

Ashbrooke House School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Ashbrooke House School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged three to 11 years. The school is registered for 142 pupils and there are currently 86 pupils on roll. There are 35 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage of which 25 are part time and 29 receive nursery education funding. There is one Nursery and one Reception class. None of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs and no pupils are looked after children. The premises are situated in a residential area, in a large Victorian house, close to the sea front of Weston-super-Mare in Somerset. The school was founded in 1953 and was last inspected in June 2009. The school aims to 'provide a happy and caring school through a broad and balanced curriculum'.

Evaluation of the school

Ashbrooke House School provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets its aims. Older pupils make satisfactory progress because of the satisfactory teaching and assessment supported by a satisfactory curriculum. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good, including good safeguarding procedures. The school's strengths lie in the school's outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour. The school continues to meet all of the regulatory requirements but the school has not made significant improvement since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory but there are good features. The curriculum is broad and well balanced and covers all of the required areas of learning. Satisfactory policies and schemes of work support the teaching of a full range of National Curriculum subjects including a number of modern foreign languages. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is planned well and incorporates the teaching of citizenship. Basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are provided satisfactorily for all pupils, as are opportunities for physical exercise. Music and singing are accorded much importance and are planned well. Pupils regularly perform in assemblies. The

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

school choir takes part in a number of events both inside and outside the school throughout the year. The curriculum for older pupils is further enriched by visits to places of educational interest and extra-curricular activities, for example visits to the Royal Naval Air Station and a number of local museums

While the curriculum has good features, what makes it satisfactory is that it does not make a striking impact upon the academic progress that pupils make. This is because of the way that some of it is interpreted by the teachers of older pupils. For example, the high quality, interesting, imaginative and challenging interpretation in PSHE, music and singing is not always present in the teaching of some other subjects.

The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Staff in the Nursery have a good knowledge of the curricular requirements and guidance. Planning shows that the activities provided for children support their learning and development well. For example, during the inspection, children were fascinated by a topic about the 'summertime' and confidently selected their own resources to make attractive seaside collages. However, planning in the Reception class is only satisfactory because it is not as detailed or thorough as in the Nursery.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are satisfactory, although there are some good features. For older pupils, work is planned to match most pupils' capabilities so that they make satisfactory progress overall. However, the needs of more-able pupils are not always met sufficiently and the pace of some lessons is too slow. These are two reasons why teaching is not judged to be good. These issues were raised in the last inspection report and some improvements have been identified in the school's self-evaluation but there is still room for further improvement.

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and they are competent in terms of management and engagement of the pupils, with the pupils clearly understanding what the teacher expects of them at all times. Teachers use praise well in lessons, but in some lessons teachers talk for too long, which limits the pace and the potential for the pupils to become more informed independent learners. This is another reason why teaching is not judged to be good. However, there are examples of good teaching. During the inspection, this included a geography lesson where pupils were required to demonstrate and acquire a range of map-reading and technology-based investigative skills. The work stretched and enthused all of the pupils in the class such that they continued to research their chosen country outside of the classroom. In another lesson designed to develop thinking skills, pupils were wholly engrossed by the task. The teacher used humour and incisive questioning to good effect to ensure that every child in the class was fully challenged.

Learning resources provided by the school are adequate; however, the computer facilities of the school are ageing. Pupils are set homework regularly and this is linked to the topics being taught.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage staff are effective play partners and help promote children's language development so that children use vocabulary confidently in their conversations with each other and with adults. Teaching for the development of early reading and writing skills is good and, by the start of Year 1, most children read and write above the expected levels for their age. For example, all of the Reception children have written sentences about what they would do if they were King or Queen for a day. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. However, one weakness is that lesson planning documents for Reception children do not always state clearly enough what children are to learn in lessons.

The use of assessment is satisfactory overall. The school collects information about the pupils' progress and attainment and this is used satisfactorily to support the teaching and learning of most pupils. Marking is satisfactory and provides suitable feedback to pupils. In the Nursery, staff record children's progress clearly in attractive and informative learning diaries. This information is used well to inform teaching.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is despite the earlier criticisms that some aspects of the curriculum are not interpreted imaginatively and on a few occasions teachers do not sufficiently encourage pupils' independence when learning. The main reasons for the outstanding judgement include the strong Christian ethos of the school which impacts very positively on pupils' attitudes to learning and other aspects of their lives and the understanding and patience that pupils have for one another. In some instances, the curriculum does contribute very well to pupils' development, for example, PSHE, citizenship and in music, particularly the regular opportunities to sing to various audiences. This develops outstandingly well pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage pupils quickly learn to respect one another and get on well together. They learn how to understand each other and this successfully promotes harmony between the children. Children enjoy their learning and play activities and concentrate for increasingly lengthy periods. They are very happy to be in school and their behaviour is outstanding. They share toys and apparatus exceptionally well and take turns appropriately.

This excellent foundation is built on highly successfully throughout the rest of the school. Pupils' behaviour continues to be outstanding. Attendance levels are high and pupils' manners to visitors for example, are exemplary. Pupils have a strong sense of right, wrong and fairness. Pupils appreciate the small, close-knit school community and love their school and are proud of it. They feel it their duty to raise money for those less fortunate. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to discuss a range of issues in assemblies, for example an excellent display by pupils on the Korean martial art, Tae Kwon Do. They also talk about the importance of positive relationships.

Pupils develop a good understanding of the institutions of the United Kingdom through classroom discussion and curriculum study. They study the cultures and faiths of others and discuss them knowledgeably. This helps to promote harmony and tolerance between different cultural traditions. They practice healthy eating and exercise. Older pupils are prepared well for transition to senior school. Consequently, none has worries about the future and pupils say the skills they are taught at school prepare them well for their lives in the future.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Effective health and safety policies, including sound risk assessments, are in place. Guidance is implemented effectively. Safeguarding policies and procedures, including arrangements for child protection training, are good. All staff, including the designated person, have been trained at the appropriate level to fulfil their child protection duties. There are sufficient trained first aiders on site at all times. Very clear policies for behaviour, anti-bullying and fire safety exist and are well understood and implemented by staff. Bullying is rare and pupils feel very safe and happy. Staff are well deployed to ensure good supervision and they ensure children are kept safe at all times. Emergency fire evacuation procedures are suitably in place and fire-safety equipment is monitored effectively. Regular outdoor and indoor physical activity and healthy eating are promoted by the school. Attendance and admissions registers are maintained in accordance with requirements and the school's three-year access plan meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Thorough procedures for the vetting and appointment of staff and others are in place and arrangements meet all requirements. The single central register contains all of the required information.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises provide suitable accommodation. The school building is considerably enhanced by attractive displays. The Early Years Foundation Stage facilities provide children with an attractive outdoor space and sufficient, good quality equipment to meet their needs. All of the furniture and fittings meet requirements. There are suitable facilities for those who are ill.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or is made available. Clear, accurate and up-to-date information for parents, carers and others is provided through the website, prospectus, reports and school policies. The vast majority of questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers were positive.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

Clear procedures, which conform to requirements, are in place in the event of a complaint being made.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 (‘the Regulations’).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that all teachers interpret the curriculum in exciting and challenging ways
- ensure that in lessons, pupils are given more opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning and so become competent, independent learners
- use assessment information more effectively to improve teaching and so ensure that the needs of the more-able pupils are always clearly identified and addressed
- in the Early Years Foundation Stage, improve the quality of planning in Reception in order to improve teaching and children’s progress.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary School		
Date school opened	1953		
Age range of pupils	3–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 18	Girls: 33	Total: 51
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 16	Girls: 19	Total: 35
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,470		
Address of school	9 Ellenborough Park North Weston-super-Mare North Somerset BS23 1XH		
Telephone number	01934 629515		
Email address	headteacher@ashbrookehouse.n-somerset.sch.uk		
Headteacher	Ruth Thomas		
Proprietor	Mr & Mrs John C Teasdale		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

25 June 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Ashbrooke House School, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1XH

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed speaking with you and your views are really important to us.

We found that your school is satisfactory overall although there are some good things happening. All government requirements are met. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The adults at school take care to make sure you are safe and nurtured well. As a result you grow in confidence and become well-rounded young people. We can see why you all enjoy coming to school and this is evident in your positive attitude to work and your exemplary behaviour.

Because of the individual support you all receive in the small classes, the satisfactory teaching, and the interesting things you are given the opportunity to do, you make satisfactory progress in your work.

We would like your school to continue to improve, so we have asked staff to consider a few suggestions:

- We want teachers to interpret the curriculum in exciting and challenging ways.
- We think you should be given more opportunity to take responsibility for your own learning and so become competent, independent learners.
- We want teachers to use assessment information more effectively to improve teaching and so ensure that the needs of those of you who are more able are always clearly identified and addressed.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we would like the school to improve the quality of planning in Reception in order to improve teaching and children's progress.

My very best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely
Israr Khan
Lead inspector