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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 that took place on 14 and 15 February 2024, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded (section 5) inspection that took place in April 2022.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's overall effectiveness, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, Rachael Judd, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, the chair of the board of trustees, the director of education, and other senior leaders, 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. The OI and I undertook a range of inspection activities, including: meetings with curriculum leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with pupils and staff and reviews of school documentation. Further, we also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and staff. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to be no longer judged as requiring special measures.

I am of the opinion that the school may appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the previous monitoring inspection, there have been notable changes to leadership within the trust. New colleagues have taken up post, including the CEO, director of education and chair of the board of trustees. Other than the appointment of an additional assistant headteacher, school leaders and staff have largely stayed the same. Such stability in staffing is testament to your ability to ensure staff share leaders' vision for developing the school.

To improve the curriculum, you elected to adopt high-quality schemes of work, including for early reading. As a result, the curriculum is ambitious. It enables pupils to learn new knowledge in small steps. These changes to the curriculum were done sensibly in stages to avoid staff being overwhelmed. In addition, considered and tailored provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is helping many to thrive.

However, historic issues with attendance, behaviour, curriculum and teaching means that pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge. These gaps persist because of weaknesses in teaching. Some staff do not present subject matter clearly or correct pupils' responses to questions. You and your leadership team are resolving this by providing training for staff. Staff appreciate the way that leaders provide coaching and feedback.

You and your leadership team recognise the need to improve education in the early years. The initial changes following the previous graded inspection did not account for children's starting points or prepare children well for Year 1. This negatively affected staff morale. Subsequently, you have created a more detailed plan for improvement. This considers important factors such as the need for more adult-led learning towards the end of the academic year. You have also instructed staff to plan opportunities for children to experience awe and wonder. This is so that children develop a love of learning early on.

The school's personal development programme is impressive and well-considered. For example, pupils now access extra-curricular activities every Monday morning to develop new talents and interests. This includes crochet, escape room design, and woodwork. Pupils and staff notice that this provides a positive start to the school week. Furthermore, you have improved the way that the school nurtures pupils' sense of belonging. For example, the school spots when pupils need school uniform and supplies it without pupils or parents having to request it.

Since the last monitoring inspection, you have adopted creative strategies to improve attendance. These are working well. You and your colleagues have helped parents to understand that genuine care for pupils' wellbeing is the reason for raised expectations. For example, home visits are used to check on a pupil's safety and to determine any barriers to school attendance. Staff who oversee attendance then work hard to put in place suitable support. For example, providing a space on the 'walking bus' or funding a place at the school's breakfast club.

Trust leaders are taking appropriate action to support the school improvement journey. This alleviates the need for external support. Trustees and local school committee members maintain their moral purpose. They balance the need to challenge with the need to support leaders well. Furthermore, they provide useful advice. For example, by signposting you and your team to community organisations that provide support for parents.

You and your staff value the enhanced links made between home and school. The twice weekly 'Everybody reads' is one of many events you arrange for parents to visit the school. Despite this, some parents do not know how the school has changed for the better, particularly with regards to pupils' behaviour. The school is now a more welcoming place. You are willing to listen to parents and this strengthens their relationship with the school. You are confident that parents will, in time, see how the school appreciates every pupil and parent.

You, other leaders and staff remain tenacious in how you safeguard pupils. How you share and report information with one another leaves no stone unturned. It allows you to challenge statutory partners, when needed, to act and intervene. Pupils recognise how leaders and staff are working hard to improve behaviour. Pupils feel safer in school now than they did in the past.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of the Kingfisher Schools 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