8 to 9 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in December 2019. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. We discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in our evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

**The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.**

**The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.**

**I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.**

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the executive headteacher of the Robinswood multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 8 and 9 June 2021**

### **Context**

The previous headteacher left in August 2020. A new headteacher and an assistant headteacher, from within the trust, took up their posts in September 2020. A special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and an assistant SENCo joined the school in September 2020. A mathematics leader and a pre-school leader were appointed from within school.

The chair of trustees left in October 2020. A new chair of trustees took up post in November 2020 and will step down in August 2021 to become a member of the trust. A new chair of trustees will begin in September 2021. Six new trustees have been appointed since the previous full inspection. There is no longer a local governing body.

COVID-19 has affected staffing, with some long-term absences. Leaders have made slower progress with the implementation of the full curriculum because of COVID-19.

During this monitoring inspection, we concentrated on the capacity of leadership to bring about improvements. In addition, we inspected the implementation of a phonics system and reading, writing and mathematics curriculums. We visited the pre-school and Reception classes to see the progress in these areas.

### **The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

Since the last full inspection, school leaders have hit the ground running and have made several important changes swiftly, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. They have tackled poor behaviour in an inclusive and helpful way. Consequently, the school is calm and orderly and a suitable place for learning. Pupils are polite and follow the COVID-19 restrictions, such as one-way systems, without fuss.

School leaders are tenacious, resilient and experienced in their fields. They work very well as a team and have the capacity to continue to improve the school. This is evident from the way they have managed to take the correct steps forward despite there being a national pandemic.

Leaders know the strengths of the school and the many weaknesses accurately. At the same time, they are sensitive to the overwhelming impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of staff and pupils. They respond to this with sensitive understanding.

There was a governance review in June 2020. This identified the many areas for improvement within strategic leadership that were needed. Although trustees have started the process of reforming committees, it is too soon to determine any impact.

Leaders have rightly concentrated on English and mathematics. Pupils' abilities in reading and calculation are starting to improve.

The early years leader has introduced a new phonics scheme. Teachers and teaching assistants in early years and key stage 1 have received appropriate training. Pupils understand how to decode words, and this is helping them to become more fluent readers. Books match the sounds that pupils know.

Reading in key stage 2 is ambitious. Pupils are starting to read with stronger comprehension. Leaders choose texts that extend pupils' vocabulary and help them to make sense of the wider world. School leaders are setting up a new and inviting library in the centre of the school.

Writing is not as strong. In key stage 1, too many pupils do not hold their pencils correctly and, too often, teachers ignore this. Some teachers are not checking each pupil's spelling, so errors continue. Equally, many teachers do not model writing effectively, so pupils' letter formation is weak.

Writing in key stage 2 has similar weaknesses. The subject knowledge of some teachers is not secure. As a result, they are unable to identify misconceptions in pupils' writing and intervene with corrections.

Leaders have planned a well-structured and sequenced curriculum in mathematics. Pupils respond well to newly established routines. They concentrate and take pride in their progress. Pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills are improving. However, there are still significant weaknesses to overcome, such as fluent understanding of times tables.

Changes in the pre-school are a success story. Children behave and learn well. With much support from the early years leader, the pre-school teachers are implementing a purposeful and personalised curriculum that allows children to develop physically, socially and academically. Children follow instructions as well as engaging independently in a very safe environment.

The Reception area is well equipped, and staff provide many suitable learning stations for children. This is an improvement since the last full inspection because of the training by the early years leader. However, staff do not have high enough expectations of children and do not manage attitudes and behaviours well. Consequently, many children are not learning. Too often, children get overexcited and mistreat some of the equipment, particularly in the outside area. Staff do not check this often enough.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils to have a broad curriculum with every national curriculum subject included. Subject leaders have completed the planning stage. Teachers have not received training yet in each subject.

The number of pupils with highly complex needs increased from a quarter of the school community to half during the national lockdowns. The SENCo has made sure that there is an up-to-date register of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She and the assistant SENCo are supporting teachers and teaching assistants in making appropriate adjustments to the curriculum for some of these pupils. It is too soon to comment on the impact of this. The very knowledgeable family support adviser and other members of the inclusion team work well to meet the needs of pupils and their families. Communication between the school and the community improved further during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Additional support**

The headteacher values the weekly meetings that she has with other leaders in the trust. These provide a rich source of support and suitable suggestions for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and current issues facing the school. She also has access to relevant local authority training.

There are trust leaders in SEND, phonics, mathematics and English. Relevant school leaders work with their trust counterparts. The mathematics leaders are part of the Department for Education's local hub for mathematics. This has provided them with helpful training.

The external school improvement adviser (SIA) has reviewed several areas of need in the school. She is training senior and middle leaders to be as discerning as she is so that improvements take place at the right level and at the right time. She demands high expectations continually and supports colleagues in making sure staff reach them.

The SIA works closely with the executive headteacher and provides support for school improvement. As yet, trustees have not made any substantive internal posts to increase capacity in school improvement.

### **Evidence**

We observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the executive headteacher, the school improvement adviser, the chair of trustees and two other trustees, pupils and staff.