

WEST HILL SCHOOL

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Dear Parent

Ofsted Inspection Report

Recently, OFSTED visited the school to carry out our first inspection as an academy. Today we received the Final Report of the inspectors, and are only now in a position to share its findings with you.

OFSTED have recently introduced new standards by which schools are judged which were significantly higher than previously. The judgement we received is a reflection of this “raising of the bar” and we welcome this as a part of the overall drive to improve standards of education for all children, locally and nationally.

On a positive note, it is clear from the report that the school’s ethos, the good relationships that exist across the school and the care we provide for our pupils are still second to none. Indeed, the OFSTED team said that boys, “*have very positive attitudes to learning. The management of students’ behaviour is a strength*” and “*the students generate a positive culture around the academy because they are respectful of others and their views.*” This is a strong platform on which to build.

However, you will be as disappointed as I am to find the school is judged to be “inadequate” and “requiring special measures”. This was mainly because the progress of some students in the past 12 months has not been as strong as it should have been. The majority of pupils at the school do make expected progress but we agree with the inspection team’s judgement that this is an area for further improvement.

Although our results in 2011 and 2012 were well above the national average, they were declining, and in 2013 our results dipped slightly below the national average for the first time in many years. There were a number of unusual factors that were in some ways beyond our control which contributed to these results, however, we acknowledge they were well below the high standards we set ourselves.

I should like to emphasise that the areas judged as inadequate have been identified and are being addressed with great commitment by the Senior Team, the staff of the school and our hugely supportive governors. We will also be engaging with colleagues externally and from the Local Authority to provide additional support and challenge to us in this work.

The school will now have regular monitoring visits from HMI (Her Majesty’s Inspectors) and you will receive a letter after each visit confirming their findings. The school can probably expect a further full inspection within the next two years.



Science



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We will also be arranging two events to reassure parents of our resolve to meet the new challenges this judgement presents to us as quickly as possible. We will be sharing our action plan at one of these events and I will let you know the dates for this once it has been finalised with the governors. We will also be providing the opportunity for parents to visit school in small groups to view at first hand the quality of education we provide, and to see how we intend to make the changes necessary to ensure that all boys at West Hill achieve to their full potential. If you would like to visit the school, we will be organising visits from Monday 10th February, please phone the school office and they will make the necessary arrangements. In the meantime, if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Although we are all very disappointed with the outcome of the report, there are still things to celebrate. "The leadership and management of behaviour and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength." This was illustrated during the inspection by our excellent Carol Service and more recently by the Duke of Edinburgh Award Praise and Celebration Evening when almost 150 pupils received an award.

Our curriculum offers good breadth and balance and "The students receive high-quality information, advice and guidance when choosing their Key Stage courses and in preparation for when they leave the academy for the next stage of their learning or training." Once again, this is demonstrated by the number of pupils who are able to progress on their chosen career path and we learnt only this week of a very recent former student who has been accepted at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge one of several pupils to follow this route over the past few years.

The full inspection report is available to view at <http://www.westhillschool.co.uk/ofsted-report>.

Should you have any comments about the report then please email me at admin@westhillschool.co.uk. Further information and comments will be published on our website, along with a list of Frequently Asked Questions.

Finally, I should like to thank all parents for your continued support and encouragement. The strong and supportive partnership that exists between the school, pupils and parents is a key element to your sons' success.

Yours faithfully,

R J Hewitt
Headteacher



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