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Darren Moroney
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Dear Mr Moroney

Special measures monitoring inspection of Reddish Vale High School

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 1 and 2 April 2025, 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 June 2024.

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, 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, Scott Maclean, Ofsted Inspector (OI), and I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust, trustees, the chair of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority 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. We also visited lessons, met with pupils and staff and reviewed a range of documentation. We also met with a representative of another multi-academy trust providing external support. 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 no longer be judged as requiring special measures.

HMCI strongly recommends that the school does not seek to appoint early career teachers.

The progress made towards the removal of special measures

Since the last inspection, the trust has implemented key changes as part of its commitment to improve working relationships with the school and the local governing body. A new headteacher started in January 2025, and a new chair of the board of trustees has been appointed. The local governing body has also undergone changes, with several members leaving and new appointments made, including a new chair and additional governors. Inspectors focused primarily on the quality of education during this visit.

Leaders at all levels have accepted the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The school, the trust and the local governing body have worked swiftly and determinedly to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. Leaders are taking the right actions, in the right order and at the right pace. The school has a clear and realistic understanding of the progress it has made and its future priorities. For example, its action plan for improvement outlines the steps needed to build leadership capacity and address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. With support brokered by the trust and selected external partners, leaders have rightly prioritised actions to improve the quality of education, the provision for reading, and attendance. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders are rightly focusing on long-term improvement, planning strategically rather than relying on unsustainable quick fixes.

Since the previous inspection, the school has carried out substantial work to improve the delivery and impact of the curriculum. Building on secure curriculum design, the school is now focused on improving how well staff teach the curriculum. Informed by educational research, and with trust support, the school has designed an agreed pedagogical approach for delivering the curriculum. It has outlined the lesson structure and teaching strategies that it expects staff to use. Staff have received training to support this approach, which is increasing their confidence and understanding of leaders' raised expectations for what all pupils can achieve. Overall, this is leading to greater consistency in how the curriculum is delivered across subjects.

Teachers are now better equipped to check how well pupils know and understand the curriculum. For instance, the school expects teachers to provide pupils with frequent opportunities to recall what they have been taught previously. Additionally, the improvements made to assessment strategies have sharpened teachers' focus on questioning, allowing them to check pupils' progress more effectively. There is also greater consistency in how teachers share feedback with pupils. Where teachers confidently embed these methods, pupils engage in meaningful reflection activities that help to further secure their learning. However, some teachers' checks on pupils' learning are not effective enough. This means that misconceptions are missed or go unaddressed, especially for those pupils who have been absent.

Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened its work to identify and support weaker readers. The school accurately identifies pupils who find reading difficult.

It has introduced a phonics programme and other reading strategies to help pupils become confident, fluent readers. However, many pupils who join the school have significant gaps in their reading knowledge. Leaders have plans in place to build capacity to ensure that all pupils, including those in key stage 4, receive the timely help that they need to address these gaps. The school has created a well-resourced library, and pupils are starting to benefit from dedicated form time reading. However, the work to foster a culture of reading is still in its early stages.

The school and trustees, with external support from another multi-academy trust and the local authority, have heavily invested in improving the provision for pupils with SEND. The trust has deployed significant resources to bolster staffing levels in the SEND team. In addition, leaders have restructured roles and responsibilities within this team and appointed a new special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, bringing clarity around the actions required to address the deficiencies in this provision. This has helped the school to raise its ambitions for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The school now identifies pupils with SEND more effectively than before. The SEND team has reviewed the information teachers receive regarding pupils' needs and ensured that the suggested strategies on pupils' individual support plans are appropriate. Teachers receive helpful information on how to support these pupils in lessons. However, they do not always use this information as effectively as they should, leading to some pupils experiencing inconsistency in how well learning is adapted for them across subjects.

Reducing pupils' absence from school has been a key focus since the previous inspection. The school is becoming increasingly aware of the key barriers to attendance and is now more effective in identifying and responding to emerging trends. The school is in the early stages of strengthening its engagement with families to encourage better attendance. Although pupils' attendance is slowly improving, some groups, including disadvantaged pupils, still do not attend frequently enough. Persistent absence remains too high, which hampers pupils' learning. Additionally, incidents of internal truancy are still too common. Although there is a new behaviour policy with clear processes and systems, it is still in the early stages of roll-out. The school deals with incidents of behaviour and truancy inconsistently. Consequently, there remains a small, but considerable, number of pupils who, at times, continue to disregard the school's behaviour systems by disrupting learning and truanting from lessons.

Leaders at all levels understand the importance of building on the current progress to deliver the improvements that pupils deserve. Leaders, trustees and governors now share the same vision. The strengthening of the governing body has resulted in more robust evaluation of the school's work. Leaders at all levels have hit the ground running to ensure their precise, focused actions have impact. The school has taken steps to support and protect staff's well-being and workload during this period of improvement. Many staff feel reassured by the work of the new leadership team. However, a significant minority of staff feel that poor communication from leaders and insufficient support for behaviour and internal truancy are unhelpful at times. Leaders understand there is more work to do to bring all staff along on the school's improvement journey.

The school's trust has brokered external expertise and harnessed support from carefully nominated external partners to help address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. This work included an external review of the trust's quality assurance procedures and SEND provision. Additionally, the trust has reviewed the school's monitoring systems for the quality of education. These reviews have helped to verify that the changes the school has introduced are having the intended impact. The school continues to work closely with these external partners to sustain momentum in bringing about lasting improvement. It recognises the need for further work to consistently embed its newer initiatives, with these partners serving as critical friends in the process.

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

Yours sincerely

Kate Bowker
His Majesty's Inspector