

Ashbrooke House School

9 Ellenborough Park North, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1XH

Inspection dates

23–25 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not secured sufficient improvement in the school.
- Leaders with specific responsibilities do not ensure that their improvement plans are consistently implemented across the school.
- The tracking of pupils' progress through an agreed whole-school assessment system is not well developed.
- Governors have not provided effective support to the headteacher to implement a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching.
- Governors have not provided sufficient opportunities for teachers to improve through continuous professional development.
- Teachers have not ensured that the most-able pupils in key stage 2 consistently achieve the high standards of which they are capable.
- Pupils do not use the feedback they receive to improve their work.
- Teachers do not regularly share with parents information about their children's progress and what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils do not make enough progress by Year 6, particularly in writing and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Teachers closely monitor each child's social and emotional development and children enjoy stimulating learning tasks.
- Pupils enter the school with well-developed early reading skills. Their progress in reading is maintained as they move through the school.
- From Year 2, pupils are able to benefit from a broad range of subjects, including French, German, speech and drama, music, personal music tuition and swimming.
- Pupils are happy in their school.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is strong. They have a well-developed awareness of their own and other cultures, underpinned by a strong moral conscience and consideration of others.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build strategic leadership capacity for sustainable long-term development by:
 - ensuring that senior leaders, particularly the headteacher and deputy headteacher, focus on bringing about rapid improvement
 - ensuring that leaders monitor the impact of their development plans
 - ensuring that an agreed assessment system is used throughout the school to accurately measure pupils' progress.
- Improve governance and management by:
 - regularly reviewing targets and timescales in the school development and improvement plan to check the impact of actions taken
 - developing a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching by linking it closely to the progress that pupils make over time
 - providing more consistent opportunities for teachers to develop their skills through continuous professional development.
- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress further by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able
 - closely monitoring pupils' attainment and progress
 - ensuring that pupils use the feedback they receive to improve their learning
 - regularly recording and sharing assessment data with parents about their children's attainment and progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- All independent school standards have been met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good school.
- Leadership and management require improvement because although leaders have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, they have not implemented a clear improvement plan which regularly evaluates the quality of teaching across the school and identifies areas for improvement.
- The senior leadership team includes the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Together they monitor the quality of teaching and learning through classroom visits and lesson observations. As full-time class teachers of Year 1 and Year 3, they do not manage the demands on their time in order to bring about school improvement. The monitoring system is still being developed and there is little evidence to show that evaluation of teaching in some older classes has improved outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders have taken action to put in place recommendations from the previous inspection to improve the assessment of pupils' progress. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their attainment is tracked using a combination of skills-based assessment and national curriculum levels. The tracking and recording of pupils' progress is at an early stage of development. It does not yet provide reliable assessment information that can be used by teachers in the upper school.
- Teachers have voluntarily undertaken leadership responsibilities for mathematics and English. They have developed whole-school policies but are not monitoring the impact these policies are having.
- A lack of well-targeted professional development has meant that there is no shared sense of purpose or expectation throughout the school. Although most staff work hard to ensure that pupils make progress, there is no consistency in the way teachers challenge pupils to achieve their highest potential, particularly the most-able pupils.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum in place. From Year 2, pupils are able to benefit from a range of subjects, including French, German, speech and drama, and swimming. In addition to numeracy and literacy, topic work for the lower school and Year 3 is carefully planned to include physical education, science, art, music, geography, history and computing. Early years pupils are integrated with Years 1 and 2 during topic-based sessions as part of the 'Wow Wednesday' curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to experience activities such as gardening, choir and cookery in lunchtime and after-school activities. Pupils can also choose extra music tuition and play instruments such as the violin and piano.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural curriculum actively promotes a good understanding of British values and positively prepares pupils for life in modern Britain. Religious education lessons and daily assemblies have clear moral themes, such as 'tolerance', and pupils learn about living together in society. Older pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of the principles of democracy. They have a good understanding of moral responsibilities and have eagerly carried out fundraising activities for charities, for example for Children in Need and the Nepal earthquake fund.
- Parents are supportive of the school's leadership and they value the daily access to their children's teachers. However, results from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, show that a minority of parents believe that the school does not respond well to their concerns, nor that they receive valuable information on their children's progress.
- Eight staff questionnaires were considered as part of this inspection and a majority of staff believe that management requires improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Proprietors have been slow to bring about improvements. They are committed to their role within the school but are over-reliant on senior leaders to assess teachers' performance and pupils' outcomes. They do not regularly check that improvement targets are met.
 - Proprietors do not have an accurate understanding of current achievement and the quality of teaching. This means that teachers are not rigorously held to account.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers have not ensured that most-able pupils in key stage 2 consistently achieve the high standards of which they are capable. These pupils are clearly identified but frequently teachers do not make full use of the school's assessment information to plan activities for them to be continuously engaged in their learning.
- Teaching and learning require improvement because pupils are rarely challenged to apply their skills and deepen their knowledge. Older pupils lack opportunities to discuss and explore ideas in depth.
- Assessment requires improvement because there is no consistency in the methods that teachers use to measure pupils' progress. Teachers in the lower school assess learning effectively and school data shows that the progress these pupils make is good. However, the same assessment procedures are not routinely used by teachers in the upper school and there is no overall moderation of standards and progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They do not always ensure that pupils improve their knowledge and understanding as a result of the feedback they receive.
- In the upper school, checks to measure pupils' achievement are not regularly carried out. This means that teachers do not routinely share with parents how well their children are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- The recommendation from the previous inspection to ensure that all teachers interpret the curriculum in exciting and challenging ways has been achieved successfully in the lower school and in Year 3. Learning activities, such as 'working walls', are pitched at individual pupils' needs, which lead to good progress. Delivery of the curriculum has not improved as rapidly in the upper school, where pupils are not challenged frequently enough. For example, the most-able pupils wait to move on to more challenging activities or repeat work they already know.
- Each pupil's learning needs are recognised and teachers ensure that most pupils are given effective individual support and guidance. The small numbers in classes mean that all pupils receive one-to-one support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teaching in Year 6 ensures that most pupils are given opportunities to articulate their thinking and explore ideas. For example, practical activities in science engage pupils and they are able to reflect on the experiments they are given to complete and predict outcomes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils are confident learners. They are enthusiastic in lessons and engage eagerly in learning activities. Their physical and emotional well-being is particularly well provided for. Pupils have frequent opportunity to exercise in the spacious gardens at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils get on well with their teachers who demonstrate good care for each other throughout the school. Values such as respect, honesty, kindness and consideration for one another are incorporated across the curriculum. In addition, pupils have weekly personal, social, health and environment lessons, which cover topics such as peer pressure, animal welfare and internet safety.
- Bullying is rare but when it does occur staff deal with it promptly and effectively. They encourage pupils to discuss what has happened and then, where necessary, apologise to each other.
- The presentation of pupils' work is generally good and pupils clearly take pride in their handwriting and the neat appearance of their work.
- Parents believe the school provides a stimulating, caring environment in which their children thrive, which is a view supported by inspectors.
- **Behaviour**
- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school at lunchtime and playtime is good with pupils treating each other in a friendly manner.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors unanimously said that they feel safe and happy in this school.

- Pupils are given good social, moral and cultural guidance, and this prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils' spiritual education is very well developed through daily assemblies and religious education lessons.
- Punctuality and attendance are very good.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils enter the school with levels of knowledge, skills and abilities above those typical for their age. Outcomes require improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress over time. School data for the last four years indicates that by the end of key stage 2, pupils do not perform as well as they could.
- Pupils' progress requires improvement because most-able pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the end of Year 6, particularly in writing and mathematics, because they are not challenged to reach the high standards of which they are capable.
- Most pupils leave the Reception class exceeding age-related expectations. At the end of key stage 1, reading, writing and mathematics are all above national averages. However, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress has stalled and too few pupils achieve the good outcomes expected in English and mathematics.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in subjects throughout the school. There have been improvements, for example in science, but most-able and lower-attaining pupils are not consistently achieving well enough over time.
- Pupils enter the school with well-developed early reading skills. Their progress is maintained throughout the school so that they reach high levels of attainment by the time they leave the school. Teachers ensure that pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.
- The school has no pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Neither are there pupils who are disadvantaged. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are given specific one-to-one support and they make good progress over time.
- School records show that every year a small proportion of Year 6 pupils apply to grammar and independent secondary schools and pass the entrance tests. Others have successfully gone on to local comprehensive schools.

Early years provision

is good

- The school effectively meets the independent school standards in relation to early years provision.
- The learning of children observed during the inspection was good with children making good progress especially in developing their writing and number skills. Some children are able to write stories comprised of several sentences. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is used well to support children in learning to read.
- Information gathered by the school on children's early learning shows that all achieve the expected standards during their time in the early years in all areas of learning. The majority of children are predicted to exceed these standards during this academic year.
- In lessons, children in the Nursery and Reception classes work confidently and cooperatively together. They are provided with an appropriate balance of guided and 'open' tasks which they enjoy.
- Leadership of the early years provision is good. The lead teacher ensures that teachers work as a team and carry out learning checks for children on a daily basis. They compile detailed records of children's achievement as they progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The lead teacher regularly attends the professional development meetings organised by the local authority. These meetings include the moderation of teachers' assessment to check that assessments taking place in the school are accurate and reliable.
- Detailed notes of children's achievements, with photographs, are recorded in their 'learning journals'. These are made available to parents and are a useful focus for discussion with parents during open evenings.

- Leaders ensure that children experience a smooth transition into Year 1 by having regular opportunities for children in Nursery and Reception to work together with Years 1 and 2 pupils, for example during the 'Wow Wednesday' practical sessions.
- Children are motivated and eager to join in, and their positive behaviour shows that they are happy in their learning. They love coming to school and this is reflected in their regular attendance. They are highly stimulated by the attractive adventure playground in which they play at break and lunchtimes.
- The care which the early years leader takes to ensure a safe environment is enhanced and maintained by the risk assessments and regular checks carried out for children.
- Children in the Reception class have limited opportunities to work and play outdoors. Plans to extend the free-flow play area have been postponed and this limits children's range of experiences and the level of challenge provided to develop their knowledge and understanding.

School details

Unique reference number	109364
Inspection number	10006131
DfE registration number	6004

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Independent day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Number of part-time pupils	11
Proprietor	Mr and Mrs J C Teasdale
Headteacher	Miss Karen Wallington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,725 to £5,544
Telephone number	01934 629515
Website	www.ashbrookehouseschool.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@ashbrookehouse.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 June 2012

Information about this school

- Ashbrooke House School is a co-educational, non-selective and non-denominational independent day school which was first established in 1953. It is located close to the sea front in Weston-Super-Mare.
- Ashbrooke House School has been managed by proprietors since 1993. The building is owned by the original school founders. It is leased by the current proprietors on a long-term lease, which was renewed for 15 years in 2013. The school was converted to become a limited company in 2013 with the proprietors as joint shareholders.
- The present headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2012.
- The school admits girls and boys aged three to 11 years.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. A small minority of pupils in the lower school speak English as an additional language.
- The school is registered for 142 pupils and there are currently 80 pupils on roll. The headteacher is also the full-time teacher for Year 3 and the deputy headteacher is the full-time Year 1 teacher.
- There are 12 pupils who are funded through the government scheme for nursery education. Children in the early years are taught in the Nursery and Reception classes. One child is full time and the remainder attend school on a part-time basis.
- There are no pupils with special educational needs or education, health and care plans. There are no pupils with disabilities or disadvantaged pupils.
- The school was previously inspected in June 2012.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed learning in 24 lessons covering all classes including the early years provision. Five learning sessions were observed together with members of the leadership team.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, the proprietor, the leader for early years, teachers with responsibilities for numeracy and literacy, staff and pupils.
- Pupils' work was examined during lessons and a more detailed scrutiny was made of a sample of written work. Inspectors spoke with pupils throughout the inspection in order to gather their views.
- Inspectors listened to groups of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reading.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation including policies and records about how the school was keeping pupils safe; information about pupils' behaviour and their learning, progress and achievement, and the school's evaluation of its strengths and its priorities for improvement. They also looked at management reviews of teachers' performance.
- Inspectors considered 14 responses to Parent View, together with eight staff questionnaires which had also been returned. Discussions were held with parents as they collected or dropped off their children.

Inspection team

Sheila Crew, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Howard Dodd

Ofsted Inspector

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