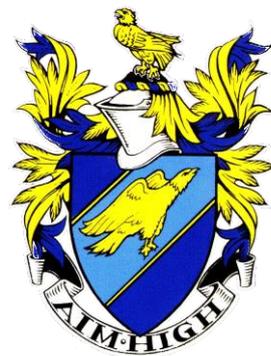


WEST HILL SCHOOL

Headteacher: **R J Hewitt** BA; MEd
Thompson Cross, Stalybridge, SK15 1LX
Tel: 0161 338 2193 Fax: 0161 338 8293
Sports Hall: 0161 338 9292
E-mail: admin@westhillschool.co.uk
Website: www.westhillschool.co.uk
Twitter: [@westhillschool](https://twitter.com/westhillschool)



September 2014

Dear Parent,

At the beginning of this new academic year, I should like to inform you of the following points.

GCSE Examination Results

This year our GCSE examination results showed a significant improvement in a number of areas. We achieved our:

- best ever maths results;
- second best ever points score (this is a measure across all subjects); and
- third best ever 5+A* to C grades including English and Maths.

Congratulations to all pupils and staff for producing these excellent results.

OFSTED

The report following our most recent visit from HMI is now on the school website.

Overall the report is overwhelmingly positive, however, HMI are very limited in their ability to comment on the progress being made by any school and I am pleased to say that West Hill was placed in the highest category for progress with the comment:

“The academy is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.”

What follows is a small selection of the many positive and encouraging comments made in the report.

“Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the academy.”

“Teaching continues to improve so that students’ learning is getting better. Leaders’ evaluations of teaching are increasingly accurate in identifying strengths and what needs to be improved.”

“.....it is important to note the unfailing courtesy, maturity and highly positive attitudes to learning shown by students during this monitoring inspection. Students take pride in their academy and in their appearance and say that they feel safe in the academy. They listen well to each other and to their teachers in their lessons. They clearly relish opportunities to develop leadership qualities, for example, as monitors and prefects.”

“Achievement gaps are narrowing in English and mathematics for those students supported by the pupil premium.”

“The academy’s own, sharper, information about the progress of pupils in Key Stage 3 also paints an improving picture.”

“Leaders and governors are working urgently to move the academy forward as systems and expectations are beginning to become established across the academy.”

“Leaders and governors have been decisive in making teaching and leadership appointments that show the capacity to strengthen departments ...”



“The academy is drawing well on local teaching alliances to allow staff to see outstanding practice.”

The full report can be seen on the school website at www.westhillschool.co.uk/ofsted-report

Congratulations to:

- Luke Kelly who recently won the U16 English Schools Golf Championships and subsequently represented England in an international match against Wales.
- Archie Palmer who won the recent Cheshire Boys U14 Golf Championship.
- Lewis Thompson who was selected to play football for England against Belgium.
- Former student Andrew Robertson who won a silver medal at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games as part of the 4 x 100 m relay athletics squad.
- Former student Sanjay Shah who has secured a placed at Liverpool University to study medicine.
- Former student Joe Gregory who begins his Natural Science degree at Sidney Sussex, Cambridge University.

Communication

Over the past few years we have tried to improve school communication. Frequent tweets via @westhillschool inform our followers of school notices and news items. Links to more detailed information on the school website www.westhillschool.co.uk are also tweeted.

Letters home will usually be sent home to parents on the following days:

<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Years 9 and 10</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Years 7 and 11</i>
<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Year 8</i>

Please ask your son each week on the appropriate day if any letters have been sent from school and, if necessary, check his bag! General school letters will also be posted on the school website.

If you need to see a member of staff for any reason, please ring school to make an appointment.

New Staff

This year we welcome the following new staff:

1. Mr Hazzelby who joins us as KS Co-ordinator of English;
2. Mr Cochrane who joins the English Department;
3. Mr Welsby who joins us as Head of History;
4. Mrs Radcliffe and Mr Marshall who join the Science department;
5. Mrs Chatterton who joins the MFL department; and
6. Mr Kay who joins the PE department.

I am sure they will all be very happy at West Hill.

Attendance and Holidays in Term time

Last year 31 pupils in Y7, 21 pupils in Y8, 25 pupils in Y9, 15 pupils in Y10 and 17 in Y11, 109 in total, achieved 100% attendance.

As you are no doubt aware, the government is determined to tackle poor school attendance and the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced important amendments to legislation surrounding holidays in term time. These amendments to the law came into force on 1st September 2013 and make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The new law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

We ask that parents support West Hill School in our efforts to help your son gain the best possible outcome from his education by not asking for leave of absence from school in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Pupils need to attend school regularly and missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both secondary school and their future life outside.

I would ask all parents to refer to our school website www.westhillschool.co.uk for information regarding the protocols for reporting absence and illness, attending medical appointments and applying for leave of absence.

Charity Fund Raising

Last academic year the school has raised a remarkable amount of money for charitable causes. This includes:

OKE (Our Kids Eyes)	£10, 705.13
Macmillan Coffee Morning	£190
Willow Wood (IDP Project)	£1, 323.38
Willow Wood (bag packing)	£1, 139.36
Willow Wood (Christmas Beans)	£43
Philippines Typhoon Appeal	£663.97
Children in Need	£248.61
Readathon	£1, 498.70
Poppy Sales	£508.84
Remembrance Coffee Morning	£108
Teenage Cancer Trust	£200

A grand total of £15, 120.15. I should like to congratulate pupils, parents and staff for their contribution in raising this outstanding sum for charity.

In addition, 125 boxes have been donated to Operation Christmas Child.

Over the past six years we have:

raised the outstanding sum of £72, 511.81 for charitable causes; and
donated 450 shoe boxes to Operation Christmas Child.

We also raised a remarkable 680Kg and 754Kg for the local Trussell Trust Foodbank in October and April respectively following two non-uniform days.

VIVO

Vivo is a new and exciting addition to our positive rewards system that enhances the recognition we give to the excellent work and behaviour shown by boys at West Hill School. Using our existing system (SIMS) for allocating points for good behaviour; these points are now converted into Vivo Miles, which can be redeemed in an online store that boys can access via a PC or smartphone. All boys have been provided with their personal log-in details and have been encouraged to access the system in order for them to see their balance, view who awarded them the points and ultimately, to save them up and be rewarded for their hard work and effort.

Child Protection Policy

West Hill School follows the guidance laid out in the Tameside "Child Protection Procedures Handbook". Copies of the school policy statement and 'The Short Guide to the Child Protection Handbook' are available for inspection on request. The Headteacher and the Child Protection Designated Teacher hold copies of the full Child Protection Procedures Handbook in school.

E-Safety

The educational benefits of new and emerging technologies, such as the Internet and email, weblogs, mobile phones, podcasting and video conferencing cannot be underestimated. These help to motivate children in their learning, equipping them with essential skills for the future, as well as enabling access to information which might not otherwise have been available.

We cannot ignore the dangers associated with this emerging technology, however. Pupils might quite innocently happen upon inappropriate or offensive material on the internet or, as is frequently highlighted in the media,

unwanted contact might be received via text, email or in an online chat room. Mobile phones, social networking sites or email might also be used by unscrupulous individuals to 'cyberbully' peers or threaten and abuse members of staff.

These risks can be kept to a minimum allowing pupils to reap the rewards this technology has to offer. The use of the internet at school is protected by a firewall, which filters out the vast majority of inappropriate websites and material. A direct link to some useful websites that provide further information for parents and pupils on e-safety can be accessed through the "e-safety" link on the school website.

Drinks in School

In order to aid learning and stay healthy, we actively encourage pupils to be well hydrated throughout the day by drinking water. However, fizzy drinks are discouraged and, due to the potential adverse effect on learning and behaviour, drinks that are classified as high caffeine such as Red Bull and Monster are not allowed in school.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones, MP3 players or any other electronic devices should not be seen or used on the school premises. Such items seen in the possession of or used on the premises by pupils will be confiscated and kept in the school safe until parents can make arrangements to collect them or to send a letter in requesting that it is returned.

End of the School Day

I should like to emphasise that the great majority of boys will be released at the end of afternoon school at approximately 2.55 pm. There are, however, occasions when your son will need to see a subject teacher about work or a Form Tutor or a Head of Year about problems or concerns. This is of benefit to him. Please do not, therefore, make medical, dental or other appointments until after 3.05 pm.

The roads around school are often very congested and potentially dangerous. In order to make the school environment as safe as possible, I should like to ask parents who pick their son up at the end of the school day to park on Norman Road, Stamford Grove or Astley Road. Please do not drive onto the school site.

Planners

All pupils have been issued with a new academic planner designed to meet their needs. Please make sure you look at this regularly to keep track of your son's weekly activities and homework and sign it at the end of every week.

Appearance

West Hill pupils generally look very smart in school. It is also very important that uniform is worn correctly on the way to and from school. Ties should be worn, and ear studs left at home. Year 10 and 11 pupils should also be clean shaven. Shoes should be plain black and made of a material that can be polished. If the shoes have laces they must also be black. Trainers, shoes that look like trainers and canvas shoes are **not** acceptable. This includes shoes which have a mix of colours e.g. mainly black with a coloured stripe. It would greatly help if parents could support school policy by checking these details. I should also like to remind parents that tracksuit tops and "hoodies" are not part of school uniform and are not allowed to be worn in place of an outside coat.

Hair styles should not be unusual or aggressive. This includes hair cut too short (No 3 being the minimum length that hair should be cut), allowed to grow too long, with steps or streaks. If boys wish to grow their hair longer than normal it should always be kept tidy and, if necessary, tied back.

Labelling Clothing and Equipment

I should like to remind parents of the importance of labelling their son's clothing and equipment. One or two boys, particularly in Year 7, have already lost items of clothing and equipment. If they are labelled with your son's name and form there is a far greater chance of any lost clothing or equipment being returned to the rightful owner.

PE Kit

In order to get into a firm routine, I should be grateful if you would ensure that your son brings his kit to **all** PE lessons. This applies even if he is not participating in the practical element of the lesson. May I remind parents of boys in Years 10 and 11 that participation in the weekly PE lessons is expected just as in any other timetabled lesson.

Advanced Notice 1: Moving On Open Evening 7 – 9pm Thursday 2nd October 2014

School will close at 1.55 pm on Thursday 2nd October. Pupils having lunch between 1.25 and 1.55 pm (pupils in 9A and years 10 and 11 only) may leave the premises once they have had lunch. This is the day of our Moving On Open Evening and it is important that school is well prepared and looking at its best for the large number of visitors that we expect. Many boys will be invited back to help during the evening and by finishing early it will give them ample time to get home and return to school before the event gets underway. A waiting room will be made available for pupils whose parents would prefer their son to remain on the school premises until the normal closing time.

Advanced Notice 2: School Closure

School will be closed for staff training on Monday 3rd November.

Sports Hall Bookings

Currently there are a number of sessions available for booking in the Sports Hall. On a Wednesday there is one badminton court available to hire, 7.00pm-8.00pm and the cost is £9.50 per hour. On Monday 6.00pm-7.00pm the whole Sports Hall is available. On a Tuesday the whole Sports Hall is available to hire 6.00pm-7.00pm, 8.00pm-9.00pm and 9.00pm-10.00pm. The hire fee is £33.00 per hour for Junior usage and £38.00 per hour for Adult usage. If you wish to make a booking please phone the Sports Hall on 0161 338 9292.

Calendar 2014 - 2015

For your information I have attached an outline school calendar for 2014 – 2015, below. A more detailed version of the whole school calendar is available on the school website at <http://www.westhillschool.co.uk/School-Calendar>, please check this for sports practices and fixtures, examination dates, parents' evenings and any other important events concerning your son's year. A dedicated sports calendar is available at <http://www.westhillschool.co.uk/Sports-Calendar>. The planned weekly schedule of extra-curricular sports practices can be found at <http://www.westhillschool.co.uk/Sporting-Opportunities>.

Dates for the Academic Year 2014 – 2015*Autumn Term 2014*

Wednesday 3rd September – School opens for the Autumn term

Friday 24th October - school closes for half term

Tuesday 4th November- school reopens at 8.45 am

Friday 19th December - school closes for the end of term

Spring Term 2015

Monday 5th January - school reopens for the Spring term at 8.45 am

Friday 13th February - school closes for half term

Monday 23rd February - school reopens at 8.45 am

Thursday 2nd April - school closes for the end of term

Summer Term 2015

Monday 20th April - school reopens for the Summer term at 8.45 am

Monday 4th May – School closed for May Day

Friday 22nd May- school closes for half term

Monday 1st June - school reopens at 8.45 am

Friday 17th July - school closes for the end of term

Finally, whichever year your son is in, please encourage him to engage in as many activities as possible and work hard at all times. By doing this he will achieve his best.

Yours faithfully,

R J Hewitt
Headteacher