

Ashgrove School LTD

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Joanne Caswell HMI

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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

Ashgrove School is an independent day school for boys and girls from three to 11 years of age. The school was established by the principal in 1986. It is located in a large, detached house in the London borough of Bromley. An adjoining coach house provides additional teaching space. There are 83 pupils on the school roll, of whom 79 attend full time and four attend part time. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of two classes. There are no children in receipt of funding for early years education. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school provides extended day provision. A breakfast club is available from 8.00am and after-school care is provided each day until 6.00pm. The school operates as a tutorial centre from 3.30pm to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

The school seeks to provide 'a first class education in a caring, well-disciplined and happy environment'. It seeks to achieve this through its motto, 'Strong foundations for future success.' The school prepares pupils for entry into independent and maintained secondary schools. This is the school's third Ofsted inspection; the last one took place in November 2008. A monitoring visit was carried out in January 2011.

Evaluation of the school

Ashgrove School provides a good quality of education and is successful in meeting its aims. All of the regulatory requirements are met. Strengths throughout the school include the positive relationships pupils form with their peers and teachers and the strong attitudes they develop towards their learning. The promotion of pupils' welfare, health and safety is good, including safeguarding arrangements, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers know the pupils very well and have a very secure understanding of their different learning needs. As a result, all pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Quality of education

Overall, the curriculum provided by the school is good. However, provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is less well developed. Although children in this phase

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

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

of education achieve well, they sometimes have limited opportunities to extend their learning through self-initiated activities in the outdoor area. Policies, schemes of work and teachers' planning are effective for all subjects. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is planned to ensure pupils' basic skills are met very well. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, pupils are taught by specialist teachers. As a result, the vast majority of pupils make good progress and are well prepared for their future learning and progression into secondary education. In the last academic year, 100% of pupils were successful in passing public entrance examinations. Two pupils also gained scholarships.

The curriculum is enhanced effectively through a wide range of visitors to the school and learning opportunities within the wider community. For example, the school sponsors the local Churchill Theatre. This enables pupils to participate in a wide range of music and drama activities. Pupils regularly represent the school in local music and sports events and are successful in competitions. For example, recently the school's jazz band and junior strings group were awarded honours certificates in the Bromley (Kent) Festival of Music and Speech. Visitors to the school have included a children's author, the road safety officer, a circus workshop and a grandparent who talked to pupils about the Second World War. A small number of parents and carers expressed concern in the questionnaires that pupils did not participate in outings and visits off site. However, as the school regularly invites a wide range of visitors into the school, pupils' learning is extended through these experiences. Therefore, pupils' learning is not inhibited due to the lack of external visits.

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good throughout the school. This is delivered through specific lessons, assemblies, fundraising and charity events. For example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn about the role of the emergency services. Pupils enjoy a varied range of extra-curricular activities to enhance their learning. For example, clubs such as French, gardening, drama, football and orchestra are widely available and well attended. Specialist provision also enables pupils to have individual music tuition. Music is a strength throughout the school and pupils have successfully formed their own bands and play together well. They are confident to perform and enjoy taking part in organised events, such as 'Ashgrove's Got Talent.' Pupils' artwork throughout the school represents their own creativity and expression. Older pupils have explored the work of different artists, such as Renoir and the work of Wyndham Lewis. This broadens pupils' creativity and enhances their artistic awareness.

Teaching and assessment are good. Pupils benefit from small class sizes and are taught by subject specialists. Staff know all the pupils exceptionally well and there is a very homely, nurturing environment. Any pupil who is identified as requiring extra help to extend their skills and knowledge is supported appropriately. This ensures each pupil's personal needs are clearly understood by all teachers, so that all pupils feel valued and achieve well. One pupil wrote in a questionnaire, 'My school makes me feel confident and is special to me.' Teachers adopt a wide range of strategies to engage pupils effectively in their learning. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and grounded in self-belief. The teachers' good subject knowledge engages pupils

well. From the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6, the large majority of lessons are good. The quality of written planning is variable between teachers, but successfully meets the needs of all pupils and ensures the quality of lessons and pupils' progression in learning.

Teachers make good cross-curricular links within their lessons. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 design and technology lesson, pupils had fun making framed shelters, linking both mathematical and scientific concepts. In an Early Years Foundation Stage physical education (PE) lesson, good links were made between colour, shape and size as children used a range of resources, such as cones, balls and hoops. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively. This system is still in its infancy within the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, staff have a secure knowledge of each child's progress towards the early learning goals and are working to improve the current systems for recording their learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. From the Early Years Foundation Stage, children develop strong social skills and form very positive attitudes towards learning. All pupils are very polite and form respectful relationships with their peers and the staff. Pupils clearly enjoy their time at school and develop very strong motivation to work hard and achieve well. This is reflected in pupils' regular attendance. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Any disruptive behaviour in a small minority of lessons is managed effectively to prevent interruption to pupils' learning.

Pupils are keen to help one another, and social engagement between different age groups of pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, is very positive. This makes lunchtimes and break times a positive experience. Pupils are keen to represent their different houses and strive hard to win trophies awarded by the principal for achievement. Regular fundraising and charity events help pupils gain a greater awareness of the needs of others. For example, pupils take part in events to raise money for charities, such as the London Air Ambulance. Pupils show particular care and concern for others and older pupils are very attentive towards the younger pupils. The school encourages a strong sense of morals within the pupils and this means pupils behave with courtesy to one another and are polite with all adults. The older pupils undertake first aid training and this helps them take responsibility and develop a strong level of citizenship.

Pupils develop a clear understanding of other faiths and religions and this is enhanced through the celebration of different festivals and cultural events. For example, pupils celebrated Chinese New Year by sampling differing Chinese foods and exploring Chinese culture. Pupils work harmoniously together in school and are respectful of each other. Very good relationships are evident throughout the school and this helps to support pupils' feelings of self-worth and ability to succeed and achieve. This is reflected in the good progress all pupils make. As a result, pupils are very well-prepared for their future economic well-being.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities throughout the school and to develop roles within the classroom. For example, the oldest pupils become 'House Martins' and assume duties to keep the school tidy and safe. During their final year in school, the oldest pupils work together cooperatively to produce the annual newspaper. As a result, pupils develop confidence; the ability to work as a team and to show respect for others.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. This includes the Early Years Foundation Stage welfare requirements where all regulations are also met. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Robust procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils. All staff regularly undertake child protection training and are confident in the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. Written safeguarding policies are in place and consistently implemented. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Attendance records are maintained in full and support pupils' safety. This also is an improvement since the last inspection. Health and safety procedures are effective and documentation meets requirements. Records for fire safety meet requirements, but are minimal. Regular evacuation drills are carried out and staff and pupils are confident in the action to take in the event of an emergency.

Good attention is given towards supporting pupils' personal welfare needs. Staff are appropriately trained in first aid and clear procedures are in place to manage any accidents and emergency situations. The school operates a nut-free policy to meet the needs of pupils who have individual dietary requirements. There are no reported incidents of bullying and no exclusions. Behaviour policies are clear and promote positive behaviour. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and how they would seek help if they had concerns. Pupils demonstrated to inspectors a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and all pupils confirmed how safe and secure they feel at school. A very large proportion of pupils who completed the questionnaires were very positive about their experiences of school. The school's three-year access plan has recently been updated to meet the regulatory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The procedures for vetting staff and carrying out suitability checks meet all requirements. The school has a single central register which contains all the required information.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises are maintained to a good standard and provide a safe and secure environment for pupils to work and play in. The school makes full use of the neighbouring sports field to extend the curriculum for PE and larger group events. Classrooms are generally well equipped, and the garden and playground are used for

additional activities and extra-curricular clubs. However, the outdoor environment is not always utilised fully to extend children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Provision of information

The school provides helpful information for parents and carers, Ofsted and the Department of Education on request. The school's website is updated regularly and gives a clear indication of the school's policies, procedures and pupils' activities. The majority of the parental questionnaires returned were very positive.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure meets requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

1.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- review the arrangements for planning and assessment to provide consistency in the methods that all teachers use to record how pupils' individual learning needs will be met during all lessons
- in the Early Years Foundation Stage, improve children's opportunities for independent learning in the outside environment.

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		
Date school opened	1986		
Age range of pupils	3–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 40	Girls: 39	Total: 79
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 4	Total: 4
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,185		
Address of school	116 Widmore Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3BE		
Telephone number	020 8460 4143		
Email address	pash@ashgrove.org.uk		
Principal	Dr Patricia Ash		
Proprietor	Dr Patricia Ash		

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.

2 March 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Ashgrove School Ltd, Bromley, BR1 3BE

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed having the opportunity to talk with you, reading your views in the questionnaires and observing some of your lessons. You told us how much you enjoy school and you are very enthusiastic in your learning. Many of you told us how safe and secure you find school and make friends easily. Your parents and carers agree, and a large majority of them are also very pleased with the standards of education you receive. We found out that:

- children are very happy and settled in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in their learning. However, this could be extended further through increased access to the outdoor environment
- you all behave very well and develop high levels of confidence and responsibility, such as by acting as House Martins and helping around the school
- you make good progress in your learning as your teachers know you very well and support your individual needs in classes. However, we noted that all teachers have a different way of recording this learning
- your parents and carers say how much they appreciate the way in which the school helps you to enjoy your learning and to be well prepared when you change school
- the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities you participate in help to extend your learning and broaden your skills.

We talked with your principal and vice-principal about the small number of things that need to be improved and they will be working hard to make things even better for you.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jo Caswell
Her Majesty's Inspector
Lead Inspector