



**ISI** Independent  
Schools  
Inspectorate

**REGULATORY COMPLIANCE INSPECTION**

**ASHBRIDGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

**JUNE 2017**



## SCHOOL'S DETAILS

<b>School</b>	Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery			
<b>DfE Number</b>	888/6027			
<b>EYFS Number</b>	EY286886 EY478907			
<b>Address</b>	Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery Lindle Lane Hutton Preston PR4 4AQ			
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 619900			
<b>Email address</b>	school@ashbridgeschool.co.uk			
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Karen Mehta			
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ashbridge School Ltd			
<b>Age range</b>	0 to 11			
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	545			
	<b>Boys</b>	298	<b>Girls</b>	247
	<b>Nursery</b>	452	<b>Infant</b>	37
	<b>Junior</b>	56		
<b>Pupils' ability</b>	The school's own assessment indicates that the ability of pupils on entry is broadly average.			
<b>Pupils' needs</b>	The number of pupils requiring support for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is sixteen. They require support with speech and language; basic numeracy and literacy skills; social, emotional and behavioural development; and physical development. None has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Forty-six pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). They receive support with vocabulary, and developing spoken and written English skills.			

<b>History of the school</b>	Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery is a day school for pupils aged from three months to eleven years. It was founded in 1995 and set in an eleven-acre rural landscape on the outskirts of Preston, Lancashire. The school moved from its original location in Bamber Bridge, Preston in 2001 and has developed the provision, premises and environment over recent years, including the addition of more than one Nursery setting.
<b>Ownership and governing structure</b>	The school is owned and operated by the Ashbridge School and Nursery Limited company, whose directors act as the school's proprietors and form the governing body.
<b>School structure</b>	The school has Nursery provision on two separate sites, including the main school site. The main school is also divided into Infant and junior departments. The Infant department consists of Reception to Year 2 pupils.
<b>Other useful information</b>	The two separate Nursery settings are: Ashbridge Nursery, Lindle Lane, Hutton which is also the main school site; and Ashbridge on Ribble Nursery, Walton-le-Dale.
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14 to 15 June 2017

## PREFACE

The registration authority for independent schools is the Department for Education (DfE), which directs inspection according to a specified frequency or at any time where the DfE has particular concerns about a school. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and reporting on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards (“the standards”) in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. Accordingly, inspection records whether the school meets each of these standards, which are arranged in eight Parts, each of which is divided into separate paragraphs. The inspection of schools that have early years settings not requiring registration similarly records whether the school complies with key provisions of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, and for registered settings the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage provisions is considered. Additionally, the inspection reports on the school’s accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the compliance action points set out in the school’s most recent statutory inspection.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE depending on a number of factors, including findings from their most recent inspection. Schools judged not to meet the standards following their inspection may also be subject to a progress monitoring visit before their next routine inspection. The progress monitoring visit will judge whether the school has taken the necessary action to meet any un-met standards and any qualitative concerns identified at their previous inspection.

**This is a COMPLIANCE ONLY inspection and as such reports only on the school’s compliance with the standards.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified.

The inspection does not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as:

- (i) the school’s aims;
- (ii) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (iii) compliance with data protection requirements;
- (iv) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features;
- (v) contractual arrangements with parents;
- (vi) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups. Links to the full regulations and requirements can be found here: [The Independent School Standards Regulations](#), [Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework](#).

## SUMMARY EVALUATION

**The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the requirements of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

### PART 1

#### Quality of education provided

In the junior school, the school uses its own framework to determine attainment, instead of the national framework.

The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place.

**The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

### PART 2

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

Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens.

**The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] is met.**

### PART 3

#### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

**The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996 are met.**

### PART 4

#### Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors and a register is kept as required.

**The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] are met.**

## **PART 5**

### **Premises of and accommodation at schools**

Suitable toilet facilities for pupils and appropriate accommodation for their medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play.

**The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] are met.**

## **PART 6**

### **Provision of information**

A range of information is variously published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. These include details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for those with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. They also include particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website.

**The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] is met.**

## **PART 7**

### **Manner in which complaints are handled**

Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful.

**The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] is met.**

## **PART 8**

### **Quality of leadership in and management of schools**

The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met and they actively promote the well-being of the pupils.

**The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] is met.**

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of the early years provision**

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision is outstanding.

A team of dedicated and skilled staff ensure that all children make good and at times excellent, progress in relation to their starting points and are carefully prepared for transition into their next stage of education. Very well-planned and stimulating activities that make excellent use of the settings' facilities and outdoor space ensure that all children's needs are met, including those with SEND or EAL.

Children's well-being is afforded high priority in both settings and as a result they are extremely happy, safe and secure in the learning environments that have been prepared for them. Careful thought has been afforded to transitions so that children move seamlessly between rooms.

The arrangements for children's safeguarding are effective. Staff know how to keep children safe, and senior staff carefully monitor training to ensure that all staff are kept up to date. Welfare requirements are met by adherence to procedures and a shared understanding of the responsibilities of all staff to look after the children.

A strong and highly skilled leadership team implements rigorous systems to ensure regular evaluation of the settings and continuous improvement. This ensures that all children receive the best possible support and care from when they start.

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management**

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding.

The leadership team shares a highly ambitious vision based on the '3 A's' of aspiration, attitude and achievement. A highly successful, intensive programme of monitoring and tracking pupil progress is in place to ensure the achievement of the high standards set.

A well-established and rigorous supervision and appraisal system ensures that all staff are well supported and any training needs are identified. Senior leaders actively encourage staff to further their skills, and the settings provide opportunities for staff to take on new roles. Firmly established systems enable thorough evaluation of both settings and incorporate the views of parents and staff. Recently, outdoor learning was identified as an area to develop and several staff are currently receiving training in this. Staff are committed to providing a high-quality learning experience for the children and all rooms are bright, stimulating and welcoming for the children in their care.

Learning programmes provide an excellent, well-balanced curriculum which meets the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They focus on the prime areas of learning and meticulously track personal achievement against targets that have been set from analysis of baseline assessments to ensure that each child is making appropriate or more-than-expected progress. Skilled staff plan activities that meet the children's needs and interests, and support children's development and learning.

Senior leaders ensure that staff have access to relevant and up-to-date policies, and arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are highly effective, including those regarding the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Regular risk assessments of indoor and outdoor learning environments alongside comprehensive documentation and policies ensure that children are safe. Fire practices are held regularly. Any medicines issued or accidents are carefully recorded, with parents informed on the same day.

Leaders and managers promote a positive approach to behaviour management, guard against bullying, and encourage understanding of the need for equality and tolerance. Both settings actively promote the values of equality and diversity through the ethos of the school and in its everyday practice.

Parent forums and meetings feed into the settings' self-evaluation. Senior leaders actively ensure that all views are considered and that the settings continue to improve and develop, with clear plans and targets set. Parental attendance at sessions led by a wide range of early years experts is not high and therefore the alignment of school and home learning is not as consistent as it could be.

In interview and through their pre-inspection questionnaire response, parents expressed very positive views about the early years provision. Parents commented on how happy they are with the level of care that their children receive and indicated that staff are approachable, friendly and informative. They are delighted with the facilities and range of activities on offer for their children.

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

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.

Staff have high expectations of what each child can achieve, and plan well-matched activities to enthuse, challenge and support all groups of children. They have an excellent understanding of how babies and young children learn and develop. Staff are knowledgeable in developing children's skills in the prime areas of learning. They use their expertise and experience to enhance the learning environment for the children in their care.

Useful assessment information is gathered when children join the setting, and baseline assessments are effectively used to identify children's starting points. Regular observations and assessments are carefully reviewed and monitored to determine what children can do and highlight their next steps. Senior leaders work with staff to carefully track children's progress and to identify any children who may need extra support. Assessments of children are used effectively to plan specific targets for individuals. As a result, this provides a rich and varied learning experience for all children.

Staff encourage children to be active learners. The high quality and range of resources in both settings provide many opportunities for exploration, and the free flow access to outdoors encourages children to develop their physical skills. Staff engage with children in a lively and animated manner, and model language to help the youngest children develop their communication skills.

The settings actively promote British values in their daily practice through weekly planning links. From a young age, children are encouraged to respect one another and develop friendships through sharing and taking turns. Equality and diversity is promoted through celebrations of different cultures.

Excellent home-school links are in place and parents are well informed through daily feedback sheets about their children's day. 'What to expect, when?' sheets help parents to understand how their children are doing in relation to their age and how they can contribute to their children's progress. Formal parents' meetings are held three times each year, and parents are invited for a progress meeting when their children turn two as part of the two-year check. Learning journeys provide a record of children's learning and achievements, and parents are invited to comment and contribute to this at various points in the year.

Teaching supports children in acquiring good communication and language skills, and strengthening and developing their physical, social and emotional skills. This enables children to be ready for the next stage in their learning.



## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding.

A strong commitment to learning pervades the settings. Young babies are happy and secure in their environment. Staff create a nurturing environment where children are confident to take risks and explore; toddlers using ride-on toys were observed approaching a step with caution as they recognised and managed the risk independently. Children demonstrate an exceptional level of focus and concentration in their play through the interesting and age-appropriate activities staff plan for them. For example, children were engrossed in water play and mark-making activities. Staff complete daily risk assessments on the indoor and outdoor learning environment, and children's safety is a priority.

Staff ensure that children are emotionally ready for the next stage in their learning, and much thought is given to ensure success in this regard. The staff take time to consider this for every child. For example, deciding whether to move a child's key person with them may be necessary for a child with SEND. The children form secure emotional attachments with their key people, and parents are appreciative of the consistency of staffing. Children were seen happily being handed over in the mornings, from parent to key person. Staff demonstrate great care towards the children. For example, the inspection observed toddlers being woken gently from their sleep, and a baby being rocked to sleep in a swinging seat.

Prompt and regular attendance is promoted and staff discuss with parents the need to ensure continuity and consistency for the children. Accurate records of attendance are kept. Children enjoy nutritious snacks and meals, which help them to develop an understanding about healthy food. Opportunities for toddlers to be outside and to exercise are plentiful, and young babies are regularly taken out for walks.

Children's behaviour is exceptional. Staff lead by example and set consistent high standards of behaviour in a gentle and calm manner. Children's personal development is a high priority, as staff ensure that children focus on developing their well-being at all times.

## **Outcomes for children**

The outcomes for children are outstanding.

All children including those with SEND or EAL make good and at times excellent progress in relation to their starting points. Careful tracking and monitoring ensure that support is provided to those children who need it, and help to ensure that all children are ready for the next stage of learning. This was apparent when EAL children demonstrated a good level of understanding following instructions while communicating with their key person and enhanced by the fact that some staff speak their first home language.

The school measures performance of staff against succinct criteria and determines the impact that staff have on children's outcomes. Specific targets, for staff to meet, on weekly planning documentation enable them to focus on children's next steps and provide opportunities for skills to be developed. High levels of intervention ensure that all children make significant progress across the prime areas of learning.

The youngest babies were seen to develop their confidence and physical skills as they tried to crawl and pull themselves up, with encouragement from staff. They display high levels of engagement and curiosity as they crawl and explore the resources that they can access independently. They are provided opportunities to learn from their mistakes from an early age and this develops their resilience. Babies can follow and respond to simple routine instructions, such as lifting their hands whilst the tray is fitted on their highchair.

Staff regularly use songs and rhymes to encourage children to actively engage with them and with each other. Children enjoy interacting and were observed stamping and clapping along.

Staff model language and repeat it for children, helping them develop their communication skills and vocabulary. All children enjoy sensory opportunities to explore water, foam, jelly and sand whilst developing their motor skills and expressing preferences. Great care is taken by staff to ensure that all children develop the key skills for the next stage of learning.

### **Compliance with statutory requirements**

**The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.**

### **Recommendation for further improvement**

The school is advised to make the following improvement to its provision for children in the early years.

- Provide more opportunities for parents to engage with the school's wide range of expertise for early years learning and development.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The inspectors observed a small sample of lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chairman of directors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### Inspectors

Mr Desmond Dunne	Reporting inspector
Mr Paul Easterbrook	Compliance team inspector (Headmaster, IAPS school)
Miss Victoria Plenderleith	Co-ordinating inspector for early years
Miss Jane Louise Sheppard	Early years team inspector (Head of Lower School and Nursery, IAPS school)
Mrs Florence Robinson	Early years team inspector (Former deputy head , ISA school)