

The John Roan School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100192
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	323242
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Barry Jones

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1147
Sixth form	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Elizabeth Gardiner
Headteacher	Mr Des Malone
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
School address	Maze Hill Blackheath London SE3 7UD
Telephone number	020 8516 7555
Fax number	020 8516 7594

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

John Roan School is larger than most schools, and has a higher than average proportion of boys. It is located on two sites about 400 metres apart. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is almost treble the national average. It has higher proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language than the great majority of schools. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These are mainly specific learning difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional issues. The school has the Healthy School Award and the silver award for work-related learning.

The school was given a Notice to Improve by its previous inspection. Significant improvement was required to improve students' behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 7 to 11, and the quality of accommodation in conjunction with the local authority. An interim headteacher was appointed in January 2008 and he was confirmed as the substantive headteacher in April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The very good leadership of the new headteacher has galvanised the staff. They have responded enthusiastically and say that staff morale has improved significantly and is now good. As a result of their hard work the school is now satisfactory and is improving. There are some good features. Most parents are appreciative of the school's efforts. As two parents wrote, 'The headteacher has transformed the school' and 'The headteacher, along with his senior team, has created a strong ethos of belonging and aspiration'.

Students join the school with attainment that is below average. Standards at GCSE level improved in 2008 but are also below average and achievement over time is satisfactory. As the result of a concerted, successful effort, teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. This means that students are making better progress. However, progress is uneven because some inconsistencies in teaching remain. Students make outstanding progress in history but until recently their progress has been unsatisfactory in subjects such as design technology. Progress is satisfactory in English and mathematics, but improvements have lagged behind the average for other subjects. The school takes very decisive action where departments are identified as underperforming. Expectations are raised and this has led to improvements in all departments. Teachers now have much better data on the prior attainment and progress of students in their classes. Data are used effectively to help students with learning difficulties and they make good progress. However, teachers vary in how well they make use of assessment data in their lesson planning to meet the needs of all groups. The needs of all students are therefore not met consistently in all classes.

Students' behaviour in class is good. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. It means that there is a positive working atmosphere in the great majority of classes and more productive learning takes place. Behaviour around the school is a little more boisterous but is kept within bounds by a watchful staff. Students' personal development is good as a result of effective pastoral care. The school council is well established and feels that its views are valued. Attendance has improved and the proportion of students who are persistent absentees has reduced to below average. This is the result of effective working with the attendance officer and a robust approach, including prosecution in extreme cases. Provision for work-related and enterprise activities is good. Students' enjoyment is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have been considerably enhanced. This creates opportunities for teachers to use ICT to promote learning in their own subject. However, their use of ICT is at an early stage.

The driving force for change is the headteacher. Staff have rallied round and an effective senior leadership team has been established. The school has an accurate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. The tracking of students' attainment has improved but this is a recent initiative. Results are being used well to identify and address dips in performance in Year 11. The procedures are not yet so well established in other years. The school cannot be sure, therefore, that it is identifying underperformance in all year groups. However, given the strength of the senior leadership team, an effective governing body and an improving picture, the capacity to improve further is good.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

There is a thriving sixth form community. Attainment on entry is well below average. Students achieve well although standards at A level remain below average. Some students make outstanding progress over the two years of study. A few find the pace in Year 12 too fast but benefit by taking an extra year in the sixth form. Guidance is good and helps students to make decisions about courses to take and destinations after leaving school. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have positive relationships with their students. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school community. They help younger students to settle into school. They are consulted by the senior managers about all aspects of sixth form life. For example, there was a 'global café' event when students worked in groups with sixth form tutors. The students identified ways in which the curriculum could be enhanced. The curriculum is currently satisfactory. At the instigation of the students, other subjects, including economics, will be offered next year. The planned additions to students' choices for courses have the potential to provide a good curriculum. The sixth form is led well and there is good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that all teaching is at least good, particularly in the use of assessment data and ICT, so that all students make good progress.
- Ensure that the tracking procedures identify dips in performance for all ability groups and trigger effective intervention strategies.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

There is a rising trend at each key stage. In 2008, half of the students gained five or more GCSE grades A* to C. However, only one third attained this standard when English and mathematics are included, which is only just above the minimum of 30% set by the government. Standards improved in English in 2008 but declined in mathematics. The school is rigorously addressing the relatively lower performance in these subjects. This includes advisory support, staff training and robust monitoring. The most progress has been made by the more able and the least able students who receive targeted support. However, a few students in the middle ability range have not made the progress they should have. There are no underachieving groups. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good provision.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students show a good understanding of and respect for a range of beliefs and cultures. Relationships between students and with staff are good and the school is a racially harmonious community. Students say that there are a few instances of bullying but they are dealt with effectively when they occur. Students have positive attitudes and this is shown by the marked improvement in their

attendance. In particular, the school has a lower proportion of persistent absentees than similar schools. Students have a good understanding of healthy living issues, acknowledged by the award of Healthy School status. School council members say that their views are valued. They have been able to influence decisions relating to uniform, food and the toilets. Students' average numeracy and literacy skills are reinforced by extensive opportunities for enterprise activities and work experience. Hence, their economic awareness is good, preparing them well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching varies from outstanding to inadequate. The proportion of good lessons is increasing and the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is much reduced. The school has 14 newly qualified teachers. They bring an enthusiasm and a vitality to the teaching although they are still learning their trade. Most teachers manage their classes well and this results in positive working atmospheres. In the best lessons, teachers use assessment data to match work to the abilities of different groups. However, in some lessons the same work is set to all students and the pace is too slow for some. Teachers are making effective use of interactive whiteboards but too few use ICT to help students to learn. Teaching assistants provide good support in classrooms and help students with learning difficulties to make good progress. The quality of marking is satisfactory and usually shows students how they might improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving in the main school and in the sixth form. Strategies for promoting numeracy and literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory. The school has recently appointed a numeracy coordinator and is seeking to appoint a literacy coordinator. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and contributes significantly to students' strong personal development. Students receive good preparation for the world of work, including two weeks on work experience and a five-day enterprise programme. Business links in the sixth form have been strengthened this year through participating in Young Enterprise. The strength of the school's provision has been recognised through a silver award for work-related learning. There are more vocational programmes being introduced into the Key Stage 4 curriculum to better meet the needs of students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support is good and underpins students' good personal development. It emanates from the high level of care provided by individual staff. This is complemented by a good range of effective strategies. The school works well with other agencies. Consequently, behaviour and attendance are now good. There are rigorous, effective procedures for promoting good attendance. There is a clear system of rewards and sanctions that is consistently applied by staff. Expectations for good behaviour have been raised. Although the number of fixed-term exclusions continues to be high, it is reducing. Students have access to a range of programmes, including conflict resolution and anger management, which support their personal development well. Support for students who have learning difficulties and for those at the early stages of

learning English is organised well. The school is seeking to make further improvements by making stronger links between the different strands of in-school support. Record-keeping is exemplary and contributes to the smooth running of the inclusion department. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. As the new tracking system becomes established there is potential for improving early intervention strategies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior leaders are effective in raising standards and improving the quality of education. The headteacher provides a vision that students can achieve and this is now being shared by all staff. The headteacher and governors take difficult decisions. This is leading to improvement in the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of middle managers. The school recognises that there is still work to do. The school has also made some good appointments. A new assistant headteacher has accepted oversight for the technology department as an interim measure. The early signs are that she has been able to transform the quality of planning and teamwork so that standards are rising. Another new assistant head is helping the school to move its good provision for inclusion further forward still. The school is proactive and is implementing action plans for all departments where students perform below expectation. There have been significant improvements to the two sites, including complete redecoration of one site and creation of new ICT and drama rooms. The school has been identified by the local authority as requiring a new building, and plans to replace the current buildings under the Building Schools for the Future programme are underway. In the interim, the school and the local authority recognise that there is more work to be done in the old buildings to maintain an environment conducive to effective learning. The governors are supporting and challenging when necessary. The school promotes citizenship well, and other aspects of community cohesion satisfactorily. It has allocated a senior manager to lead on forging stronger links with its local community.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

31 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The John Roan School, London, SE3 7UD

Thank you very much for your help and cooperation when we inspected your school. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe there. Your school council members told us that they take their role seriously. They say that their views have been taken into account for such things as uniform, healthy meals and the toilets.

Just over a year ago, in its previous inspection, your school was asked to improve. It has done so successfully. It now provides a satisfactory education and there are several good aspects. The most important are:

- your behaviour and attendance have improved and are now good
- you all get on well together and yours is a harmonious community
- the staff take good care of you and have your interests at heart
- examination results are improving
- there is a thriving sixth form and students do well
- you make a good contribution to the community
- the school is led well by the headteacher and his team.

The school is always trying to do even better in your interests. We have asked the school to:

- help you to do even better in English and mathematics
- encourage teachers to use computers more in their lessons
- encourage teachers to use what you have learned already in planning their lessons
- help all of you who fall behind in your work.

Thank you again. You made us feel very welcome in your school. We wish you continuing success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Barry Jones

Lead Inspector