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Dear Mr Lee

Special measures monitoring inspection of Roman Hill Primary School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection of your school that took place on 29 and 30 November 2022, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in April 2022.

During the inspection, Ashley Best-White, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you, other senior leaders, school committee members and representatives of the Waveney Valley Academies Trust the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also scrutinised the school's development plan, visited lessons, held meetings with curriculum leaders in early reading, mathematics and history and met with the early years leader, leaders responsible for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and wider development. We also met with support staff and spoke to pupils. I reviewed the school's information on attendance, spoke to parents at the school gate, listened to a number of pupils read with a familiar adult and considered responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, and responses to the staff survey. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Roman Hill Primary School remains inadequate and requires special measures. Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the category of concern to be removed.

I strongly recommend that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures.

Following the previous inspection, there have been changes to the leadership team. You were appointed as headteacher in October 2022. You have made internal secondments to the leadership team to support leaders' capacity for improvement. Regular visits from the trust's director of primary education have provided leaders with additional support and challenge. The trust's newly appointed director for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has supported leaders to improve provision for SEND. As a consequence of the work undertaken by leaders, some progress has been made to address the areas identified in the previous inspection report. However, you recognise that there is still significant work to do to ensure that pupils receive a high quality of education. You are aware that there is a need to increase leadership capacity further.

At the time of the previous inspection, the early reading curriculum had recently been introduced. Leaders have provided staff with further training to support the development of phonics teaching. As a result, teachers are more confident in teaching the early reading curriculum. However, the reading curriculum is not fully developed. Where lessons are consistently taught, teachers ensure that pupils practise and remember the sounds and words that they need to know. Pupils in these lessons are more confident with their reading. Further support and training are needed to make sure that the teaching of phonics is consistently and effectively taught as leaders intend.

Assessment opportunities are used to inform teachers so they can accurately match books to the sounds pupils know. When listening to pupils read with a familiar adult, pupils knew how to sound and blend words accurately. However, due to the inconsistency of phonics teaching, many pupils continue to struggle to develop into confident, fluent readers. Leaders need to ensure that the reading curriculum is more rigorously taught to develop pupils' fluency and confidence in reading. Leaders also need to ensure that gaps in pupils' phonic knowledge are identified and addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils, including those pupils with SEND.

During the last visit, there were a large number of pupils with SEND who were being taught in 'nurture rooms' out of the mainstream classroom. Leaders have acted promptly to reintegrate these pupils back into the classroom. Pupils have been carefully transitioned back into classrooms and although some pupils initially struggled, the reintegrated pupils are now thriving. These pupils now access the curriculum fully and are making progress in their learning. In some cases, they are also able to talk about how their behaviour has improved. You have repurposed the 'nurture rooms' to provide pupils with short periods of targeted intervention to help them, for example, manage their anxiety issues. Leaders need to continue to develop the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND. This includes ensuring pupils with SEND achieve well and produce work of consistently high quality.

The reintegration of pupils with SEND back into the classroom has had a positive impact on pupils' wider development. Pupils with SEND are accessing the same curriculum as their peers. This includes the teaching of PSHE. The recent wider development day, where pupils were off timetable, focused on mental health and well-being of pupils. This was put

in place to help all pupils but was something that you specifically identified would support those pupils with SEND.

The curriculum in early years has been overhauled. There is now a curriculum that is well planned to support what children need to know and develop during the early years so they are well prepared for key stage 1. The early years leader and staff are in the initial stages of delivering the curriculum. While the curriculum in early years is now established, leaders need to monitor and evaluate how well the curriculum helps children to make progress in the seven areas of learning in early years. Subject leaders need to continue to develop their understanding of early years to ensure that they are reviewing their curriculum content to align with what children know and remember.

Expectations around behaviour are now much higher. While the new behaviour policy is in the early stages of being implemented, there are now effective systems in place to support positive behaviour. Pupils understand the rewards and consequences of their behaviour and strive to be 'stars'. They know that if their behaviour is not as good as it should be, they end up on the 'cloud' and if this continues, they will receive a sanction. This has resulted in significantly improved pupil behaviour. In early years, children have clear and established routines. They demonstrate positive behaviours for learning. However, in some other year groups, low-level disruption is still evident in some lessons. Leaders need to continue to support teachers to implement the new behaviour policy consistently to ensure that behaviour in these areas continues to improve.

You have appointed an attendance officer to ensure that absences are followed up in line with the agreed school's policy. Expectations around attendance have been significantly raised. While attendance is still not where leaders want it to be, it has improved. There has been a focus on explaining to pupils and parents why attendance is important. Attendance is now celebrated on an individual pupil and a whole-class level. All absences are now followed up routinely and support is being put in place to support families where pupil absence has been an issue. The number of pupils arriving late at school is high. However, these pupils are typically those that previously would have been absent from school. While attendance is improving, leaders need to continue to take swift and effective action to further improve this area of their work.

Trustees and the school committee have started to make the necessary steps to know the quality of the school's provision. The trust is supporting you in your new role as headteacher. This includes the work that is focused on pupils with SEND. The trust recognises and supports the need to improve leadership capacity in the school to continue the work that has been started. Those responsible for governance understand the actions that leaders have taken to improve the quality of education. While progress has been made in this area, leaders must continue to support the development of the school's vision and strategy and to manage resources to ensure that improvement can be sustained.

In addition to the support provided by the trust, further ongoing specific support is planned from other commissioned providers. For example, the trust is commissioning an

external review of governance. The planned support aligns with leaders' improvement priorities.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Wayne Jarvis
His Majesty's Inspector