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9 May 2019

Ms Cath Smith  
Executive Headteacher  
The John Roan School  
Westcombe Park Road  
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London  
SE3 7QR

Dear Ms Smith

### **Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of The John Roan School**

Following my visit to your school on 27 March 2019, accompanied by Sam Hainey, Her Majesty's Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in March 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, meetings were held with: you and other school leaders; the chair and another member of the interim executive board (IEB); a representative of the local authority; members of staff; and groups of pupils representing all year groups. Inspectors visited classrooms, usually accompanied by school leaders. Inspectors held informal conversations with pupils and staff. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

### **Context**

Since the previous inspection, you have taken on your role as executive headteacher on a full-time, substantive basis. You have extended and restructured your senior leadership team, deploying new and existing leaders appropriately, according to the school's priorities for improvement. New appointments include the associate headteacher, whose responsibilities include overseeing the work of the lower school. The governing body was replaced by the IEB in January 2019. The proposed academy sponsor withdrew in December 2018. A new sponsor has not yet

been announced.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Leaders are aware of the relative strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching across the school. They have established a more systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning. This has enabled them to have a thorough overview of training needs for individuals and for the school as a whole.

Leaders are ambitious in their planning of ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They have put in place an appropriate programme of professional development for teachers and teaching assistants, as well as bespoke one-to-one support. New initiatives include more opportunities for teachers to share good practice and to work together to agree strategies and compile helpful resources. Leaders have recently set up working groups to address key areas for development, such as the promotion of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. However, while this work is targeting weaker aspects of teaching, it is at too early a stage to have led to substantial improvements in pupils' achievement, which remains low.

Leaders have clarified the systems for assessment. More rigorous monitoring has led to teachers' more accurate and effective use of assessment. When leaders' raised expectations are met by teachers, pupils make better progress. This is because teachers provide guidance to pupils and pupils are familiar with the routines for improving their work. However, there is too much variation within and between departments because, with few exceptions, the quality of subject leadership is weak. When the quality of teachers' planning and assessment is not strong, pupils do not build effectively on their prior learning. Their misconceptions and spelling errors, including of technical terms, persist.

An external review of the expenditure of pupil premium funding was completed in Autumn 2018. Leaders have very recently carried out a more detailed analysis of pupils' progress. This is helpful, so that they are in the early stages of identifying the support that individual pupils need, both in lessons and specific interventions. However, leaders do not have sufficient overview of the impact of their use of external funding. They do not have enough insight into where funds are most effectively allocated to enable pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. This means that limited progress has been made in meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, including those eligible for support from pupil premium funding and those with SEND.

Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Leaders have raised their expectations. There are better-organised routines, for example, for the start of the school day. Pupils interact sociably at breaktimes and generally collaborate well in classrooms to support each other's learning. Pupils who spoke to inspectors commented that behaviour has improved over the last year as their teachers are

'stricter'. Pupils appreciate this as it means that their lessons are not interrupted as frequently by the poor behaviour of others.

However, some teachers' expectations are not high enough regarding, for example, pupils' uniform and levels of attentiveness in lessons. Pupils' off-task chatting and distracting behaviour such as fidgeting often occurs when the quality of teaching is weak and teachers fail to implement the school's behaviour policy. Inspectors saw several examples of unacceptable and offensive graffiti in classrooms. This was removed when inspectors drew leaders' attention to it.

There have been overall improvements in pupils' attendance, which is now close to the national average. This is due to leaders' effective actions, including extending the staff team responsible for the monitoring and follow up of absences. This has enabled pupils to access early help more easily. It has also provided families with support sooner to enable pupils to improve their attendance. Leaders are monitoring pupils' punctuality more closely. There are early indications that the revised routines for the start of the school day, including more purposeful activities at tutor time, are leading to fewer pupils being late for school.

While the rate of fixed-term exclusions continues to be high, these are used appropriately and recent increases have been influenced by leaders' raised expectations for behaviour. However, more needs to be done in terms of early preventative work. This especially applies to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), so that those who are having difficulties in engaging productively with school receive more swiftly the help and guidance they need.

In the previous inspection it was noted that pupils did not find guidance about their GCSE choices to be helpful. This has improved. Year 9 pupils who spoke with inspectors during this inspection commented that they felt confident about their options for key stage 4 because of the valuable information they had received at school. Some could relate their choices to their career aspirations and interests.

The IEB has been proactive and focused since its formation earlier this term. Board members provide highly competent and knowledgeable support and challenge for senior leaders. They draw on their professional expertise wisely to ensure that leaders' work is firmly targeted where improvements are needed.

Leaders have drawn effectively on external support, including from the local authority, to address the areas for improvement from the previous inspection report. This includes leadership development, and intervention work with pupils.

Inspectors considered the improvements made in the quality of teachers' assessments, and in pupils' attitudes to learning, that have arisen as a result of your assertive and determined actions. This has been achieved in the face of a range of challenges that followed the previous inspection. The drive for improvement has been punctuated by periods of industrial action. During this time, you have gone to

great lengths to keep parents well informed about all aspects of life in the school and have nurtured calm and settled day-to-day routines.

There remain significant weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report for which little progress is evident. Teaching remains too variable and this is having a disproportionate impact on the progress on disadvantaged groups of pupils, including those eligible for support from pupil premium funding and those with SEND. There is much work to be done and these areas need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Following the monitoring inspection, the following judgements were made:

Leaders and managers are taking effective actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the interim executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Greenwich. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**