



ISI Independent
Schools
Inspectorate

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY INSPECTION

ASHVILLE COLLEGE

MARCH 2017



SCHOOL'S DETAILS

College	Ashville College			
DfE number	815/6028			
Registered charity number	529577			
Address	Ashville College Green Lane Harrogate Yorkshire HG2 9JP			
Telephone number	01423 566358			
Email address	ashville@ashville.co.uk			
Headmaster	Mr Mark Lauder			
Chair of governors	Mr Peter Whiteley			
Age range	2 to 19			
Number of pupils on roll	892			
	Boys	506	Girls	386
	Day pupils	804	Boarders	88
	EYFS	62	Preparatory	269
	Seniors	398	Sixth Form	163
Inspection dates	29 to 30 March 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.

All association independent schools will have an inspection within three years from April 2016, in accordance with the Framework and DfE requirements. The inspection may be of COMPLIANCE ONLY or a combined inspection 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 unmet standards identified at their previous inspection.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is an EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection, reporting on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and
- The personal development of the pupils.

Since the school was last inspected, the framework for inspection has changed. The current inspection framework uses different criteria and arrangements for grading from those used in previous inspection frameworks. The judgements made on this inspection are, therefore, not directly comparable to judgements made on previous inspections.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

All inspections of independent schools in England are conducted according to the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, different inspectorates apply different frameworks that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. The ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by the national inspectorate, Ofsted. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement about key outcomes for pupils and information on the quality of the school's work.

The headline judgements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for the youngest pupils, together with the learning support and educational resource areas. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mrs Roberta Georghiou	Reporting inspector
Mrs Kathryn Benson-Dugdale	Team inspector (Senior tutor, HMC School)
Dr Philippa Davies	Team inspector (Master in charge of scholarships and bursaries, HMC school)
Mr Kevin Fear	Team inspector (Headmaster, HMC school)
Mrs Sara Povey	Team inspector (Deputy head of prep, GSA school)
Dr Ernst Zillekens	Team inspector (Senior librarian, HMC school)

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the school

- 1.1 Ashville College is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls aged between 2 and 19 years situated on the outskirts of Harrogate, North Yorkshire. Founded in 1877 as a boys' boarding school, it has been co-educational since 1984. An associate school of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, the college is a registered charity. It is directed by a board of governors.
- 1.2 Since the previous inspection, the school has extended the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to include children from the age of three years. It has opened a new teaching block and refurbished the junior library and school hall. Its preparatory school for pupils aged 8 to 11 years is merging with the pre-preparatory school for pupils aged 2 to 7 years. Of the four boarding houses, two are for boys aged 13 to 19 years, one is for girls aged 13 to 19 years and one is for boys and girls aged 8 to 13 years. From the age of 5, the school selects its pupils by academic ability.

What the school seeks to do

- 1.3 The school's aim is to be a caring Christian community that develops the full potential of each pupil. It undertakes to maintain high educational standards and stimulate excitement in learning and discipline in study. It seeks to encourage pupils to examine critically the standards and values current in society so that they may develop a personal faith to guide them throughout life.

About the pupils

- 1.4 Day pupils come from a range of professional backgrounds, mostly from White British families living within a 20-mile radius of the school. Boarders come from eleven overseas countries and from homes throughout the United Kingdom. The school has identified 92 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which include dyslexia and dyspraxia, 64 of whom receive additional specialist help. English is an additional language (EAL) for 44 pupils, all of whom receive support for their English. Data used by the school have identified 86 pupils as being the more able in the school's population and lessons and extra-curricular provision are modified for them. The school has identified 53 pupils who are talented in sport, and 69 in music and drama.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

Recommendations from previous inspections

- 1.6 The previous full inspection of the school by ISI was a standard inspection in December 2010. The recommendations from that inspection were:
- In the senior school, ensure teachers share good practice beyond subject departments.
 - In the senior school, further develop and support the role of heads of department.
 - To meet the needs of the college and the professional development of the individual, make available better training opportunities for staff.
 - Consider further development of library and ICT provision in the college, to meet pupils' growing use of, and needs for, these resources.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, continue to resource and plan for the outdoor environment, to improve provision across all areas of learning.
 - Extend the opportunities for child-initiated activities in the Reception classes.
- 1.7 The recommendation of the intermediate boarding inspection in September 2014 was:
- Improve the effectiveness with which self-evaluation assists boarding leadership to continue to maintain compliance with the National Minimum Standards.
- 1.8 The school has successfully met the recommendation of the previous inspections.

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils of all ages have excellent communication skills.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils achieve well in their activities and sport.
- Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are less developed than they might be.
- Pupils' progress slows where teaching limits opportunities to develop their own ideas and stretch their capabilities.

2.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.

- Pupils work together extremely well to achieve common goals.
- Pupils respect and value diversity within society and are tolerant of people from different backgrounds.
- Pupils willingly accept responsibility for their actions and demonstrate excellent behaviour.
- Pupils show substantial levels of self-understanding and resilience.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of life.

Recommendations

2.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements:

- Develop opportunities in lessons for pupils to use a wide range of ICT in order to strengthen their skills in this area.
- Advance pupils' progress by providing more opportunities within lessons for pupils to develop their own ideas and stretch their capabilities.

3. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' academic and other achievements is good.
- 3.2 Results in GCSE examinations for 2013 to 2015, for which national data are available, have been above the national average for maintained schools. Results in IGCSE Chinese, English as a second language and French have been higher than worldwide norms, and those in IGCSE further mathematics have been similar to worldwide norms. Results in A-level examinations, for the same years, have been similar to the national average for maintained schools. A few pupils achieve success in BTEC sport. In 2016, GCSE results were broadly in line with those of the previous year, while A-level results were higher than the average of the previous three years. This represents, in most areas, successful fulfilment of the college's aims to maintain high educational standards and stimulate in pupils of all abilities an excitement in learning and discipline in study. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that teaching enabled their children to make good progress and develop skills for the future, and that their children's educational needs were met effectively by the school.
- 3.3 Pupils of all ages, including those with SEND, have excellent communication skills. The youngest children in the EYFS have well-developed vocabulary. They explain their activities and needs clearly to adults, listen carefully and follow directions. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 speak confidently in front of larger groups, such as in assemblies. They have good understanding of correct grammar and punctuation because teaching encourages them to improve their writing by drafting and learning to check for errors. They listen carefully and select texts to read that will challenge them.
- 3.4 Senior school pupils use accurate technical vocabulary. They relish opportunities for group discussion and progress rapidly when teaching provides challenging topics. For example, pupils solved problems together in geometry and probability, discussed the causes of failure of the Spanish Armada and articulated complex theories. Pupils develop these skills because they are given opportunities to debate and present their ideas to a range of audiences.
- 3.5 Pupils learn to communicate effectively in foreign languages. Year 6 pupils acquire appropriate vocabulary in Spanish. Those in the senior school become increasingly fluent and understand grammatical relationships. Sixth form pupils' assured oral and writing skills in German are strengthened by a strong command of grammatical detail and wide vocabulary. Pupils with EAL rapidly acquire the fluency to allow them to access the curriculum and gain relevant qualifications in their English.
- 3.6 Pupils of all ages have markedly positive attitudes to their learning. Children in the EYFS concentrate upon their activities, for example, when constructing models for their imaginative play. Older pupils are committed to their work and enthusiastic about their activities and learning. Pupils with SEND show initiative. They understand their difficulties and have acquired effective strategies to overcome them. Pupils exercise care in their work, and, as they mature, use self-evaluation to drive their own improvement. Collaboration is particularly strong; for example, sixth form pupils rapidly pooled ideas in a geography lesson to create a polished written response to an examination question. When given the opportunity, pupils demonstrate independence; for example, in devising a series of skills-based sports lesson plans.
- 3.7 Pupils achieve highly in their activities and sport. Pupils in Years 1 and 6 have had success in external speech, drama, and dance exams, and in the UK Primary Maths Challenge where they have become national finalists. Pupils of all ages have had success in external music exams at all levels to grade 8. In the senior school, pupils perform with local theatrical and operatic companies and play in regional and national bands and orchestras. Over the past year, they

have gained an engineering scholarship, won a Latin competition, been shortlisted in a national short story competition and were national finalists in a debating competition. Six sixth form pupils have achieved a gold award in the UK Maths Challenge with four progressing to the next level. Seven have gained The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme (DofE) gold award.

- 3.8 In sport, the very great majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 represent the school in team games. They have qualified for the northern finals of an athletics competition and won individual and team matches in inter-school competitions in boys' cricket and girls' swimming. Year 6 pupils are currently Under 11 national team biathlon and hockey champions. Senior school teams have won competitions at county level in netball, swimming, tennis and rugby. Individual pupils have achieved representative honours at county level in rugby, cricket and netball, and have represented the country in hockey.
- 3.9 Pupils of all ages are competent users of ICT. In Years 3 to 6, pupils use interactive whiteboards effectively to demonstrate their understanding and word processing skills in presenting and editing their work. Pupils with SEND use ICT effectively to manage their difficulties. Senior school pupils program confidently within their computing lessons but have insufficient opportunity to apply their skill in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' written work shows little evidence of the use of ICT, while pupils who spoke to the inspectors stated that that they did not have many opportunities to apply ICT in lessons. Inspectors did not see pupils use high levels of ICT to enhance their learning and study skills in lessons.
- 3.10 Supported by the broad and balanced curriculum, pupils' skills for learning are at a good level across all areas of learning. Children in the EYFS use numbers proficiently in their daily lives, for example, in counting the 25 cups and plates required for morning snacks, and in teacher-led addition and subtraction exercises. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 show confident understanding of mathematical language and can calculate accurately. Senior school pupils can draw upon relevant methods to solve problems. They apply their mathematical skills in different subjects, such as statistics within geography, graphs in chemistry and calculating percentage errors in physics. In science, older preparatory school pupils hypothesise to predict results. Senior school pupils use their good scientific knowledge to ask questions relating to experimentation. They are proficient in using scientific equipment and can draw appropriate conclusions.
- 3.11 Design technology skills are well-developed from an early age; for example, younger pupils designed an electrical circuit to illuminate the model lighthouse they had made and senior school pupils confidently used applications to design, model and make artefacts. Pupils' physical development throughout the school is excellent. Children in the EYFS manipulate tools and toys effectively. Pupils from Year 5 have the skills to play team sports at a high level. Aesthetic and creative skills are strong at all ages. In the senior school, pupils work independently and use a wide range of media. Talented pupils are set more challenging tasks and, as a result, they produce original and innovative pieces. Pupils, including the youngest, perform well in drama and many gain skills as instrumentalists.
- 3.12 From observation of their activities and data provided by the school, the great majority of children in the EYFS make progress that is good and achieve well above the national average. The school uses its own assessments to determine progress in the preparatory school. From the evidence of these, of lessons observed and examination of pupils' work, pupils from Years 1 to 6 make good progress. Results in GCSE examinations and standardised measures of progress indicate pupils make good progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities. Results in A-level examinations and standardised measures of progress indicate pupils make appropriate progress in relation to the average for pupils of similar abilities.

- 3.13 Data provided by the school for 2015 to 2016 show that pupils with SEND in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in relation to their starting points. Those in the senior school perform at least as well as their peers at GCSE and those in Year 13 are slightly below their peers. They make good progress overall because their individual needs are well understood by their teachers and because they receive additional one-to-one specialist support from the learning support department. Pupils with EAL in the senior school perform in line with their peers at GCSE and slightly below their peers at A-level. They are highly motivated to access the full curriculum and well supported by their peers and teachers. The great majority of more able pupils achieve highly in accordance with their abilities. The more able pupils in the senior school benefit from a scholarship programme which challenges them beyond the curriculum.
- 3.14 Pupils of all ages make rapid progress where teaching offers them opportunities to use their higher order skills and where work in lessons is suitably matched to the range of ability. Pupils' progress slows where teaching is overly didactic and does not give them opportunities to develop their own ideas as in a minority of sixth form lessons. Investigation of pupils' work showed that teaching does not always allow pupils to exercise their higher order skills, for example, when pupils are answering straightforward and repetitive questions in worksheets which make no allowances for their different abilities. In their responses to the questionnaire, a minority of students did not agree that the marking helped them improve their work. Inspectors found that the quality of marking varied in the school. The best examples of marking provide a thorough analysis of strengths, correct errors and offer clear advice for improvement. Less informative marking is not as effective and sometimes confined to a summative statement or mark. Over the past three years, college data show that most leavers at Year 13 have entered university, and the large majority have gained their first choice.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The quality of the pupils' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Pupils make an excellent contribution to the college and fully support its aim to be a caring Christian community committed to the development of the full potential of each pupil. They are encouraged by the college leadership and staff who promote the ethos of the school through messages in assembly and lessons and demonstrate through their own actions the principles and behaviour expected of the pupils. A very large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school promotes an environment which successfully supports their child's personal development.
- 4.3 Pupils work exceptionally well together to achieve common goals. Children in the EYFS explore activities together; for example, one group of children role playing in a shop worked with another in a kitchen to buy commodities. Pupils contribute positively to the school and wider community. For example, younger pupils worked together to learn a song to present to visitors and make Easter cakes. Older pupils enjoy fulfilling responsibilities as monitors and described how they had previously welcomed younger pupils to the school with written invitations and then showed them around the buildings. Those at the top of the preparatory school worked collaboratively over a term to set up and run a mini-enterprise project, a Mexican themed café, which proved very successful with their peers and parents. The school council gives those in Years 3 to 6 the opportunity to put forward suggestions for school improvements, such as in the purchase of play equipment. They are proud of the democratic principle of voting and enjoy opportunities to represent their peers.
- 4.4 In the senior school, pupils' highly effective collaborative working makes a major contribution to their learning. A residential trip in Year 7 encourages teamwork. The school council makes a useful contribution to the school community, for example, in suggesting improvements to the queueing arrangements for lunch. All pupils participate in the house system which allows some to develop their leadership skills and all to achieve common goals, such as in team competitions, for example, in number puzzles, music, drama and sport. Sixth form pupils and prefects lead the school and charity committees. They volunteer their help at college concerts and events, perform duties and act as listeners and advisors to younger pupils. The oldest pupils volunteer in the local community, for example, visiting primary schools and residential homes for the elderly. A charities committee makes decisions on fundraising and pupils of all ages participate in a sponsored walk and in supporting a school-sponsored orphanage in Malawi as well as other national and local charities. They are keen to support people suffering hardship, for example, through donations of clothes and toys to refugees living locally. Pupils of all ages show sincere commitment to their charities.
- 4.5 The notably strong sense of community within the school's boarding houses leads boarders to work together to achieve the smooth running of their houses. Duties delegated by prefects are accepted and cheerfully carried out. The boarding council, which is led by pupils from all four houses, receives suggestions from boarders, many of which are effectively implemented. Working together for the common good is seen as the norm and leads to eagerly anticipated events, such as house performances entertaining the whole boarding community. Parents of boarders who responded to the questionnaire all agreed that the boarding experience had helped their child's personal development.
- 4.6 Pupils of all ages respect and value diversity within society and are tolerant of people from different backgrounds. They enjoy the diversity within the college and particularly within boarding where ten overseas nations are represented. Supported by an induction programme and also by a nominated buddy, international students feel they are welcome from their first

day. Similarly, pupils from the United Kingdom appreciate the cultural diversity brought by international students and enjoy interacting with them. Pupils are respectful of the differences between them, for example, in religious belief, gender and background. They understand that some people in the wider world are not always as tolerant as themselves and are firm in their condemnation of prejudice such as Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. An overwhelming majority of parents and most pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages and actively promotes respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

- 4.7 Pupils are naturally thoughtful of others; they are courteous, accept responsibility for their own actions and demonstrate excellent behaviour. Younger pupils are clear that they understand the difference between right and wrong. They accept the need for rules and laws, which uphold the values of the college. Sixth form pupils are excellent role models for younger pupils. They expressed the view that pupils can easily conform to school rules. Younger pupils said that they are at all times encouraged by the college to review and reflect upon their behaviour to decide if it is appropriate. Pupils throughout the college are helped in this process because they recognise the importance of taking time to think about priorities in life, such as helping others, and they consider seriously the messages they are given in assembly. Their well-developed spiritual understanding is deepened through discussion in their personal social health and economic education (PSHE) lessons and seen in their response to services, such as that in memory of the war dead held at the school cenotaph, and in their activities, such as singing while employing sign language.
- 4.8 Pupils show high levels of self-understanding and resilience and are well prepared for the next stage in life. They develop their self-confidence from a very early age. For example, children in the EYFS are self-assured in speaking to adults. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are confident in public performance. They recognise the value of persisting in their sporting and musical activities even when it proves difficult. They expressed the view that they should always try hard because that was the best preparation for their future and they showed awareness of the importance not only of academic qualifications but also of becoming a rounded person. Senior school pupils understand how to improve their own learning; they evaluate their performance using their termly tracking grades and readily choose to attend optional subject clinics to strengthen their understanding. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to increase their confidence through activities, such as drama and debating. They encourage pupils to express their views, responding to them with careful consideration.
- 4.9 Pupils are keen to make their own decisions and leaders encourage them to do so from an early age. Children in the EYFS select materials to construct a scene for their imaginative play. Pupils from Year 1 choose their activities from the wide range provided by the school and, as they mature, increasingly understand their value to their personal development. Pupils select subjects to study at GCSE and A-level and are supported through advice from the careers department, subject teachers and boarding staff. The oldest pupils felt well equipped to make their future career choices including for university entry.
- 4.10 Pupils know how to stay safe and how to be physically and mentally healthy. Children in the EYFS understand what constitutes a healthy snack and the importance of hand washing. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make healthy choices at lunch, describing this as having a 'colourful plate'. They exercise enthusiastically in play periods and in sport. Pupils from Year 3 are aware of the importance of staying safe online and listen carefully to advice given to them, such as in e-safety week. Responding to the questionnaire, almost all of the pupils agreed that they understand how to stay safe online. Senior pupils and boarders appreciate the range of healthy food they have to eat. They are aware of the importance of achieving a balanced lifestyle and

appreciate the guidance they are given in the PSHE, well-being and mindfulness programmes. An inclusive sports programme gives all pupils, including those in the sixth form, good opportunities for exercise. Pupils recognise that the staff in the school and boarding houses care for their well-being. The very large majority of pupils responding to the questionnaire stated that they have somebody at school to talk to if they have a concern or worry. They confirmed to inspectors that they feel safe in school.

- 4.11 Pupils leaving the school in Year 13 are well equipped to make wise choices which lead to successful and fulfilled lives, in line with the college's aims to enable pupils to make a critical examination of the standards and values current in society so that they may develop a personal faith to guide them throughout their lives.