



29 April 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

## **Statement from the Chair of Governors: Senior Leadership Reorganisation and Financial Update**

Further to my announcement on Monday 10 March, I am now in a position to share a formal update on behalf of the Governing Board regarding the proposed reorganisation and strengthening of the Senior Leadership Team at The John Fisher School.

I'd like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks for your continued support and partnership. Your engagement with the school community makes a genuine and lasting difference, and it plays a vital role in helping governors move the school forward with confidence and purpose.

I am pleased to confirm that the Governing Board has now reached agreement with the appropriate trade union on a plan to restructure and enhance the school's senior leadership. This includes the creation of two Deputy Headteacher roles. We are currently recruiting for one of these positions, with a view to a September start. Once the appointment is made, we will share more information about the individual, who will play a central role in shaping the school's strategic direction and supporting the day-to-day leadership. Recruitment to the second post will follow when circumstances allow, but the intention is to eventually have two Deputy and three Assistant Headteachers.

These changes are designed to build on the progress made in recent years—particularly in academic outcomes—and to support our long-term mission: to be the first-choice Catholic boys' school for families in the communities we serve.

In this regard, I am proud to share that The John Fisher School is one of only three secondary schools in the borough—alongside Wallington County Grammar School and Wilson's School—that achieved significantly above average progress at both GCSE and A Level in 2024. This is a remarkable achievement and a clear reflection of the hard work, talent, and dedication of our students and staff. It is also a strong foundation on which we intend to build through the strengthening of our leadership team.

Like many schools across the country, we are navigating a very challenging financial climate. In our case, this is compounded by a historic cumulative deficit which stood at nearly £1M in late 2021. The new Governing Board appointed by the Archdiocese of Southwark in March 2022, are actively addressing this through a Debt Recovery Plan agreed with the London

Borough of Sutton, with whom we maintain a highly constructive and supportive relationship.

We have already made encouraging progress in tackling the deficit. However, significant increases in staffing costs have required us to review our curriculum to ensure we are using our limited resources as effectively as possible. While national headlines suggest that recent pay awards have been fully funded, the reality is more nuanced. The funding formula reflects changes in pupil numbers—for example, our move from seven to six forms of entry in September 2022—but it does not account for the experience profile of our dedicated and long-serving staff, nor their extraordinary commitment to our school and students.

To give a sense of the scale of the challenge: our most recent financial figures show a modest increase in funding but this falls far short of additional staffing costs and has led to an increase in our predicted deficit. These are difficult issues, but we remain committed to ensuring both financial sustainability and high-quality education for all our students.

We understand that changes of this nature can raise questions or concerns. Please be assured that all decisions have been made with great care and with the best interests of our students at heart. Our priority remains to provide a stable, supportive, and high-quality learning environment for every young person in our care. If you have any questions, or if you would like to discuss any aspect of this update, please don't hesitate to contact the school. We are always happy to listen and provide further clarity wherever we can.

In light of the sad death of our beloved Pope Francis, I would like to conclude with one of his most well-known quotes: *"Catholic education gives soul to the world."* By this, he reminded us that truly effective Catholic education rests on three essential pillars: a strong sense of identity, a commitment to excellence, and a deep care for the common good. These values remain at the heart of everything the Governing Board seeks to uphold at The John Fisher School.

As we move forward, we do so with a sense of purpose and quiet confidence. While the challenges ahead are real, so too is our commitment to addressing them with integrity and clarity. With the continued support of our staff, students, families, and wider community, we are well placed to strengthen the foundations of the school and ensure that The John Fisher School continues to provide a high-quality Catholic education for all those we serve.

We will continue to keep you informed and involved as we move forward. Thank you once again for your support—it is greatly appreciated.

With all good wishes,



**Andrew Theobald**  
**Chair of Governors**