

20th December 2018

By email

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to let you know that the University Schools Trust (UST) Board of Trustees have decided, after careful deliberation, not to sponsor The John Roan School.

Our sole interest from our first engagement has been to help the school to overcome its current difficulties and provide the quality of education that your child deserves. However, having commissioned a range of external specialists to look in detail at the current status, it has become clear that the school has a very wide-range of deeply embedded educational, financial and operational challenges that will require a truly exceptional level of investment and a sponsor with extensive resources to call upon.

The UST is a small successful MAT, and we are committed to community-based, inclusive and comprehensive education. Forging strong local partnerships is important to us and has been key to our success with the other schools in our family. Our Board of Trustees is based on this partnership model, given it comprises six world-leading universities and five sector-leading bodies including the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Sadly, this partnership model will not be possible in relation to The John Roan School, and we regret that our resources alone will not be enough to address the challenges that the school faces.

I anticipate that you may be asking why we agreed to be the preferred sponsor given this outcome. My hope is that the following information will help you understand the series of events that have led to the decision that our Board of Trustees has taken:

- **June 2017:** Having been approached by the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council, UST developed a support plan to strengthen teaching, learning and improve school leadership.
- **July 2017:** The Department for Education (DfE) visited the school and were positive about this plan and the support to be put in place.
- **August 2017:** GCSE results showed that the Headteacher's examination predictions had been much too high. It became clear that should Ofsted visit, the school would be highly likely to be placed in 'category' (either Special Measures or Serious Weaknesses).
- **September 2017:** Undeterred by the scale of the challenge, UST started to implement the agreed plan. Very quickly our team discovered that not only did teaching and learning need to improve but also other areas, such as safeguarding, were a concern. The UST team increased their scope to address these areas of work as well.
- **December 2017:** Cath Smith agreed to increase her time as Interim Executive Headteacher, and early in 2018 was appointed by the Council and Governing Body as the new substantive postholder at the school.

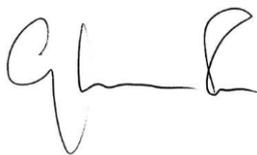
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- **March 2018:** Ofsted carried out a full inspection. And whilst they recognised the improvements had started to have an impact, the previous summer's results together with the quality of teaching in evidence during their inspection, lead to their conclusion that the school had Serious Weaknesses.
- **June 2018:** The DfE confirmed, in light of these facts, that The John Roan School should become an academy with UST named as the preferred sponsor. The proposal was supported by both the John Roan Foundation and Governing Body.
- **September 2018:** UST's work on supporting improvements in teaching and learning continued, despite strikes and increasing hostility from various parties. Additionally, the UST team recruited a team of professionals to provide in-depth analysis for our Due Diligence on all aspects of the school: teaching and learning; finance and budgeting; HR; and buildings and ICT.
- **October 2018:** When additional educational support for the school did not materialise, the UST began to provide support and guidance at our own cost. This was done because we were keen to help ensure that GCSE results in summer 2019 improved.
- **November 2018:** The team of independent professionals concluded their work on Due Diligence, producing their reports and communicating their findings to UST.
- **December 2018:** The Board of Trustees considered these reports, and made their decision to withdraw.

The Board's decision not to move ahead as the preferred sponsor for The John Roan School is not one that has been taken lightly. We have invested heavily in the school throughout our involvement, but it has become clear that the challenges at the school are of such a serious nature that we could not overcome these without damaging the rest of our small Trust. Ultimately our responsibility must be to those schools already in our small family, and to make sure that The John Roan School secures the support it needs to have a successful future.

On behalf of everyone at UST, I wish you all the very best for the future and am hopeful that the school and the Royal Borough of Greenwich establishes a constructive partnership with the new preferred sponsor through this next phase. I am sure that you will also be keen to continue to support Cath Smith as she makes the necessary changes to secure a good education for every child.

Yours sincerely,



Grahame Price
Chief Executive
National Leader of Education