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Robert Lee
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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 28 and 29 March 2023, 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 second 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, Helen McCarney, Ofsted Inspector, and I discussed with you and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the multi-academy trust the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We explored these actions through meetings with leaders and staff, visits to lessons and reviewing school documentation. All this was considered 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

Since the last monitoring inspection, in November 2022, there have not been any notable changes to leadership and staffing. To support curriculum development, leaders have made two appointments. A deputy headteacher will start in April 2023 and an assistant headteacher will start in September 2023. Leaders have also appointed an additional

administrative assistant to free up more time for a staff member to oversee pupils' attendance.

There is success in how leaders continue to develop the early years curriculum. Staff redirect children skilfully, for example when their play lacks structure and they narrate children's actions to help them to build language. In the classroom, staff instil leaders' raised expectations of all pupils' behaviour. Children line up quickly and walk quietly when leaving the room. However, the self-discipline seen in the classroom is not seen in the outdoor learning environment. This is because the area is underdeveloped. Consequently, there is little to engage children in purposeful learning.

The reading curriculum still needs improving. Some of the same issues identified at the first monitoring inspection persist. This is because leaders lack expertise in how best to iron out the inconsistencies in teaching. So, there remains too many pupils who struggle to read. Trust leaders have commissioned external support to address this shortfall and changes are underway. These include replacing the reading curriculum and training staff in how to teach the new one well.

The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) continues to improve. Leaders meet regularly with staff to offer advice and training. Where needed, leaders facilitate external agencies working with support staff to upskill them, such as in helping teaching assistants to skilfully communicate a pupil's needs or to help build a pupil's understanding of what words mean. Some pupils with SEND demonstrate challenging behaviour. Staff support them kindly and patiently, helping to calm a situation quickly and refocus a pupil on the task at hand. Still, some learning plans for pupils with SEND focus too greatly on pastoral support. This is unhelpful given that many of these pupils do not achieve as well as they should academically, which impacts on pupils' behaviour. Leaders and staff are not aspirational enough in this aspect of their work.

Although there are still pupils who disrupt learning, pupils' behaviour is improving at pace. Leaders use assemblies astutely to embed their 'every child will...' approach. Doing so means that staff and pupils know and typically live out leaders' raised expectations. This includes pupils taking on responsibilities to encourage calm, polite behaviour in others. An example of the improvements in leading behaviour is seen in the pupil attendance team warmly welcoming pupils into school, helping to hang up coats and put away schoolbags. This ensures a bright start to every school day.

Currently, too many pupils regularly miss school. Because of this, these pupils do not achieve well. Leaders foster positive relationships with parents. This means that together with staff they can spot and support families facing difficulties. These honest, respectful relationships with parents put leaders in a strong position to continue to improve pupils' attendance. However, there is more to do to ensure that the support and challenge put to parents get more pupils into school.

The headteacher and other leaders evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately. They understand change takes time, mostly prioritising improvements

effectively. Staff back the work of leaders because everyone's efforts are celebrated. This ensures a happy, valued workforce who are willing to play their part in helping to improve the school.

Governance has improved significantly. School leaders share clear, honest information with trustees and school committee members. This allows for productive discussion about school improvement, including challenging questions that demonstrate high aspirations for the school. At this stage, school committee members are not steadfast in setting out the changes they wish to see. This limits the precision with which they can hold school leaders to account.

Leaders have not let their high standards with safeguarding slip. Open communication and clear systems create an environment where leaders and their staff remain vigilant to pupils at risk of harm. Staff's regular checks on pupils throughout the day allow pupils to freely voice their concerns. Staff report these without delay, allowing leaders to act fast to address issues. This includes making timely referrals to external agencies. Leaders' record-keeping impressively captures everything that is done to keep pupils safe.

Trust leaders commission ongoing external support from another multi-academy trust and the local authority. Recently, this support involved reviewing reading and the early years provision. These visits provide leaders with a helpful steer to drive further improvements.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Waveney Valley Academies Trust, 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

Daniel Short
His Majesty's Inspector