



ASHBROOKE HOUSE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 3 TO 11

REPORT ON THE SCHOOL YEAR 2012-2013

This report was presented at the annual prizegiving at Batch Country Hotel on 4th July 2013. Mrs Pauline Kidner of Secret World Wildlife Rescue Centre presented the prizes.

Good evening and welcome to our Prizegiving evening which is the culmination of our academic year. Thank you all for being here this evening and for the continued interest you show in our school. On a personal note I would like to thank the members of staff and you as parents for the encouragement you have given me during my first year as Headteacher. You may well know that I have a long association with Ashbrooke as I was a pupil here at the age of 7 and spent four very happy and formative years before going to senior school and university. In 1994 I was offered the post of P.E teacher and have over the years progressed through the school and I am still here in this new exciting role.

The school year 2012-2013 has been a significant one for Ashbrooke House involving several staff changes. At the end of the academic year 2012 Mrs Ruth Thomas retired from the day to day management of the school and I succeeded her as Headteacher. I had been Deputy Headteacher for the past four years and this position was filled by Mrs Frances Ball. In September we welcomed two new members of staff – Mrs Buckingham as our new music teacher and Mrs Gifford joined us as a classroom assistant.

We held our Harvest Festival at Clarence Park Baptist Church in October and the whole school took part in a musical production of the 'Harvest Factory' arranged by Mrs Buckingham which was enjoyed by all, both participants and audience. It was an opportunity to talk to the children not just about Harvest and the gifts of the earth, but also about the responsibility of sharing these gifts. Pupils were asked to bring in items that could be used to feed some of Weston's poor and homeless. The Weston-super-Mare foodbank were most appreciative of our gifts, including £100 collected at the end of the service.

On November 16th we joined with the rest of the country in raising money for "Children in Need". The children had a great day – trying to outbid one another in being dressed in the worst outfits. We all had fun searching for Pudsey pictures around the school, and indulging in lots of gooey cakes. It is amazing how many coins are needed to cover an outline of Pudsey. In total we collected £250. Thank you for all your contributions and please start saving your loose change now. Children in Need Day will soon be around again!

At the start of the autumn term a new P.T.A. committee was elected and their enthusiastic efforts have resulted in several successful fund raising events this year, starting off with a

sponsored bounce which as you can imagine was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part. Even some of the staff joined in. Just over £800 was raised at this event enabling the PTA committee to buy many of the items from the children's wish list.

Children need the opportunity to express themselves in a creative manner and it often helps them with self-esteem. Music and drama play an important part in the curriculum at Ashbrooke House. Children in upper school learn to play the recorder and ukulele and are members of the school choirs. Many of the children have lessons in speech and drama, violin, piano, brass and singing. Children perform to a very high standard in all of these as was demonstrated at our annual school concert.

I am sure everyone has one of these hanging somewhere in your house (or at least I sincerely hope you have). Once again Ashbrooke went into print with their own unique calendar with every child featuring in a class photograph and contributing to a class picture. They make very good Christmas presents for grandparents as I expect many of you found out.

The autumn term finished with the traditional Christmas productions. The lower school entertained us with a performance of 'The Little Angel' – wowing the audience with their confidence and ability to remember all the words.

The following evening the upper school put on an excellent production entitled "The Magical Christmas Jigsaw" – once again reminding us of the great wealth of talent we have amongst our pupils. We find that sometimes the quietest child suddenly becomes the star when they play a key role in a performance and a hidden talent is allowed to shine for all to see.

The P.T.A were once again very active in organising our annual 'Carols by Candlelight'. This is always an excellent way to finish the Autumn Term and with the help of 'Harmony Plus' brass band puts us quickly into the Christmas spirit – with the added help of a glass of mulled wine and the obligatory mince pie.

The grand finale of the Autumn term is as always the Christmas party with lots of traditional games, dancing and of course the arrival of a very special visitor to add to the excitement.

The beginning of the Spring Term was slightly disrupted by the arrival of quite a substantial fall of snow. We didn't experience it like the rest of the country but we had sufficient to build a few snowmen and have a snowball fight.

World Book Day has become a highlight in the school calendar which the children really look forward to. As a school we value this event to raise the profile of reading. The school was full of fairytale characters with Little Red Riding Hood as our Headteacher. After a colourful

assembly full of witches, fairies, princesses and all manner of beasts, the children had a chance to swap books. The children followed a book trail around the school and then classes were paired up to share the fairy tales that they had been writing throughout the week.

During the term a large number of children in classes 2-6 entered the Highbridge and Weston Junior Arts Festival. Many came away with trophies and certificates. Our choirs also did exceptionally well winning two out of the three classes for which they were entered.

School life generally is far more exciting and dynamic for pupils now....it's not just sitting at a desk and learning....there is lots more interaction and opportunities to find out for themselves.

Year 6 travelled back to the 19th century for a Victorian day. They learned how to chant the alphabet and times tables, use slates and sing the National Anthem. In the afternoon they became Victorian waitresses, making scones and cheese straws, which they served to the staff in the Victorian tea rooms in Class 6. They also took part in a playground drill and played with Victorian toys.

Class 2 had a Katie Morag day. They all dressed as characters from the stories by Marie Hedderwick. This series of books provides a wealth of material for Class 2 studies in Geography, Maths, English and Art.

There were delicious smells drifting around the school as they prepared traditional island food – scotch broth, porridgies (which are flapjacks) and shortbread which all tasted as good as they smelt.

The following day Class 2 were able to dress up again as the whole school came as explorers or dinosaurs for Red Nose Day. There were two dinosaurs amongst a horde of explorers. Everyone paid £1 for dressing up and more money was raised by a cake sale and a performance in the afternoon for parents by Nursery, Reception and Class 1, raising an incredible £408.

At the beginning of March years 3 and 4 visited Goblin Combe Environment Centre for an overnight stay and despite the extreme cold weather the trip was greatly enjoyed by all. On the first day the children visited Tyntesfield for an orienteering morning before travelling to Goblin Combe. In the evening everybody had great fun cooking hot cross buns and marshmallows around a camp fire, singing songs and going for a torch lit walk. The next day the children walked down into the woods for a bushcraft day where they built shelters, made bread and enjoyed hot dogs cooked over the campfire.

The P.T.A were busy again during this term organising a quiz which was a great success and hopefully will be repeated. Eleven teams entered and enjoyed showing their vast knowledge against each other.

The end of the Spring Term was celebrated by a disco here at the Batch Hotel, where everyone enjoyed showing off their latest moves.

Education at Ashbrooke, as in all schools, also means visits to places of interest and school trips are always the highlight of every year.

Classes 4 and 6 visited the Fleet Air Arm museum near Yeovilton. Class 4 learned about life during World War 11 while Class 6 took part in experiments to do with forces where they had the opportunity to build an ejector seat.

Class 2 went to Bristol to look at the works of Isambard Kingdom Brunel as part of their history topic visiting the S.S Great Britain and the Clifton Suspension Bridge.

As part of their Roman week, Class 3 visited the site of a Roman Villa at Chedworth near Cirencester. They also spent a day in school as Romans - making and eating Roman food, making Roman mosaics and of course dressing up in Roman clothes.

Years 1, 3 and 6 visited Weston museum. Year 1 went to look inside Clara's cottage and were excited to see an actual tin bath hanging on the outside wall. The children enjoyed learning how both the Romans and the Victorians lived in and around Weston. They also had the opportunity to handle artefacts and dress up.

The younger children in Reception and Nursery have made trips to local parks, the railway station and the new Weston library.

The annual year 5/6 residential week to Hill House is an event which is eagerly anticipated. Even the children lower down the school talk excitedly of the time when they will be able to go and experience the thrills of kayaking, rock climbing, caving, archery and a high ropes course. Every year the children surprise themselves and the staff with what they achieve through determination and often great effort. Once again one of the highlights of the week was falling or jumping into the lake after kayaking.

Our annual school concert, "Ashbrooke's Got Talent" is a chance for parents and staff to enjoy the many talents of our children. Once again everyone performed to a very high standard in singing, playing the piano, cornet and ukuleles', reciting and reading poems and a short drama by Year 6. We are very grateful to all the staff who coach the children in these extra curricular activities, providing the children with as wide a range of experiences as possible.

A new initiative for this year was a House Fundraising Day – organised and run by the children themselves. Dolphins and Corinthians were raising money for Secret World Wildlife Centre and Harlequins and Forresters were raising money for the R.N.L.I.

The children donated £1 to dress up, either as an animal, or something to do with the sea. There was also a table top sale, filling chalk outlines with coins, a cake sale and arts and craft activities for everyone to take part in. The event raised £160 for each charity and was such a success that it will most likely be placed on our fund raising programme as an annual event.

The P.T.A rounded off their fund raising activities at our keynote event – the summer fayre – which was held in the school garden in June. As always there was plenty of entertainment for all age groups, from hook a duck, filling ornaments with coloured sand to bouncing on an inflatable castle – but the most popular activity undoubtedly was “soak the teacher”! Well done to all those staff who put their head on the block to raise money for Ashbrooke! During this academic year the P.T.A have raised £3906.03 for the school. An amazing amount and I’m sure you will join me in thanking all the members for their hard work. They have only been able to raise this with your support – every raffle ticket you have bought or cake you have baked has helped us to reach this total. Thank you to you all.

The highlight of our educational visits is always our end of year school trip. This year the whole school spent the day visiting AT BRISTOL – a big and most exciting interactive science centre, with hundreds of hands on exhibits, live science shows and Planetarium star shows. A whole days learning through play for all ages – from using giant building blocks in the interactive construction site, making your own animation and e-mailing your mini-film home.

After a slight hiccup the previous week a successful sports day was held at Drove Road last Thursday. There was much cheering and clapping as Year 1 through to Year 6 ran, jumped, skipped, manned sacks and clutched eggs and spoons. Records were broken and with lots of competitive spirit, fun was had by all. The winners were Harlequins and congratulations go to Charlie Hayward for winning the Victor Ludorum Cup and Alys Skinner for winning the Victrix Ludorum Cup. The annual Reception and Nursery Sports kicked off with a morning of activities including seaside themed races where the children built sandcastles and took part in a water relay. Tyler Williams was the Reception Sports Champion.

Education at Ashbrooke is all about recognising individual strengths and encouraging all our pupils to acquire important skills such as knowing when to take an intellectual risk, understanding that the best learning often occurs through mistakes, learning when to lead and when to support, when to be assertive and when to compromise. We encourage our children to be thoughtful, critical and questioning, to stand up for the values they believe in and not to simply “go with the flow”. Modelling a respectful attitude and requiring children to have consideration for the rights and feelings of others help to create a co-operative learning environment.

We hope all the leavers will remember happy times at Ashbrooke and recognise that they are now better prepared to take the next stage of their educational journey. This year one of our Year 6 girls is moving on to Bristol Cathedral School, one to Colston's Girls' School, four to Churchill, one to Priory and one to Backwell. Alys Skinner has been awarded an all round scholarship to Wells Cathedral School. Alys is very musical and plays the piano, violin, clarinet and sings – she is also very talented at sport. We congratulate Alys and wish her and all our Year 6 girls all the very best for the future.

We are unfortunately saying goodbye to Mr Jory who is retiring after 8 years as our After School Club leader. We thank him for his loyal service and dedication towards the children.

We would like to congratulate Miss Walker who is getting married on 5th August and also Mr Cox who is getting married on 10th August. We wish them both a joyful day and every happiness in the future.

In a short while we will take the opportunity to congratulate your children who have worked so hard throughout the school year, in gaining the awards you see spread before us.

CHILDREN TO SING

I would now like to introduce Mrs Pauline Kidner from 'Secret World Wildlife Centre' at Highbridge who has very kindly agreed to present the prizes and certificates to the children.