

# The John Roan School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100192
<b>Local Authority</b>	Greenwich
<b>Inspection number</b>	376369
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Raeside HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,150
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Patrick Cooper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Des Malone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17–18 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Maze Hill Blackheath London SE3 7UD
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<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	<b>16–17 November 2011</b>
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The team observed 50 lessons taught by 50 teachers, 10 of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked closely at its analysis of students' progress and attainment. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, staff, a local primary headteacher and a local authority consultant. In addition, a telephone discussion was held with a senior officer from the local authority. Inspectors also scrutinised the school improvement plan, policies, a local authority report and records of school improvement work. They considered responses to questionnaires completed by 85 parents and carers, 219 students and 42 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective the school has been in improving the quality of teaching and learning, including teachers' use of assessment information to plan learning and track progress.
- How effectively the school maximises progress for all groups of students, particularly in mathematics, and the sustainability of improvements in achievement in mathematics.
- How effectively leaders at all levels drive improvement in outcomes and in provision and their capacity to reduce variation in outcomes between subjects.
- How effective the sixth form is overall.

## Information about the school

The John Roan School is a larger-than-average mixed school, with a higher proportion of boys than girls. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. A higher proportion than usual, over half of students, are from minority ethnic backgrounds and over one third speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average; a slightly lower than average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. The school has held specialist status in science and mathematics since September 2010. It also holds the Healthy Schools award.

The school is currently situated on two sites, both in need of significant modernisation. The school is working in partnership with the local authority to develop plans for improvements to the environment, through funding secured from the Building Schools for the Future initiative. This will involve restoration of the Grade II listed site on Maze Hill and a complete rebuild of the Westcombe Park site.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The John Roan School provides a satisfactory quality of education within a cohesive and harmonious environment. Students from a wide range of backgrounds mix well together. As one parent put it, 'There is a strong sense of community and students learn tolerance and respect.' Students feel safe at school and are confident that if they have any concerns they will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Despite the constraints of limited space and poor accommodation, they behave well and move around both sites purposefully.

Students enjoy school, as evidenced by their above average attendance. They willingly take on additional responsibilities, such as mentors or prefects, and support one another's learning responsibly in these roles. They take advantage of opportunities to extend their social and cultural development, for example through music tuition or drama performances, like the forthcoming production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Support for transition from primary school into Year 7 is a strong feature of the good care, guidance and support. One parent commented on how well their son's 'unique needs' had been supported. 'We have never received this level of concern and support before and it has given both myself and my son great confidence in the school.'

Attainment in GCSE examinations, which has been low in the past, is improving strongly. In 2011, the proportion of students attaining five or more C grades or higher was the highest the school has ever achieved and matched the national average for 2010. There is also a trend of improvement in this measure when the GCSE results for English and mathematics are included. However, this suffered a setback in 2010 when the results in mathematics fell significantly below predictions and the national average. The school acted swiftly and decisively to recover improvement in mathematics; the results increased by 20 percentage points in 2011. Results for 2012 already secured through early entry have continued this improvement. Gains have been more marked for boys, however, than for girls.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although about half of teaching observed during the inspection was good and a few lessons were outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge of students' individual learning needs to plan activities and ask questions that will stretch and challenge everyone. Feedback, including marking, provides clear guidance on how to improve, so that students talk

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confidently about how they will achieve their targets. This is not a consistent picture, however. In too many lessons, progress is no more than satisfactory because assessment information has not been used effectively to inform planning. Although teachers are aware of the range of learning needs in the class, they do not take sufficient account of them when adapting tasks or asking questions. More-able students are not sufficiently stretched. Weaknesses in basic skills are not addressed so that students sometimes struggle to articulate their learning or to record work neatly and coherently for future reference.

The sixth form is satisfactory overall, but uneven across the two year groups and subjects, with particular inconsistencies in performance at AS level in 2010. Prior to the inspection, the school had commissioned a review of the sixth form in partnership with an independent consultant, which is now under way. This action is well judged and appropriate in ensuring that strategies to improve the sixth form are robust and effective. The headteacher and senior leaders are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leadership at all levels is strengthening and action to tackle underachievement is increasingly effective. There is an overall trend of improvement at GCSE, but inconsistencies remain in outcomes and in the quality of teaching, so that capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Further improve attainment and rates of progress, especially in mathematics, so that attainment for all students consistently meets or exceeds national averages.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
  - ensuring that all teachers plan lessons and adapt activities to meet the full range of learning needs
  - improving the quality of feedback to students, including through marking, so that students are consistently well informed about how to improve their work
  - raising the level of pace and challenge in all lessons, especially through targeted and probing questioning
  - ensuring that all lessons focus on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy to enhance learning across the full range of subjects.
- Ensure that the strategic direction of the sixth form is focused and effective so that provision is enhanced and improvement in outcomes is rapid and sustained.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

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Students are keen to do well and talk about their learning with enthusiasm. They enjoy lessons which challenge them and where they are able to act on clear information about how to improve. Their good relationships with one another and with teachers enable them to initiate lines of enquiry, such as in an English lesson where the word ‘anthem’ sparked interesting speculation about the effect the writer wanted to create. Where lessons were designed to facilitate this enthusiasm and tasks pitched appropriately, inspectors saw students apply themselves with confidence and diligence. Students enter the school with lower-than-average starting points. Their progress over time has often been well above expectations overall, but is more variable when broken down into different groups. Some students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make very good progress as a result of well-targeted provision, but this varies for students with different levels of support. Overall achievement is, therefore, satisfactory.

Behaviour is good and has improved. Internal sanctions have been effective in reducing the need for fixed-term exclusion, which has not been used so far this year in the lower school and is dropping overall. Students have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and are actively involved in promoting health, for example, through school council visits to the school kitchens to evaluate the quality of food on offer. They engage in sporting activities readily and are well informed about wider health issues; older students, in discussion with inspectors, showed a robust anti-drugs stance. A wide range of students contributes to the life of the school and the local community. Responsibility starts early, because students can become prefects in Year 9, supporting the effective running of the junior school site. Mature attitudes and a readiness to work together in and out of the classroom support preparation for work or the next phase of learning. However, their application of basic literacy and numeracy skills is less well developed. Community contribution has included involvement in local environmental and safety campaigns, such as for safer stations. Charity fund-raising for the British Red Cross and thoughtful displays of work about Armistice reflect students’ capacity to reflect on others’ needs. Their willingness to embrace responsibility and to report their findings and requests direct to the governing body are indicative of their well-developed sense of social and moral responsibility.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

In several lessons observed during the inspection, students talked, without being prompted, about their learning and volunteered thoughtful and probing questions. In English lessons, they referred to personalised assessments which help them track their own progress towards targets and make explicit how to get there. Conversely, however, there are too many instances of students not able to articulate how to improve and uncertain about the purpose of the activity in the lesson. Progress varies because the same task is given to all despite a wide range of starting points. As a result, more-able students mark time and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities struggle to understand or complete the work. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by additional adults, who often circulate effectively, supporting and prompting independence. This supports good achievement among some potentially vulnerable learners. Although examples exist of constructive, developmental and regular marking, there are also too many instances of books sparsely or rarely marked.

The curriculum has been modified extensively in recent years to widen the range of courses on offer and raise achievement. The three year GCSE course, for example, allows open access to separate sciences for all students. Early entry in mathematics allows the majority of students to secure a GCSE grade at the end of Year 10; this has been instrumental in raising attainment and recovering confidence in mathematics, although it is currently more broad-brush than personalised. External partnerships, for example with colleges, provide curricular extension and wider choice, especially for students for whom a conventional curriculum has not yielded success. These are carefully quality assured for their impact on achievement. Science teaching is enhanced by the specialism, for example through partnership with the Royal Observatory and the option to study astronomy. Cross-curricular approaches to the development of basic skills, although recognised as a priority, are not yet implemented coherently. Extension to the curriculum includes the opportunity to experience a residential visit to the school's own centre in the Lake District, described by one parent as 'holding a special place in both my son's hearts'.

The school knows its students well and cares for them effectively. A determined approach to reducing absence has resulted in above-average attendance overall; supportive outreach to vulnerable families has also reduced significantly the

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proportion of persistent absentees to below average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior team have effectively communicated high expectations to staff and students about securing and sustaining improvement. They have determinedly tackled variations in middle leadership, recruiting to key areas and targeting support and challenge in areas where outcomes have persistently been too low. Middle leaders are now a more cohesive group. They share an ambition for learning to be highly engaging, creative and interactive. A new planning framework has recently been implemented to help teachers develop lessons that are inclusive of all learners. Many of these changes and improvements, however, are too recent to have had a widespread impact on the quality of teaching, although they are in evidence in the best lessons. Teaching is monitored and any weakness is challenged, although evaluation is sometimes over-generous. Improvement plans are focused on the right priorities, but not always sharply focused on learning.

Governors are keenly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and challenge any underperformance robustly. Together with senior leaders, they have ensured that procedures and training for child protection are well established and effective. However, immediate remedial action was necessary as a result of the inspection because some systems to improve and monitor the safety of the sites were not watertight.

The school is active in seeking opportunities to communicate and consult with parents and carers. Several remarked on the responsiveness of staff to any concerns and the accessibility of the headteacher: 'a strong presence, but approachable' was a typical comment. An active parents' and carers' association, as well as a group for those acquiring English as an additional language, provides effective advice about the education system as well as practical support and a designated presence on the school website. The school has a clear understanding of its intake and takes steps to ensure that no group of students is disadvantaged, for example by subsidising music tuition and residential trips for those in challenging financial circumstances. Senior leaders track and monitor the achievement of different groups of students and target efforts to reduce slippage. They can point to improvements as a result, and predicted outcomes indicate that the targeting of remaining gaps is effective. The school builds effective community cohesion on students' excellent first-hand understanding of



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diversity; it fosters mutual respect and, as a result, groups from a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds get on well together. It has capitalised on the proximity of the impending London Olympic games to broaden international understanding within the positive framework of the Olympic values.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

Students in the sixth form make progress in line with expectations overall, and some achieve well, but there is too much variation between subjects and courses. The A-level results in 2011 showed an increase in the proportion of students attaining the top grades, but too many students were unsuccessful at AS level. Consequently, the proportion staying on in the sixth form was lower than average. Attendance was also variable and has been low in the past, but it is improving rapidly as a result of more rigorous systems and monitoring.

Teaching and assessment overall are satisfactory. Students are set targets and their progress is regularly monitored, with appropriate interventions in place if required. Students comment that teachers are always willing to advise and help them to improve. They have the opportunity to contribute to decisions about their learning and feel that their voice is heard and acted upon. The best sixth form teaching enables students to develop and deepen their thinking. In a Year 13 English literature lesson, students showed maturity and sensitivity in responding to a poetry lesson in which they had to develop analyses from different viewpoints. They listened intently to one another and built an increasingly sophisticated collective understanding from individual ideas.

The curriculum is developing to meet a wider range of needs, with the introduction

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of new courses, including BTEC qualifications, and specific programmes to develop literacy skills and independent learning. However, the impact of these programmes on outcomes is not yet sufficiently in evidence. Partnerships with a range of universities, including the most prestigious, are supporting the drive for better achievement; the Aspire Group meets weekly and aims to increase aspirations and outcomes for the most able. Over half of students leaving in 2011 went on to university, including some with exceptional individual results.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Senior leaders are addressing weaknesses in subject teaching and in outcomes. Guidance for students entering the sixth form is improving so that they are better matched to courses. There has been some focus on improving learning and teaching in the sixth form, but this is yet to show sustained and consistent impact in the classroom.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

A lower-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Those who responded were generally supportive of the school and many commented on different strengths, in particular improvements since the current headteacher took up post. One characterised the school as ‘growing in confidence year on year’. Virtually all agreed that their child enjoyed school and the very large majority agreed that they were happy overall with their child’s experience at school. A lower proportion agreed that the school helps them to support their child’s learning. Inspectors found this to be improving in line with rising attainment and more effective targeting of underachievement.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The John Roan School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,150 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	58	35	41	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	53	38	45	0	0	2	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	34	40	44	52	7	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	36	47	55	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	28	33	54	64	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	29	47	55	10	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	24	52	61	11	13	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	41	38	45	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	32	38	45	53	6	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	36	46	54	4	5	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	32	47	55	7	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	45	53	34	40	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	52	61	30	35	1	1	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

18 November 2011

Dear Students



### **Inspection of The John Roan School, Greenwich SE3 7UD**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. Throughout the inspection, you were courteous and polite and keen to discuss your learning. We were impressed with how responsibly you move around two small and cramped sites and with your good behaviour generally. You spoke with great pride about your school and what a close and friendly community it is. You help to achieve this through your good relationships with one another and staff, and by taking on additional responsibilities, like mentor and prefect roles. Several of your parents and carers commented on how much you enjoy the activities that enhance your curriculum, such as learning musical instruments or going on school journeys, including residential trips to the Lake District. We agree that these contribute well to your enthusiasm for school and for learning.

The GCSE examination results have improved a great deal over recent years, but they have been variable, especially in mathematics. This is a changing picture and many of you in Year 11 have already 'banked' good mathematics grades this year through early entry. We have asked your headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that improvements in mathematics continue and are sustained. In addition, we have asked them to ensure that those of you staying on into the sixth form are well guided to choose the right courses and that achievement is equally strong across all sixth form courses and in both year groups.

We can see that you enjoy your lessons, especially where they challenge you and when you understand clearly how to improve your work and reach your targets. This is a strength in English, but is more mixed in other subjects, so we have also asked your teachers to ensure that: all lessons are equally challenging; that activities are planned to make sure that everyone in the class makes excellent progress; and that the feedback you receive on your work, including marking, is consistently of a high quality. You can help by getting fully involved in every lesson, seeking regular and detailed feedback on your work and striving to meet or exceed your targets in every lesson.

Yours sincerely

Christine Raeside  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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