



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High Since 1927

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Dear Parents and Carers,

What a term our school community have had, ending things with a bang with two excellent Christmas Carol performances, multiple celebratory events in school, the first hosting of our Winter Fair and a plethora of outstanding sporting performances in a range of sporting disciplines. This end of term letter is to celebrate the achievements of this term to date, so is lengthier than normal as we have much to celebrate. If you have not had a chance to follow our social media accounts, they have been added to the letterhead above, and offer parents and carers an insight into our daily events and ongoings which sometimes are missed in our busy lives. Before we commence, a reminder to our families that school ends on **Tuesday 19th December at 12pm**. Students return to school on **Thursday 4th January 2024** for a normal school day. Additionally, in the spring term we will be launching more details about our Parent Association and our Parent Forums, offering parents the timely opportunity to come in and input into discussion with school leaders on strategies to secure excellence at West Hill as our parent/carer partners.

Staffing

Mrs Harrison, our School Business Manager retires this term. Mrs Harrison joined us in 2003 and has led the school budget and a host of essential, but often unseen, roles to keep the high standards at West Hill. We thank Mrs Harrison for all her work and welcome Mrs Shackleton to our team as our new School Business Manager. Similarly, Mr O'Brien, our ICT Strategic Lead has been supporting us for two days a week but he officially leaves us this term with his new adventures away from mainstream schools. We thank him for his dedication and passion over the years in his multitudes of roles. Mrs Miller, one of our Maths teachers planned to leave us this summer but kindly stayed to help us whilst we recruited a full-time member of staff in a teaching recruitment crisis. We thank Mrs Miller for her support and welcome Mr Lane-Super joining our Maths team in January. Additionally, Mr Greaves stepped in to support Computing and Business Studies in Mr Cookson's October retirement, we thank him for his support as he departs this term as we welcome Mr Wilson as our replacement in Computing from January. Alongside this we have secured two additional LSAs joining our SEND Team, Mr Porteous and Miss Ellor, to boost our learning support team to meet the needs of all our learners.

Reading

Reading, and the encouragement of further reading, was one of our recommendations to improve within our last Ofsted inspection. Since then, our library has been fully opened, stocked and fully staffed by our passionate librarian and coordinator of reading interventions, Mrs Whittaker. We have made **Reading for Pleasure** our main focus this school year and the library is going from strength to strength. Throughout the whole of last year (2022-2023) we loaned out 3927 books to 443 students. Already, from September to December, we have loaned 2289 books to 465 students. We are on course to smash our totals. Please continue to encourage your child to read and to maximise the selection we have in our library.

Languages at West Hill

Twenty-three Year 8 boys visited the Manchester Christmas Markets on 6th December to practise their German skills. after studying the topic of food and German/Austrian specialities. Some boys were even successful in securing a £2 discount from a stall holder who they impressed with their knowledge!
We have launched our Languages Club every Thursday 12:25-12:55 for our KS3 learners. So far, students have been learning French and have explored the culture of France, playing interactive games. The club will be looking at other languages and cultures in the new year and will also sample food from different countries. All learners are welcome in L26.

Music at West Hill

The Music Department have been busy performing Christmas engagements for our local community. Our own school Carol Service in St. Pauls Church featured the Jazz Orchestra, Choir, Handbells and soloists. Other concerts were



performed at Dukinfield Town Hall and for the Tameside Community Christmas Party in Stalybridge. Our students have been a credit to yourselves and us in every event. Ms Cronin would like to recognise the additional time, passion and patience displayed by Mr Wells and Mr Cross in organising such vast and characterful opportunities for our students.

Computing at West Hill

Our Head of Department, Miss Worthington, would like to congratulate the GCSE Computer Science students for entering the 'Codementum International Coding Competition' this month. We are yet to find out results but all boys were engaged, showing great resilience and team work in the problem-solving.

Maths at West Hill

Our Sparx Maths competition drew to an end with the highest participation and achieving boys recognised with certificates and selection boxes. Well done to Kean P-P in Year 7, Max Y in Year 8, Joshua M in Year 9 (the highest in the whole school), Oscar Y in Year 10 and Muslim R in Year 11. Your efforts are seen and are admirable. Our Sparx Maths 'drop-in' has continued again this year with old faces as well as some new ones joining us. We meet every Friday (even the days we break up) in M1 from 3pm to use the laptops to complete our home learning. Boys enjoy juice, biscuits and fruit and sometimes sweets as a treat. Staff and Maths Ambassadors are on hand to help and support where needed. This is a very relaxed and informal session with some boys staying for the hour (or longer) with others just staying for the few minutes they need to. Everyone is welcome from Year 11 to Year 7.

PE at West Hill

It has been a busy first term for the PE department. The boys have had access to a multitude of co-curricular clubs. There have been clubs for football, rugby, badminton, basketball, running, mountain biking and the gym with excellent participation and we want to make it OUTSTANDING! All boys are welcome to participate and try sessions to find their passion. Ms Cronin would like to thank the PE team for the extra hours and commitments in attending these events. The boys have also been busy competing against other schools in a range of competitions for all of the sports above. These have ranged from friendlies, to local competitions such as the Tameside Football Cup and Lancashire Rugby Cup, to nationwide competitions such as the English Schools Football Cup and the English Schools X-Country Championships at Sedbergh. Hundreds of boys across school have worn the West Hill badge with pride and have been excellent ambassadors to the school. So far this year, we have had: 16 rugby fixtures, 31 football fixtures, 6 X-country meetings, 12 park runs, 4 basketball fixtures and 2 badminton fixtures. Congratulations to all the boys that have been chosen to represent our school. If boys want a spot on our teams, keep the training up, resilience is a key skill to have. Our X-Country team have had a really successful 2 weeks! We have just won the Altrincham District and Schools X-Country League for at least the third year running. And even more impressively, we have just retained the Tameside Schools X-Country Championship for the 28th consecutive year! Surely there is a record there somewhere? Our A team won each of the 3 different age groups to ensure a comprehensive overall victory. Our B team finished 2nd, well above every other school in the district. Congratulations to all boys involved and showing their commitment yet again.

Heads of Year Messages

Within **Year 11** we are hugely proud of the student and parent/carer support at our Year 11 Success Fair and gear towards our January mock exams for Year 11. We are hugely proud of our cohort and notably our prefect team for outstanding duties and services in all the events we have hosted this term – visitors always tell us that our boys are our biggest asset to reflect education at West Hill and this is completely true.

We owe a massive congratulations to our **Year 10** cohort who have worked hard to meet the challenges of their new GCSE curriculum. A special congratulations to our Bronze Duke of Edinburgh students who celebrated their hard work and commitments this month, alongside a special mention of congratulations to Alfie M, Caleb M and Lucas S who have recently achieved their Chief Scout Gold Award.

Within **Year 9** there are lots of standout congratulations. To Aiden M who came first overall in the Tameside X-Country championship, whose contribution also enabled our A and B teams to come 1st and 2nd in the competition taking us to our 28th victory. Congratulations to Lucas R who represents the Great Britain Youth Squad in Biathlon whose next competition is scheduled for January in Munich, Germany. Jayden W-J for making excellent progress with his trumpet, and is also a member of the successful school Jazz Orchestra. Oliver K for making excellent progress with his Tuba and is also a member of the successful school Jazz Orchestra. Malachi H-B for working extremely hard with his musical keyboard skills. Harry B has achieved his grade 3 in Muay Thai. Harry A and Josh H who play basketball (Under 15s) for Stockport Falcons, part of the National League and have been selected for ASPIRE England, with hopes to make the



England Team. Harry is also a very good guitarist and is also a member of the successful school Jazz Orchestra. Congratulations to the rest of Year 9 who contribute to the everyday of West Hill life, gaining large amounts of achievement points this term which represents the every day responsible and respectful choices.

Our **Year 8s** have become this term's overall achievement point earners (at point of writing) with over 14 thousand achievement points, growing not only in height, but also in their confidence and attitude, as they step up to be role models to the Year 7s. During the Manchester Christmas Markets Trip, students showed off their German skills, with boys getting money off a bratwurst for speaking so confidently. In Technology, there has been fantastic design and creativity from Harrison W, Freddie L, Sam W and Evan W, creating eye-catching products. Boys take part in a wide-range of co-curricular activities each week, such as Science club and the Maths Puzzle club, developing and extending their skills, as well as leadership abilities. Sporting wise, Alfie T and Flynn S finished 2nd and 3rd respectively in the Tameside Cross-Country race, contributing to the team's overall win. Boys have also been successful in football, rugby and basketball this year, competing in games across the region.

Our **Year 7s** are in second place with over 13 thousand achievement points. A fantastic start to their West Hill journey, Year 7 have settled into new routines incredibly well. So many boys are getting involved with our co-curricular activities and sporting pursuits. A special well done to Xander C and Declan A for their History Castle work. Also, to all the boys who took part in the Shoebox Science Project. Freddie H for his activities with Sea Cadets- winning multiple medals for swimming and football. Excellent use of the library by Josh H, Conlan F and Tom W-W who have loaned 126 books between them this term! Also, to all the boys who were presented with awards at the celebration assembly and to those in our Christmas Carol Service. Finally, thank you to all the Year 7 parents and carers for your support.

Please find overleaf summary details of our co-curricular clubs from Mrs Anderton. Additionally, please see our careers newsletter that was sent to parents earlier today, highlighting events that have occurred this term and additional information on careers and post-16 support at West Hill.

Many thanks for reading and we wish you a restful break.
From all of us at West Hill we wish you winter wellness wishes,

Ms C. Cronin
Headteacher

**Maths Puzzle Club every Monday 3-3.30pm**

Each week, the Maths Puzzle Club meet to try and solve some brain-teasers and conundrums, or take part in some mathematical games and activities. Students are also able to pose their own problems to the group, to see if they can be solved. All years welcome to join in the fun!

Arts Award Monday 3-4pm

Our Year 9 Arts Award Bronze cohort have made a very strong start this year in creating their portfolios. They have been developing their technical skills in photography and developing their creativity with their use of composition. They have also had the opportunity to visit the Whitworth Art gallery to view some fantastic artwork and participate in a drawing workshop with a practicing artist.

Chess and Boardgames Club every Tuesday 3-3.45pm

This year we have welcomed lots of new students to Chess and Boardgames Club. We have enjoyed playing a variety of games ranging from the more traditional such as Chess, Connect Four and Battleships to new ones such as Exploding Kittens and Skull. Some students participate in group games such as the Game of Life and others play in pairs, for example Mastermind. Some just like to enjoy time on their own building with Lego. Boardgames Club is open to everyone. We meet in H48 and G44 at 3-3.45pm. We hope to see you in the new year!

STEM Club alternate Tuesday 3-3.45pm

STEM club is a great way to explore areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths that pupils may not be able to explore in the curriculum. We do all sorts of engineering challenges from building bridges to building parachutes and making earthquake-proof buildings. We also carry out experiments to look into the Science of the world around us including the chemistry behind fireworks and looking into the human body. STEM club is on every other Tuesday in S33. Come and see Miss Johnson to sign up.

History Club alternate Wednesday 3-3.45pm

In History Club we have welcomed back old and new members. The club takes place every other Wednesday 3-3.45 in G44. So far, we have investigated World War One artefacts, played History board games and interactive games, looked at the history of Halloween and designed our own historical based pumpkins, made models and taken time out to enjoy each other's company and have fun. All of KS3 are welcome with no commitment to come to every session.

Art Club Wednesday 3-4pm

We have had a fantastic turn out for KS3 Art club this autumn term. We have had many newcomers from Year 7, 8 and 9 as well as some regular members of the club who have attended up to 3 years in a row. There has been a great range of art activities going on in each session such as drawing, canvas painting and 3D clay modelling, which has proven to be one of our most popular activities! Our students have used the time to complete their classwork or art home learning tasks and also as time to create some of their own artwork to take home with them.

Sparx Maths Club every Friday 3-4pm

Sparx Maths drop-in has continued again this year with old faces as well as some new ones joining us. We meet every Friday (even the days we break up) in M1 from 3pm to use the laptops to complete our home learning. Boys enjoy juice, biscuits and fruit and sometimes sweets as a treat as well. Staff and maths ambassadors are on hand to help and support where needed. This is a very relaxed and informal session with some boys staying for the hour and sometimes more with others just staying for the few minutes they need to. Everyone is welcome from Year 11 to Year 7.

A range of PE and Sport Clubs

There have been clubs for football, rugby, badminton, basketball, running, mountain biking and the gym; and participation has been excellent! Just come and look at the co-curricular wall in the PE Department to see what is on.

A range of Music Clubs

The Music Department has once again been a hive of activity this term. All our ensembles have been rehearsing hard after school for their performances. The Jazz Orchestra on a Monday, Drum Group and Brass Learners on a Tuesday, Guitar Group on Wednesdays and Beginner Jazz Collective on a Thursday. Sandwich in our Handbell Group, Remembrance Hymn band and Carol Service choir rehearsals and our students have not had much free time! Our brand-new Drum Group has taken off really well which is great to see with a good nucleus of boys practising after school every Tuesday. More are always welcome and we can always take a few more brass and saxophone learners. So, if you fancy learning a brass or saxophone instrument for FREE, please see Mr Wells. Or why not come along to Guitar group on a Wednesday?

Performances this term have included two Remembrance services, a Year 11 student performing the last post outside Dukinfield Town Hall, two school Carol Services and numerous other Christmas performances in our local community. We would love to see more students getting involved in learning instruments and joining in with our groups in the spring term, so why not come and give it a go, there is nothing to lose.