

# Ashbrooke House School and Pre-School

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

## Inspection dates

23–25 January 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- After taking ownership in July 2017, the two new proprietors have wasted no time in using their individual expertise to make many improvements. They are clear about the priorities for the school and know what needs to be developed.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They show respect and courtesy to each other, teachers and visitors. Pupils take great care to look after each other. Everyone is able to express themselves and feel valued as an individual.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are highly motivated and very keen to deepen and broaden their knowledge.
- Staff morale has much improved during this academic year. In particular, teaching staff are very appreciative of the opportunities they now have to access professional training.
- Teaching is good overall. When teaching is at its best, teachers have very high expectations and provide a wealth of opportunities for pupils to write neatly at length and extend their thinking. Nevertheless, leaders are fully aware that there are some inconsistencies.
- Pupils achieve well not only in the basic skills but also in a wide range of other subjects, such as modern foreign languages, drama, music and physical education.
- Low-attaining pupils are well supported and those who are most able are challenged well. This enables all pupils to make good progress.
- The curriculum is both broad and balanced. It provides a very enriching experience for pupils. It helps them to become confident, inquisitive learners.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils are fully included in school life. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is a kind and tolerant community where British values are promoted well.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff are vigilant to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils understand how to keep safe and healthy.
- The vast majority of parents and carers hold the school in very high regard. They appreciate its caring and nurturing ethos.

### 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?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
  - handwriting is taught systematically through the school so that all pupils write neatly and legibly
  - pupils are consistently challenged to write at length and extend their thinking
  - progress from each child's starting point is systematically tracked and checked in the early years, so that both leaders and teaching staff have a consistent picture of the progress that each child is making.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leadership and management has improved substantially since the previous inspection. This is because the new proprietors provide strong effective leadership and have quickly rectified many of the areas highlighted previously as requiring improvement.
- Leaders have not only ensured that all of the independent school standards are met, they have made substantial improvements to the school building, and brought stability and security to staff, parents and pupils alike.
- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the effectiveness of school development planning. The new leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas that require further development across the school. The development plan accurately reflects the improvements required and there is a clear focused approach to how they will be achieved.
- Staff morale is very high. Their views can be summed up by one member of staff who explained that 'we now have leaders who are passionate about the children's learning, welfare and happiness as well as the well-being of staff. This has injected renewed enthusiasm.'
- Although newly introduced, systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and measuring teacher performance have already started to have a positive impact on the quality of provision. The headteacher is very clear about where teaching skills need to be sharpened and where best practice which can be shared.
- The stimulating curriculum offers a breadth of learning experiences and enables pupils to develop many interests and skills. It successfully balances academic subjects with physical, technological, creative subjects and outdoor areas of learning. Very good use is made of the local environment to make connections with pupils' learning. For example, they develop their practical 'forest' skills in the nearby woods. This not only promotes pupils' well-being but helps them to learn about life during the Stone Age, when they learn to cook using a fire.
- Extra-curricular activities, including the arts and sports, provide pupils with new experiences and opportunities. For example, pupils learn to play two musical instruments during their time at the school. All these extra activities help them to develop into well-rounded individuals.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a high priority and is a strong feature of the school. Pupils actively support charities both locally and further afield. Pupils' high regard for equality and diversity is promoted well through their learning, trips and special events. For example, visits to mosques, synagogues and temples, help them to have a good appreciation of different faiths and cultures in modern-day Britain and beyond. Their understanding of fundamental British values is further promoted through opportunities to express their views in debates and by older pupils taking on roles and responsibilities.
- One of the new proprietors has brought his expertise to the financial management of the school. He is ensuring that the school's finances are carefully monitored through internal

checks and are externally audited to ensure that best value is achieved. Government funding for the early years is spent effectively.

- Since taking ownership, the proprietors have done much to engage parents who were previously dissatisfied with the school. The vast majority of parents are now very positive about the work of the school. A parent reports, for example, that 'the school going under new management is a very positive thing' with 'a clearer sense of identity and direction'.

## **Governance**

- The school does not have a governing body. The proprietors provide good oversight and strategic direction. Proprietors effectively ensure that all independent standards are met. Statutory safeguarding requirements are in place, including a suitable safeguarding policy which is fit for purpose.
- The proprietors know the school very well. They ensure that there is effective deployment of resources and continue to plan for further improvements to enhance pupils' opportunities.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's caring and nurturing ethos successfully promotes a strong culture of safeguarding vigilance. The effective safeguarding policy is firmly based on the latest government guidance. Staff report that they receive up-to-date training.
- The headteacher and class teachers have daily contact with parents or family members. This enables the immediate exchange of information related to individual pupils. Pupils' needs, including those which are medical, are well known and understood by staff.
- The school implements effective procedures for the safe recruitment of staff, the assessment of risk and the safety of the premises. The school's oversight of all aspects of safety, including for outdoor visits, is effective.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching staff are highly committed, enthusiastic about their teaching and enjoy positive relationships with their pupils.
- They have good subject knowledge and work hard to plan lessons which pupils find lively and interesting.
- Phonics is taught well and this ensures that pupils become confident readers. Regular teaching and assessing of spellings help pupils to widen their vocabulary and encourage them to use interesting language in their writing skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Teaching staff equip the pupils well with the basic skills of mental mathematics, problem-solving and times tables through regular practice and assessment. Most-able mathematicians are given extra lessons to ensure that they are fully challenged. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

- Pupils benefit from the expert input of specialist staff, such as in modern foreign languages, sports, drama and music. These teachers are highly skilled in their specific subject areas and very enthusiastic, enabling pupils to be fully stretched and challenged.
- Those pupils who have specific needs, such as dyslexia, receive specialist help to support their learning.
- At its best, handwriting is taught systematically through the school and high standards rewarded with a 'pen licence'. However, not every teacher insists that pupils write consistently and in a neat and legible style. At times, teaching staff do not challenge the pupils sufficiently well to write at length and extend their thinking.
- Assessment procedures have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers understand and consistently apply the school's marking and assessment procedures. Teaching staff use their detailed assessment information well to plan learning activities. Nevertheless, the proprietors are not complacent and are looking to refine these systems for further clarity and ease of use.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders and teaching staff know and value each pupil extremely well. They work together extremely effectively well to provide effective role models and ensure that all pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Politeness and courtesy are central to the school's values.
- Pupils are articulate and confident. They express their points of view and show respect when listening to the views of others. Pupils ask sensible questions and contribute fully to class discussions. Older pupils sensibly discuss the recent improvements made to the school and unanimously agree that it has vastly improved.
- The caring family ethos promotes positive and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils who spoke to the inspector reported that they are happy and feel safe and secure in school. They are confident that they are able to share any worries with an adult and that these will be swiftly resolved.
- Pupils regularly participate in sports and physical education. These opportunities make a strong contribution to their physical and emotional development and well-being. The weekly mile walk, undertaken by all pupils in the school, highlights their eagerness to keep fit and work together as a team.
- Pupils report that any form of anti-social behaviour is rare. They know how to keep safe while using the internet and when walking or cycling outside school hours.
- The vast majority of parents feel that their children develop their personal skills well in a 'nurturing environment where they can be encouraged to be themselves and challenge themselves to reach their fullest potential'.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils conduct themselves very well in and around the school building. They are exceptionally courteous and polite and respect the learning environment provided for them.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, work conscientiously and attend school regularly. They thoroughly enjoy taking part in the many interesting activities on offer to them each day.
- At playtimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily together in the outside area and enjoy socialising with their friends. Older pupils act as very good role models for younger ones.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Teaching groups are very small, so analysis of trends, or comparisons with national results, would be misleading and cannot be securely made.
- Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Work in pupils' books, together with the school's information, shows that pupils make good progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils practise their speaking and listening skills regularly across a range of subjects. The broad curriculum enhances their vocabulary. The frequent opportunities they have to recite poetry and explain geographical or scientific facts develop not only their knowledge and skills but also their confidence. Older pupils join in regular debates about a range of different topics and perform well in speech and drama examinations.
- Pupils use their phonic skills well to tackle unfamiliar words when reading aloud or working out how to spell unfamiliar words. They enjoy reading a wide range of texts, both for pleasure and for fact finding.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in creative work, in art, drama and music. For example, Years 3 and 4 spoke confidently in German to the inspector and Years 5 and 6 demonstrated their competent ball skills during a physical education lesson. Years 1 and 2 were fully engrossed in an art and design session where they were making their own 'stick men', based on the Julia Donaldson story they were reading in class.
- The most able pupils generally make good progress because activities are well planned to meet their needs and encourage them to stretch their thinking. Staff provide extra support for the few pupils who experience some difficulty in their learning and they make good progress from their starting points. There are no disadvantaged pupils in the school.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The school meets the independent school standards in relation to its early years provision.
- Teaching staff know the children well and liaise closely with parents. They are kept safe and happy in the provision. This helps children to build confidence in themselves as learners.
- Provision in the early years supports children's development in all areas of learning. From a wide range of starting points, children, including those who speak English as an

additional language, make good progress towards the early learning goals and are prepared well for Year 1.

- Teaching is good and supports effective learning. Sessions are filled with interesting and fun activities, which the children enjoy. During the inspection, children in the pre-school class were busy learning about 'people who help us'. There was much activity in the role-play area where the children pretended to be police officers. They took calls, recorded incidents and apprehended potential criminals using handcuffs. This activity provided high-quality opportunities for the children to develop their speech, interact with each other and practise their writing skills.
- Teaching staff maintain examples of children's individual achievements and regularly compare them to what is typically expected for their age. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to this evidence. These examples are used as a basis for planning the children's next learning steps.
- Nevertheless, the progress from each child's starting point is not systematically tracked and checked during their time in the early years. This means that both leaders and teaching staff do not have a consistent picture of the progress that each child is making. It also limits the leaders' ability to assess the quality of provision with accuracy in the early years.

## School details

Unique reference number	109364
DfE registration number	802/6004
Inspection number	10041373

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	60
Number of part-time pupils	10
Proprietors	K Wallington and A Gifford
Headteacher	K Wallington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,301 to £6,150
Telephone number	01934 629 515
Website	<a href="http://www.AHSandPS.co.uk">www.AHSandPS.co.uk</a>
Email address	enquiries@AHSandPS.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–25 February 2016

## Information about this school

- Ashbrooke House School and Pre-School is a co-educational, non-selective, Christian independent day school which was first established in 1953. It is located close to the seafront in Weston-super-Mare. The building is owned by the family of the original school founders.
- Having been managed by the same proprietors since 1993, the school changed ownership in July 2017. The two new proprietors have renamed the school and it is now known as Ashbrooke House School and Pre-School. It was previously known as Ashbrooke House School.



- The headteacher is one of the proprietors. The other proprietor is a former pupil and parent of the school who has a background in commerce. There are no governors.
- The school admits girls and boys aged 3 to 11 years.
- The school is registered for 142 pupils and there are currently 60 pupils on roll. The headteacher is currently the teacher for the Year 3 class.
- The school has pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds.
- There are a small proportion of pupils who use English as an additional language.
- There are 18 pupils who are funded through the government scheme for nursery education. Children in the early years are taught in the pre-school and Reception classes. Eight children are full-time and the remainder attend on a part-time basis.
- There are no pupils with special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- The school aims to 'build the foundations for life, in a safe and caring environment'.
- The school was previously inspected in February 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- This full standard inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The inspector conducted a range of activities to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation. Records relating to attendance, the curriculum, assessment and safeguarding were scrutinised.
- The inspector visited classes to observe learning, in most cases with the headteacher.
- The inspector also looked at pupils' books, in most cases with the headteacher or class teachers.
- The inspector met with the proprietors, teaching staff, and a group of pupils.
- The inspector met with a group of parents to hear their views of the school. She also considered the 20 responses to Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire and 24 text comments which were submitted.
- The inspector took account of 8 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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