



# Ashbrooke House School

Independent School

Inspection report

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**Better  
education  
and care**

DfES Registration Number      802/6004  
Unique Reference Number      109364  
Inspection number              296771  
Inspection dates                16-17 January 2007  
Reporting inspector              Mr Daniel Towl HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Age group  
3-11

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

Ashbrooke House School is an independent day school for boys and girls aged 3 – 11 years. It is situated in an old residential area of Weston-super-Mare in a large Victorian house which has been suitably adapted for school use. There are 103 pupils on roll, of whom 27 are funded for nursery places. Among a number of stated aims the school endeavours to provide a happy and caring school and develop pupils' potential in literacy and numeracy through a balanced curriculum.

## Evaluation of the school

Ashbrooke House School offers a good education for its pupils. Parents are rightly very positive about the education it provides. Pupils make good progress in key areas of learning. Relationships and attitudes in school are very good and pupils' behaviour is outstanding. However, some of the procedures in the school, especially those related to aspects of health, safety and welfare of pupils are inadequate and require immediate attention.

## Quality of education

The curriculum is of good quality and is broad and appropriately planned to ensure a balance of experiences for pupils. The use of national guidance and a large range of commercial materials help teachers to ensure that the content of work is appropriate. All the required areas of learning are taught and pupils make good progress in reading, speaking and listening, information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematics. Satisfactory progress is made in writing. However, the systematic development of different writing genres, spelling and accurate independent writing across the curriculum is not well established in all year groups. This is exacerbated by too much copying in some lessons.

Pupils make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and by the time pupils leave the school they have achieved high standards. The curriculum is enriched with opportunities to learn French and German. Pupils enjoy these lessons and achieve well. Physical education (PE) lessons provide regular exercise for all pupils, from the youngest to the oldest.

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Pupils are mature and responsible, although personal, social and health education (PSHE) is not systematically developed and reinforced throughout the school. Pupils take part in a satisfactory range of educational visits, for example to museums and local places of interest, and extended visits for older pupils contribute effectively to their personal development.

Teaching is often good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, who behave very well and respond diligently to their tasks and activities. Teachers take full advantage of the small classes to get to know their pupils. The best lesson planning clearly identifies what pupils will learn and this is made obvious to pupils in lessons. Where planning is very brief, activities do not always provide for the range of ability, especially the higher attainers. A feature of the best lessons is the good questioning techniques used by teachers, which challenge and involve pupils of all abilities. Pupils say that their teachers are very helpful and this enables them to enjoy their lessons. This is exemplified by their attentiveness and willingness to work hard and participate. Support for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities or English as an additional language is good.

Regular assessment provides information about pupils' progress, although this is not used consistently to plan improvement. Teachers mark work regularly and in the best practice there are helpful comments for pupils' next steps.

Classroom resources are adequate except in the Nursery and Reception, where there are no items such as ride-on toys to challenge and develop coordination skills. Resources for older pupils to create working models are limited, although clay and other resources provide opportunities to make artefacts often linked with topics, for example in history and geography.

While teachers are confident about what they teach, there have been few opportunities for further training to enable them to keep up-to-date with current thinking and ideas despite their keenness to attend such courses. Where training has taken place, for example to develop the use of ICT and interactive whiteboards, there has been a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Their social development is good. They are considerate to each other and their behaviour is outstanding in all parts of the school. This leads to a very harmonious atmosphere and ethos. Older pupils have responsibilities through being head boy and girl or prefects. Such roles require them to consider the welfare of younger pupils in particular.

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Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. The school has developed several community links which are successful in broadening pupils' awareness of their own responsibilities and the needs of the wider community. They use their good singing skills in local festivals and take part in community events such as a bulb planting scheme. Pupils regularly raise money for charitable causes. Pupils gain a good insight into some aspects of European culture, especially through their lessons in French and German. They learn about other faiths in religious education but the provision to help them gain a greater insight into worldwide cultures, issues of racial harmony and public institutions is not well developed and is not planned systematically.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's provision to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils is inadequate. A number of practices and procedures are unsatisfactory. The school is fully aware of the shortcomings and is taking steps to remedy them quickly.

Pupils are supervised very well around the school and at break times. This, together with pupils' outstanding behaviour, means that the school is an orderly community. The behaviour policy is clear and pupils are aware of the rules of the school. They have a common sense approach to what is acceptable and not acceptable. Pupils have no concerns about bullying and are aware of what to do if they have any worries.

In other respects, the school is less successful in ensuring that pupils stay safe and healthy. The arrangements to ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children do not comply with national guidance. No staff have attended the required training but the designated lead member of staff for child protection is due to attend training in the near future.

Arrangements for health and safety are unsatisfactory. Pupils' understanding of healthy living is patchy, due to deficiencies in PSHE. Insufficient attention has been given to developing policies and procedures for pupils on educational visits and the general health and safety policy does not have due regard to the national guidance provided by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). There are no recorded risk assessments. While the fire risk assessment is satisfactory, the school has not complied with the requirement to have a fire drill every term.

The school does not fulfil its responsibilities with regard to the Disability and Discrimination Act 2002 because it has no outline plan to show how the school is working towards making the school more accessible.

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## Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school does not meet requirements in respect of the appointment of staff. Not all staff have appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks and the appointment procedures have not required any declaration of medical fitness of staff to teach or work with children. There is no written procedure to follow for the appointment of staff.

## School's premises and accommodation

The school premises are attractive and appropriate for the number of pupils currently attending. The classrooms are well maintained and the outside area provides a suitably large grass and hard area for pupils to play and take part in PE activities. A local park is also used for games. The school is clean and tidy. Displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment. The good behaviour of pupils and supervision by staff means that stairways and landings are managed well. The ICT room makes a significant positive contribution to pupils' learning.

The school has sufficient washrooms but there is not enough privacy for the youngest Nursery children. The school does not have adequate facilities for pupils who are ill.

## Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents receive regular reports about their children's progress and they have frequent contact with staff before and after school. Other information provided for parents is adequate in most respects but there are omissions concerning information about the proprietor and about the provision for pupils who have English as an additional language.

## Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a brief procedure for handling complaints that is published in the information given to parents. It does not, however, comply with the requirements in a number of respects and it is therefore inadequate.

The school keeps a record of concerns raised by parents and the action taken to resolve matters but there is no formal procedure set out. There have been no formal complaints in the last twelve months.

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## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide a more coherent programme to develop pupils' knowledge of personal, social and health education (paragraph 1(2)(f))
- make better use of assessments of pupils' aptitudes, needs and prior attainments in order to plan lessons to systematically meet the needs of all pupils (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- provide more resources for outside play for Nursery and Reception pupils (paragraph 1(3)(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement more detailed policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, especially in relation to child protection (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- prepare and implement policies relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside school (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- prepare and implement more detailed policies, including risk assessments, for health and safety (paragraph 3(4))
- ensure that fire drills are held termly as advised in the fire risk assessment (paragraph 3(5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of proprietor and staff (standard 4) and must:

- ensure that, prior to the confirmation of the appointment of all staff, and for all existing staff, checks have been made with the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm their suitability to work with children (paragraph 4(b))
- confirm with all staff, prior to their appointment, their medical fitness to teach and work with children (paragraph 4(c)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill (paragraph 5(l)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- provide particulars of the proprietor's name, address and contact details (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- provide particulars of the school's education and welfare provision for pupils who have English as an additional language (paragraph 6(2)(f)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of procedures for handling complaints (standard 7) and must:

- provide and implement a written and formal complaints procedure which complies with requirements (paragraphs 7(c) and 7(e - k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002 the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.



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## School details

Name of school	Ashbrooke House School		
DfES number	802/6004		
Unique reference number	109364		
Type of school	Day		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1953		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 44	Girls: 47	Total: 91
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 8	Girls: 4	Total: 12
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,356 - £3,480		
Address of school	Ashbrooke House School 9 Ellenborough Park North Weston-super-Mare BS23 1XH		
Telephone number	01934 629515		
Fax number	01934 629515		
Email address	headteacher@ashbrookehouse.n-somerset.sch.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Thomas		
Proprietor	Mr John Teasdale and Mrs Angela Teasdale		
Reporting inspector	Mr Daniel Towl HMI		
Dates of inspection	16-17 January 2007		