

## Possible parental questions

### **Why hasn't the school overall grading improved?**

Ofsted recognised that the school is 'significantly different' than it was when it was last inspected in October 2014. The improvement to the school and the school's performance are cited throughout the report. Ofsted's view is that the school has 'clear and strongly improving trends' (term relevant to the school in the Ofsted handbook) in school performance measures. For instance, 67% more children attained 5 A\*-C or better at GCSE compared to 58% two years ago. Many more children are also now achieving higher in their best 8 GCSEs from where they started. One in 5 children left with A/A\* GCSEs in five or more subjects. The number of children meeting and the number of children exceeding targets rose in all three core subjects in 2016, English, maths and science. The school's ability to predict (project) outcomes is acknowledged in the report and we are confident in our forecast that the performance trends will continue the strong upward trend.

The Ofsted framework in 2014 is different to that used in 2016. In our recent report we successfully met the majority of the good criteria in Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Outcomes and 16-18 Study Programmes; Ofsted deemed us as not having met all the judgements yet in these sections and therefore judged as not yet fully good in all areas.

In the report you will read much of the data Ofsted chose to use was from 2014 (before the previous Ofsted report) and 2015, rather than the 2016 outcomes. This is unfortunate as the data this summer proves the positive and good trends in performance. Unfortunately, it is within Ofsted's remit to not count at current and projected data as key evidence in their judgments.

Students across all year groups are making progress. However, exiting KS4 students and those who remain in KS4 currently experienced too much inadequate teaching and support in their earlier years at WHS. Robust training for staff and staff turnover (recruitment) has ensured this has not continued. Students in KS4 and exiting KS4 have and are receiving a vast amount of support to close gaps which appeared from previous learning. Students in years 7 – 9 show their outcomes are in a stronger position than their peers above them.

Students are safer and feel more supported, the attitude and behaviour in school is dramatically different to 2 years ago.

### **When will the good leadership have an impact?**

The report states that the leadership and management at all levels are good and the right systems are now in place to continue improving outcomes. Ofsted recognised the serious strengths of the upward trends in all key measures.

We work on the premise that we do what is best for the students and sometimes this may not be the easiest for staff or the fastest way, but it is the way that secures sustainable learning and outcomes for the students. Visitors who come and look around our school during the school day or speak to our students comment on the confidence, warmth and pride with which the students speak about their school. The school is in a strong position, with staff and students working together, to continue the significant and rapid improvement already made.

Leadership and management expectations are now embedded. Leaders and managers are clear about the way forward and the school community is responding positively to a 'raising of the bar'. The quality of teaching and the continued improvement in examination results and attendance demonstrates this.

The good leadership of this school has already had a significant impact on the outcomes and experiences of our students.

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### **Will my child be safe at WHS?**

The recent Ofsted report highlights that students feel safe at WHS. It also comments that 'pupils are safe, well-behaved and develop as well-rounded individuals'. All students regularly comment on feeling safe in school and having an adult to talk to if they need support. This is enabled through coaching where students have a voice on three occasions a week, building relationships with their coach and other members of their coaching group. As a result of coaching, students have become more confident in speaking to adults or older peers. We work restoratively as a school to build, maintain and when needed repair relationships. We work to build an understanding and commitment amongst students to 'choose to and want to' make positive decisions. Flexible Learning provides opportunities for students to take part in a wide range of activities and through this get to know and build relationships with a wider range of staff and students beyond their subject timetable and coaching group.

### **Will my high ability child be stretched?**

Our first school value is 'Know our Children Well' and this begins the moment we know the students are starting at WHS. Staff visit our primary feeder schools and use prior data effectively to support and stretch the most able the moment students arrive in school. This prior data leads to targeted intervention across a range of subjects from day 1.

Our curriculum design allows for students in all years to be stretched. For example, in year 9 the curriculum offer enables all students to follow an accelerated pathway. Students study for a GCSE or equivalent in a year across subjects ranging from Law, Economics, Sociology, Sports leadership, arts award and BTEC performing Arts. Effectively students are undertaking a GCSE course nearly two years early allowing them to gain an understanding of GCSE requirements and therefore make faster progress when they start their full GCSE programme in Year 10.

Targeted Home Learning (HL) is personalised and at the appropriate level for each child. In a class there may be several pieces set which allow the most able to be stretched both in their lessons and through Home Learning and extension tasks. We have a specific Flexible Learning Club called the 'Everest Group' which encourages students to aim for the highest levels of achievement. Our most able students have been encouraged to attend with the focus on continuous development and increased personal aspiration.

Another of our school values is 'Character for Achievement'. This focuses on all children of all abilities being expected to develop the characteristics to keep learning when the work is hard and stretching. We look to develop characteristics such as independence, resilience, motivation, collaboration and effort.

One in 5 students left with at least 5A\*-C GCSE grades with those students joining the school working at the highest levels for their year group nationally, exiting Y11 having continued to be very good progress. The outcomes for 2016 demonstrate this progress, as do projections for 2017. The current tracking of years 7 – 9 also shows that the most able pupils continue to make strong progress in a range of subjects.

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### **Will my child with Special Educational Need and/or Disability (SEND) make good progress?**

Students with SEND are supported in school, both pastorally and through our highly personal coaching model. Students are also supported and challenged academically, through our bespoke diagnostic testing and intervention focused on closing gaps in knowledge and skills at Key Stage 3. Our assessments at Key Stage 3 show that children with SEND are now progressing more rapidly than children without SEND in core subjects.

Our SENCo works closely with teachers, children and their families to meet individual needs. A team of Assistant Teachers work with small groups of children to close gaps in knowledge and skills in all year groups to enable every child to be better challenged and supported in the main classroom.

### **Why is progress in Maths described as still variable?**

Nationally over the past two years progress in maths has declined. Progress in maths has increased over the past two years at WHS and projected grades for this year's year 11 show a 3-year trend of improvement. Ofsted recognised that there has been effective recruitment of staff with a newly appointed Subject Manager and Senior Manager for Maths who both arrive to us with strong evidence of impact from previous schools. Ofsted felt confident that mathematics will continue to improve due to the new management and teaching team in place and both the quality schemes of learning and the improved teaching. However, because Ofsted judge the school on the previous data rather than current data, meant that due to the timing of the inspection in September Ofsted looked at 2014 and 2015 outcomes only; this data does not fully represent the current progress seen in 2016 or the projected progress of mathematics.

### **How is classwork marked?**

Students have a workbook and an assessment/progress book. Students receive feedback on key assessments throughout the half term. Feedback is detailed and focuses on areas of misconception and/or gaps in knowledge/skill. Students use this personalised feedback time in lessons to carry out DIRT activities (Dedicated, Improvement, Reflection Time). Their teacher will then re-mark the work looking for corrections and progress in understanding. In addition to formative feedback in lessons, students and families receive summative judgements about learning in both progress reports and at Key Stage 3 ARE reports (Age Related Expectations); these are very detailed subject reports which identify clear target areas (gaps) based on both teacher and class assessments. At all Key stages students sit age appropriate exams to test their knowledge and understand as well as their memory retention; these are marked by their subject teachers.

Ofsted visited us in the first few weeks of a new school year and this timing may have prevented them from evidencing progress over time from the quantity of work in books.

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### **What does Home Learning mean at Key Stage 4?**

Students receive targeted Home Learning (HL) which are personalised pieces of work for their own development. Often this work supports their controlled assessment or if this is not appropriate HL is used to develop the knowledge the student needs to retain for the subject exam. In addition to the targeted piece of HL, Students at Key Stage 4 are expected to complete Home Learning asked of them by their teacher to support their progress.

In addition to expectations around Home Learning, there is a strong offer of academic support and intervention for key Stage 4 students to attend. These take place during lunch times, after school and during school holidays. The significant majority of year 11 students appreciate this offer and attend these interventions routinely.

### **Will the sixth form enable my child to do well?**

Yes, students at WHS sixth form are provided with 'high challenge' in and out of lessons. This is partnered with 'high support' so that the student is given every chance to reach their full potential. Students are placed on personalised curriculum pathways that meet their needs.

The school and sixth form are committed to ensuring that every student is able to follow their chosen career pathway. We provide high quality careers advice throughout the Key Stages that raises aspirations and gives students the knowledge and confidence they need when applying for Post 18 pathways. Sixth Form students at WHS undertake a wide range of enrichment activities; including work experience, community contributions, voluntary work and fund raising. This is to ensure that, along with their qualifications, they can set themselves apart from other candidates when applying for University, apprenticeships or employment.

We ensure that when students leave us at the end of their Post 16 education, that 100% move onto their chosen pathway and have the confidence and skills to thrive.