

WEST HILL SCHOOL

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Dear Parents

On 3rd December our third visit from HMI began as a normal (Section 8) monitoring visit and became a full blown OFSTED Inspection (Section 5) on the second day, 4th December. I am delighted to inform you that the overall judgement of requires improvement means that the school is no longer in special measures and is no longer judged to be inadequate.

Some of the key points below clearly illustrate the progress that has been made since our last full inspection in December 2013.

“Senior leaders and governors have formed a united team that has worked extremely hard in the year since the last inspection to improve key aspects of the school’s work. Development planning identifies appropriate priorities to drive the school forward and self-evaluation is detailed and thorough.”

“The curriculum is broad and balanced, and kept under regular review by senior leaders to ensure that it fully meets pupils’ changing learning needs and interests. The school is quick to remove ineffective courses and replace them with new ones more relevant to pupils’ ambitions and aspirations.”

“Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and effectively managed across the curriculum. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and of their responsibilities towards others in the school and the community in the broadest sense.”

“Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of sports and international links, as well as personal challenges such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme and the annual Three Peaks Challenge. However, pupils’ knowledge and understanding of some aspects of British values are under-developed.”

“Pupils rise to challenging expectations when teachers use excellent subject knowledge to explain difficult concepts clearly. There is high quality teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants to clear individual pupils’ misconceptions step by step. This was seen in science and geography.”



“Pupils have appropriate chances to practise their mathematical skills in science and technology. They have regular opportunities to read a range of books, including e-books, and many read fluently and accurately.”

“The previous decline in underperforming subjects, such as mathematics, has been halted, so that both the proportions of pupils making the expected and more than expected progress are now above average in that subject.”

“The small number of pupils who attend off-site provision at Tameside College or local professional football clubs do well because courses are matched well to their learning needs and interests. There is effective communication between the school and college and football clubs involved and there are robust measures to monitor pupils’ attendance and progress and keep them safe.”

The full report can be found at <http://www.westhillschool.co.uk/ofsted-report>

Although we are delighted with the overall judgement, we all recognise that this is only the first, although very important, step in moving the school to be at least good as quickly as possible.

One slight disappointment in the report is that our grade for behaviour and safety of pupils now also requires improvement. This reflects a change in the method of assessment, which now places greater emphasis on behaviour for learning and the promotion of British values, and not the traditional expectations we have always placed on the behaviour of our pupils, which is as good as ever, as the following extracts from the report demonstrates.

“Pupils conduct themselves very well in and around the school. They are very polite, well mannered and get on very well with each other and with their teachers. They are articulate and confident speakers, at ease with adult visitors. Staff in off-site provision confirm pupils’ positive conduct.”

I should also like to offer my heartfelt thanks to all parents and pupils for their tremendous support throughout this very difficult period. We could not have achieved this level of progress or gained the recognition from OFSTED so quickly without the continued confidence of parents and pupils.

Have a great Christmas break.

Yours faithfully

R J Hewitt
Headteacher

