Dear Parents and Carers of John Roan students,

The staff unions at The John Roan School share with you, the headteacher and senior leadership team, a desire that your children should both enjoy their time at this school and achieve to the best of their abilities.

Staff were very disappointed with the publication of the Ofsted report on Monday 4 June. We do not believe that our school is ‘Inadequate’. We know there have been challenges including four changes of Headteacher in the last two years and that there are aspects of the functioning of our school that we want to improve quickly. But we are committed staff who work hard to support all our students. We feel the report and judgement doesn’t reflect this and many aspects of the life of our school that our students enjoy and flourish in, have not been recognised.

Since April 2016, when a school is judged ‘inadequate’ the Secretary of State is empowered to issue an academy order without consultation. We understand that this order will be issued this week. We think this must be challenged. As parents you are key stakeholders and you have a right to be consulted about major changes to the school that your children attend.

We share with the whole John Roan community a determination to bring our school back to the standards that were achieved only a couple of years ago. However, we do not believe that this is best achieved by converting to an academy in a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Academisation can lead to:

- A reduced curriculum, especially in the Arts and the Creative subjects;
- Fewer places for children with special educational needs;
- Higher staff turnover which unsettles our students;
- Money going to management salaries that would be better spent in the classroom;
- Unqualified teachers in classrooms;
- Cuts to support staff and greater use of agency contracts;
- Lack of accountability and transparency and loss of Governance of the school within the MAT;
- Transfer of buildings and assets from public ownership to the MAT for 125 years.

We have been told that that Governing Body and the John Roan Foundation believe that the University Schools Trust (UST) chain of academies is the preferred sponsor. NEU members are opposed to academisation and we will do everything in our power to ensure that our school remains a Local Authority funded school. NEU members in a legal ballot have voted to take industrial action to prevent the forced academisation of our school. We do not believe that UST or any other MAT will put our students first and respect staff rights at work. In fact, we fear that it will damage our community and comprehensive ethos.

We have not taken the decision to take strike action lightly and want to assure parents that we have our students interests at heart. We have not called action during the GCSE exams. NEU members involved in pre-planned school trips and other events such as rehearsals for Founder’s day will be exempt from industrial action does go ahead. If we can have assurances that we won’t be academised then industrial action can be avoided.

We hope that by showing the strength of feeling amongst staff that the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), Dominic Herrington will not implement the Academy Order. We want the RSC to give our school and our Headteacher Cath Smith, the time to move forward with the support from our Local Authority.

The goal that we all share is to ensure the best educational outcomes for your children. We remain convinced that this is best achieved within the family of local authority schools, rather than as part of a disparate academy chain.

We want our well-loved, community-centred, local school to continue to work within and be supported both financially and educationally by the Greenwich Local Authority and its family of schools.

We ask that you join us in ensuring that any discussion about the future of the school involves all of us – staff, parents, students and governors and is not simply concluded behind closed doors.

Kirstie Paton and Jane Simms (NEU reps)