

Ashgrove School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	305/6075
Unique Reference Number	101694
Inspection number	329545
Inspection dates	27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland

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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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 Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Ashgrove School is an independent day school for boys and girls from three to eleven years of age. The school was first established in 1986. It is located in a large detached house in the London Borough of Bromley with an additional smaller building at the side of the house. There are 97 full-time pupils on the school roll. A very small number of children are in the age range from under three to four years. The school seeks to provide 'a first class education in a caring, well-disciplined and happy environment'. The school's motto is 'strong foundations for future success'. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. A small number of pupils have English as an additional language. The school prepares pupils for entry into independent and maintained secondary schools. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in May 2004. The headteacher is the proprietor of the school.

Evaluation of the school

Ashgrove School offers a good quality of education. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good. The curriculum and teaching are good and enable pupils to make good progress and to grow into confident and articulate young people. The majority of parents, as well as the pupils, are very positive about the school. The school prepares the pupils well for the next stage in their education. The headteacher knows the school's strengths and those areas in need of further development. The school has rectified some, but not all, of the few issues relating to welfare, health and safety, the provision of information and procedures for handling complaints identified in the last inspection report. The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is satisfactory. The school meets most of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced with a strong focus on English and mathematics. Planning uses national guidance for different subjects but the quality of the school's own planning is variable and is often only satisfactory as it does not

consistently identify how pupils are expected to make progress as they move through the school. Planning is stronger in the EYFS and at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Although satisfactory because an outline scheme is in place, specific planning for personal, social and health education (PSHE) remains undeveloped. The curriculum for the EYFS is good. In practice and because of the good support provided, the curriculum ensures that pupils of all abilities are able to make good progress in their personal development and in their basic skills. The school is particularly successful in developing basic skills in English and mathematics. It also teaches all National Curriculum subjects along with religious education and French. A strong and distinctive feature of the school is that most subjects are taught by subject specialists from Year 1 and all pupils receive subject specialist teaching from Year 3. The school provides for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) and facilities are used well by the pupils in several different subjects.

The small number who have learning difficulties or have English as an additional language are supported well, sometimes with additional one-to-one tuition. Pupils enjoy the opportunities for enrichment provided by the wide range of extra-curricular activities which include visitors, themed weeks such as Indian and African weeks, and various sports and music clubs as well as drama, dance, library, Spanish, German and English clubs. The school arranges few educational visits and this is one area where many parents would like to see changes. A good range of visitors, for example, a local historian, an artist, a dentist and a road safety officer come into school, as well as parents to talk about their own cultures. These events are opportunities to further enrich the pupils' learning experience. In addition to their good basic skills, pupils acquire good social and communication skills that prepare them well for their future lives and the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good in the main school and the EYFS. Teachers know their pupils well and teaching very successfully ensures that learners remain engaged with their work. As a result, pupils feel safe in lessons and they receive good support when in need of help and guidance. Teaching is characterised by a brisk pace, outstanding relationships, strong subject expertise and the effective management of pupils. Most teachers make good use of praise and encouragement. Pupils benefit from a wide range of interesting activities to promote their learning. Resources to support learning are generally good but less strong in the EYFS. Teachers successfully establish a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons and effectively foster pupils' enjoyment of school and positive attitudes towards learning. The pupils respond very positively to instructions and are eager to answer questions and to offer their views. They concentrate extremely well in lessons and are keen to complete the tasks given to them. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.

Where the teaching is occasionally less strong, there is too little alternative work to match the varied learning needs of pupils of different levels of ability. This sometimes occurs because methods of teaching are employed which consist of the teacher talking to the whole class for much of the time. Pupils are not always clear what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. This is because not all

teachers write out the intended learning outcomes of lessons at the start of the lesson or revisit them at the end of the lesson. Some lessons end without an effective summary identifying the extent to which pupils have met the lesson's objectives

Although assessment procedures lack some consistency across subjects and year groups, it is good overall. It is more strongly developed in the EYFS. Marking is satisfactory but does not always provide pupils with suggestions for how to improve their work. All pupils, including those who find learning more difficult, make good progress helped by the small numbers in most classes and the extra help. Pupils gain knowledge and skills at a good rate across the school.

At the time of the last inspection, the school did not meet the regulation to provide parents with a written annual report of their children's progress. Although these reports have improved, the school still fails to meet this regulation as too little information is provided across all year groups about pupils' progress in the main areas of learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils feel safe in a well-organised environment and are polite and friendly to each other at work and play. Behaviour is outstanding because pupils understand how they are expected to behave and all staff provide good role models, treating those in their care with courtesy and respect. One pupil said, 'Behaviour in the school is 100% good because teachers make learning fun'. All pupils enjoy school, as indicated by their above average attendance. The PSHE programme provides valuable experience for pupils to develop social skills. Older pupils have opportunities to reflect on the needs of elderly and young people through topics studied.

Friendships across cultural, racial and religious backgrounds are strong and pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds play and work amicably together. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within school, such as acting as 'house martins' and support younger children in the playground, looking to their welfare. Pupils have good understanding of the democratic institutions in Great Britain through the study of citizenship but there is no school council and pupils have too few opportunities to voice their views. Pupils' cultural development is good and they have many opportunities to learn about their own culture and others through the themed weeks and when they celebrate religious festivals such as Eid, Diwali, Christmas and Chinese New Year.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Although on a day-to-day basis the school exhibits a high level of care and concern for the pupils' welfare and safety, and staff supervise pupils well, the overall

provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is only satisfactory. This is because the school has not kept up-to-date with current guidance and requirements in relation to keeping children safe. The school does not meet the requirements for child protection as the policy provides too little guidance to staff and neither the staff nor the designated officer have received the required recent training. The school was not aware of this shortcoming in its provision, and has acted swiftly to rectify it having now arranged for the necessary training to take place.

Other essential policies, procedures and records are in place, including those for first aid. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well through sporting activities and in learning about healthy eating in PSHE and science. Pupils feel safe in school and report that there is no bullying and that they believe that swift action would be taken if it occurred. The school has made the necessary provision for fire safety. The fire drill book is up-to-date and fire equipment is regularly checked. The completion of the attendance registers did not meet requirements at the time of the last inspection and the regulation remains unmet as some are still not fully completed and in ink, as required. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002 and all of the regulations in respect of the checks it makes on prospective employees with regard to their identity and suitability to work with children.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. The procedures to help children joining the EYFS are good, helping them to settle quickly. They also enable them to quickly create positive relationships with adults and other children. The EYFS curriculum is well implemented, and planning and assessment procedures meet requirements. There is a good focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional skills which helps children to make good progress. In relation to their starting points, children make good progress and do better than expected in communication, language and literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy and personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception year. This is because of good teaching and a strong programme of activities.

Children's skills in creative development are relatively lower because of a lack of resources and insufficient space in the classrooms. The staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and well-focused activities improve their knowledge of letter sounds. For example, in one lesson the children were using their phonic skills to match words and sounds with letters. Children are taught phonic skills and number work in groups directed by the teacher, but there are also opportunities for them to choose activities themselves to help them to acquire independent learning habits. The outdoor area is currently used mainly for physical activity but is not used sufficiently creatively to give children first-hand practical experiences in all six areas of learning. This also limits opportunities for children to explore and learn through play. The EYFS provision is led and managed well. Assessments are rigorous and are used effectively to plan the next steps in children's learning. Children's welfare is given a high priority and, as a result, they feel secure

and become confident learners. This aspect is only satisfactory overall because EYFS staff have not received the appropriate training in child protection.

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 provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- prepare and implement written policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school in compliance with DCSF guidance: *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (2007) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that the attendance registers are maintained fully in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

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

- ensure that the school provides all parents with an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught (paragraph 6(5)).

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage the school must:

- ensure that all staff receive the appropriate training in child protection.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- the enrichment of the curriculum by the development of the outdoor area so that children have more opportunities to learn through play
- the development of the quality and consistency of the school's own schemes of work to ensure that day-to-day planning builds effectively on pupils' prior learning.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

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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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?			✓	
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

School details

Name of school	Ashgrove School		
DCSF number	305/6075		
Unique reference number	101694		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1986		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 46	Girls: 45	Total: 91
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 4	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,885		
Address of school	116 Widmore Road Bromley Kent BR1 3BE		
Telephone number	020 8460 4143		
Email address	pash@ashgrove.org.uk		
Headteacher	Dr Patricia Ash		
Proprietor	Dr Patricia Ash		
Reporting inspector	Ian Hartland		
Dates of inspection	27 November 2008		