

Inspection of The John Roan School

Westcombe Park Road, Blackheath, London SE3 7QR

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Cath Smith. This school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Richard Greenhalgh.

What is it like to attend this school?

A very high proportion of parents and carers are positive about this school and would recommend it. One comment, which echoed the views of others, was, 'Communication is great, teachers are accessible and my children are happy.'

There is a strong sense of community here. The school is inclusive, celebrating its diversity. Pupils are encouraged to treat everyone equally, irrespective of their backgrounds. Pupils are kept safe, many welcoming the 'QR code' that they can use to alert leaders to any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders have been successful in creating a school with a culture of high expectations, including for behaviour. Pupils behave well. For example, during lesson changeovers, they walk quietly around the school and do not cause disruption.

Pupils achieve well in many different subjects. This reflects the collective work of leaders and staff to encourage pupils to work hard and to be ambitious for themselves. Sixth-form students enjoy their time at school. They are well supported and benefit from excellent facilities at the Maze Hill site.

The school's 'PRIDE' values identify the character traits it wants pupils to develop. For example, 'I' represents 'involved'. Leaders' work to get pupils 'involved' can be seen in lots of ways, such as their participation in after-school clubs.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have carefully designed the key stage 4 and sixth-form offer to ensure that pupils can study subjects all the way through to Year 13. As the sixth form has grown, leaders have added new courses. For example, economics was introduced to the sixth form in September 2023. Sixth-form students have flexibility in their choices to best suit their aspirations, such as studying an A-level pathway or mixing A levels with relevant vocational courses. Pupils learn a broad range of subjects throughout Years 7 to 9. There are significantly more pupils studying a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11 than was previously the case, reflecting leaders' aspirations for more pupils to achieve the English Baccalaureate.

Leaders' ambition is also evident in subject curriculums. For example, leaders choose ambitious texts in English. They set out core knowledge that enables pupils to deepen their understanding of concepts such as conflict and equality as they move through the curriculum. Across the school, staff know what, why and when they should be teaching subject content.

Staff have strong subject knowledge. They receive lots of subject training, including from the trust subject advisers. Teachers explain concepts and ideas well. They use activities that are purposeful, helping pupils to make sense of what they are learning.

The school places a strong focus on helping pupils to recall prior learning and to 'stick' knowledge in pupils' long-term memory. However, occasionally some teaching, including in the sixth form, does not have a precise focus on checking that pupils have firmly understood what they are being taught. At times, teaching does not support pupils as well as it could to deepen their understanding.

The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's resourced provision, the 'Centre for Autism' (CFA) gives pupils the personalised support they need, such as the specialist learning coaches who help pupils with their literacy or other specific needs. The coaches also help to identify any underlying additional needs when pupils join the school.

Leaders identify any weaker readers. They have started work to enhance the support given to these pupils, for example with daily phonics sessions. However, greater staff expertise is needed to ensure that pupils' needs in this area, including those with SEND, can be met more quickly.

Leaders have prioritised the management of pupils' attendance, for example through employing an additional staff member. This is helping the school to identify and respond quickly to any decline in attendance. Staff work well together to achieve what the school calls 'disruption free learning'. Pupils respond to instructions from staff, quickly settling down and getting on with their work.

Pupils benefit from a variety of enrichment experiences, including visits and guest speakers. Sixth-form students have opportunities to interact with younger pupils through being a mentor or leading the school council. Pupils hear from guest speakers and have workshops to help them understand how to stay safe and look after themselves, including in relation to their mental health. All year groups go on visits throughout the year, including the 'character' trips such as 'adventure day'.

Careers guidance is effective across the school, ensuring that all pupils, including those in the sixth form are well informed about higher education and apprenticeships. Many sixth-form students are successful in gaining place at high-performing universities.

Leaders, including trustees, know the school well. They have an honest evaluation of what is working well and what needs to further improve. The trust has been instrumental in supporting the school on its improvement journey. This includes in managing ongoing challenges, such as those relating to staff recruitment. The local governing body are relatively new and are well on the way to getting a handle on their delegated responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the school does not check whether pupils, including those in the sixth form, have understood what they are learning with enough precision. When this happens, staff can move on to new learning too quickly and pupils' knowledge and understanding is not secure. The school should refine the training for staff, particularly focusing on how to precisely check pupils' learning and then adapt teaching accordingly.
- A few pupils, including those with SEND, are not being supported as well as they could in building up their reading fluency. As a result, they are not catching up with their peers as quickly as they should. The school should review the support given to those pupils who are developing their reading fluency, ensuring that a greater number of staff have the expertise needed to deliver the school's reading programmes.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147439
Local authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	10293311
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,142
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Richard Greenhalgh
CEO of the trust	Jon Coles
Principal	Cath Smith
Website	www.thejohnroanschool.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The John Roan School converted to become an academy school in September 2019. When its predecessor school, also called The John Roan School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- The school has two sites:
 - the main site for Years 7 to 11 is Westcombe Park Road SE3 7QR
 - the Maze Hill site for the sixth form is Maze Hill SE3 7UD.
- The school is part of United Learning, a large multi-academy trust. The school also has a local governing body with delegated responsibilities as set out in the trust's scheme of delegation.
- The school has a specially resourced provision, the CFA, for pupils with SEND. The provision specialises in autism. There are currently 16 pupils accessing the CFA.

- The school is currently using four registered providers and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior staff. Inspectors also met with representatives of the board of trustees, the local governing body, and regional directors from the trust central team, whose members represented the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, modern foreign languages, physical education, history and mathematics. During each deep dive inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, and spoke to teachers and pupils about their learning. Inspectors also reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to discuss arrangements for pupils with SEND, including visits to and reviewing information about pupils who are educated in the CFA, the school's resourced provision.
- Inspectors also visited lessons, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of work in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors also considered replies to Ofsted Parent View and the online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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