



ASHBROOKE HOUSE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 3 TO 11

Ashbrooke House School

End of Year Report 2014

This report was presented at the annual prizegiving at Batch Country Hotel on Thursday 10th July 2014. Mr Alcock Headteacher of Queens College presented the prizes.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls welcome to our annual Prize Giving. It is lovely to see you all here to celebrate the end of another successful year. This is a special year for us as it is 60 years since Ashbrooke House School was founded. The staff and I are delighted that you are with us and hope you have a very enjoyable evening. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our special guest, Mr. Alcock the Headteacher of Queens College, Taunton who has kindly agreed to present the children with their prizes later in the evening.

Children you have worked very hard throughout the year and I would like to congratulate each and every one of you for all you have achieved. Learning is a very essential part of your lives and at times it may seem hard but in the end the effort will be worthwhile. These formative years at Ashbrooke will stand you in good stead for the greater challenges you will face in Senior School and beyond. You will never stop learning! The teachers and I are immensely proud of all you have achieved. Well done.

We are very fortunate at Ashbrooke House to be in a close knit community where every pupil is known and valued by all the staff. We endeavour to build children's self esteem by identifying their abilities and talents in the early stages of school life, then creating tailored approaches to provide a solid foundation for the next stage of their education.

Our ethos is to foster a sense of belonging that creates the security for all pupils to develop a strong work ethic rooted in high achievement. Small classes and excellent pastoral care are vital ingredients in maintaining enthusiasm for learning which encourages the optimum development of every child.

We work closely as a staff team to develop our learning and teaching strategies across our continually changing Curriculum. We have very high expectations of ourselves and the children and constantly strive for excellence in each and every classroom in our school. Our children are articulate, confident and proud of their school. They enjoy their learning and this is evident from their behaviour and outstanding levels of achievement.

Ashbrooke's year of fundraising, charitable donations and general activities got off to a very encouraging start in September when Class 5 and Mrs. Ducker held a coffee afternoon for parents and friends to raise money for the Macmillan Cancer Support. The children baked cakes and created a decorated café in the school hall. This enjoyable event raised £150.

Our annual Harvest Festival was held in Clarence Park Baptist Church with the whole school taking part in a production of Harvest History kindly written by Mrs. Buckingham. The children were encouraged to bring items of food which amounted to an amazing 178.6kg. This was given to Foodbank, a charity who support the poor and homeless in Weston.

From your support and generosity we also collect £160 for our school charity Jiwan Jyoti, a children's orphanage in Nepal.

On November 15th we joined the rest of the country in raising money for "Children In Need". The children brought their teddies to school and we had a teddy bears picnic. During the day the children enjoyed creating Pudsey collages, making Pudsey shaped biscuits and decorating cupcakes. The afternoon was rounded off with all the school joining together to sing Teddy Bear songs. This was a fun day thoroughly enjoyed by us all and a total of £146 was raised and sent to Children In Need.

As part of our curriculum the children are taught about other religious Festivals celebrated around the world. Class 3 made the bread for our Harvest Festival, Class 1 made potato latkes for the Jewish Festival Hanukkah. The Nursery, Reception, Classes 1 and 3 were treated to sweet and savoury party food to celebrate the festival of Divali.

For their topic 'Healthy Living' Class 5 planned, prepared and then had the pleasure of eating a healthy 3 - course lunch.

The autumn term finished with our traditional Christmas productions. These are always looked forward to with great excitement and enthusiasm throughout the school. The Lower school put on a great performance of 'Jesus' Christmas Party' – wowing the audience with their confidence and ability to remember all the words.

The following evening we were entertained by Upper school with their excellent production entitled 'Countdown to Christmas'.

A special thanks to the Parents and Staff for all their patience, time and hard work in preparing costumes, scenery and all the 'behind the scenes' activities that sometimes go unnoticed.

On the day before term ended the children enjoyed a Christmas Party when a very special visitor took time out of his busy schedule to join the Lower School in their classrooms. The children in Upper School thoroughly enjoyed a morning of fun and games in the Church hall. We all returned to our School Hall to have a special Christmas lunch.

Term ended when the children wore their Christmas jumpers and raised £62 for Save the Children.

Music and drama plays an important part in the life of the school and all upper school pupils learn at least one musical instrument. The children also have the opportunity to have private lessons in piano, violin, singing and speech and drama. We have an enthusiastic and very committed school choir. At Christmas they entertained the elderly residents in various local Nursing Homes and once again was successful at the Junior Arts Festival retaining the Woodspring Cup. Children were also entered for examinations in speech and drama, piano and singing. On 5th June we held our annual school concert 'Ashbrooke's Got Talent'. I was very pleased to see that all children attended and enjoyed the fabulous performances.

In January we were very pleased to welcome Mrs. Munro to the teaching staff. She has already made a positive influence in Class 2 and the children have all settled very happily with her.

On January 23rd Mrs. Richards from the NSPCC gave an interesting assembly on the work the charity undertakes. Over the next week the children organised, with their House Captains, a fundraising event. They created posters to advertise it and on the day organised a café in class 4 where they sold drinks and cakes they had made. They came dressed in onesies and took part in an obstacle course NSPCC's mascot 'Buddy' with coins and decorated a picture of a child in his onesie. This very busy afternoon raised £353.

World Book Day continues to be a very popular event at school. In March we decided to base our day around the Mr. Benn series of books by David McKee. The children planned and wrote their own Mr. Benn adventures based on the character they had come to school dressed as. Please take time at the end of the evening to look at our Mr. Benn display. You will be amazed at the creative talents of your children.

On Thursday 6th March twenty three very excited children from Classes 3 and 4 went for an overnight stay at Goblin Combe Environment Centre near Cleeve. Despite the rain they had a wonderful time. On the first day the children visited Leigh Woods where they saw a Celtic Hill Fort and learned about life during Celtic times. In the evening everybody had a great time cooking hot cross buns and marshmallows around a campfire, singing songs and then going for a torch lit walk. Needless to say we all slept well that night! The following day the children walked down into the Combe for a Bushcraft day where they built shelter, learned how to safely light fires and enjoyed eating hot dogs cooked over the campfire.

Congratulations must go to the Nursery and Reception classes who won first prize in an Easter Egg Competition organised by Seaquarium. Many thanks to Mrs. Allard-Morgan for her expert help and advice with the design of the eggs. The children won free tickets to visit the Seaquarium which they all thoroughly enjoyed.

On the last day of the spring term the children came to school wearing Eaters hats they had designed and made at home. We had a most entertaining parade followed by an egg hunt around the school garden.

School life generally is far more exciting and dynamic for pupils now, it's not just sitting at a desk and learning, there is so much more interaction and many opportunities for children to leave the classroom and the school to find out for themselves.

We are very fortunate to have the beach and several parks close at hand which are frequently used by all the classes. The beach has many uses from learning to form letters correctly in the sand, build sand sculptures to playing cricket and other games. The parks are used as part of different environmental studies. All the children had the opportunity to visit the Tesco Supermarket where they learned about 'Farm to Fork' an initiative to teach children where food comes from and what happens to it.

During this term children in classes 1 and 4 have been on numerous visits around the local area including an open top bus tour as part of their humanities topic. They walked along Weston beach, hiked up Sandpoint and visited several churches.

At the end of June the whole school had the opportunity to see the famous sand sculpture exhibition on Weston beach. Classes 2 to 5 enjoyed an afternoon in the sun and took part in a workshop learning how to create a sand sculpture. Unfortunately the Nursery, Reception and Class 1, who went the following day, got rather wet in a sudden downpour but still managed to enjoy the exhibition and were able to return to the beach the next day to build their own sculptures.

To celebrate the start of the World Cup all the school took part in a fund raising event for Prokick a charity who supports under privileged children around the world. The children and teachers all had a go at taking a penalty kick. Shelley Tancock and Risuna Mabasa were our champion spot kickers, both managing to kick the ball over 40 miles per hour. The afternoon was thoroughly enjoyed by all; even parents came to have a go. The event raised £798 for the Charity.

At the beginning of the summer term class 3 had a Roman week as part of their History topic. During the week they visited the site of a Roman villa at Chedworth near Cirencester and also Weston Museum where they saw Roman artefacts found in Uphill. On the Friday their classroom was turned in to a Roman dining room for the day complete with a mosaic floor and couches. The children came dressed as Ancient Romans and enjoyed cooking and eating authentic Roman food, making clay oil lamps and mosaic tiles. During the afternoon in the playground they became Roman Soldiers using the shields they had made to form a Roman tortoise to protect themselves from certain staff who pretended to be angry Celts throwing foam javelins at them and this is what a Roman Tortoise looks like! The children thoroughly enjoyed their exciting and different school week.

One of the highlights of the year for Classes 5 and 6, and myself I might add, is our annual residential week at Hill House near Bridgwater. The children and some of the braver staff take part in various activities including rock climbing, gorge walking, kayaking, archery, laser quest, high ropes course, crabbing and a range of initiative and team building challenges. Every year the children surprise themselves and the staff with what they achieve through determination and often great effort. These experiences help to improve the children's self-confidence considerably but more importantly teaches them the huge importance of teamwork.

Sports day for Years 1-6 took place on Tuesday 17th June and thankfully it was a lovely warm sunny day. It was both a fun and enjoyable afternoon and was well supported by parents, grandparents and friends who all came to cheer on sporting enthusiasts. The Ashbrooke House spirit was clearly evident – children and parents who did not win their races did not give up and those who fell down got up and carried on. Competition was intense but Harlequins were the eventual winners. Congratulations to Charlie Hayward for winning the Victor Ludorum Cup and Shelley Tancock who was overall girl winner of the Victrix Ludorum Cup.

The Nursery and Reception class held their sports morning on the back lawn with Benjamin Fellowes winning the Reception Sports Award.

On the 1st of July the whole school has a day out. Nursery, Reception and Classes 1 and 2 went to Noah's Ark Farm and Zoo near Wraxhall where they enjoyed seeing the Elephants, Rhinoceros, baby Giraffes and most of all the Meerkats! Classes 3, 4 and 5 went over the Severn Bridge into Wales to visit St. Fagan's Museum of Building near Cardiff. Classes 4 and 5 learned about sustainability, how we try to use renewable energy sources now and how people in the past had the same aims. Class 3 helped in the building of a new Celtic Village. They learned how the Celts used mud and straw to construct their houses. As you can see from the picture they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

I would now like to highlight our wonderful Parent Teacher's Association. We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of parents who, with the support of the Staff, plan and hold a number of events throughout the year. Their aim is to raise money to provide "extras" for the school, which will enhance the Ashbrooke House experience for all the children. Events are designed to be fun!

I would like to thank all the members, new and old, for their great support during the year and also encourage other parents to join this worthwhile band of loyal supporters.

During our 60th anniversary year they have organised many fund raising activities, the keynote event being the Summer Fete held on a sunny day in June. This was an extremely well supported event with many ex-pupils attending, including a gentleman who was a pupil in 1967. As always there was plenty of entertainment from Splat the Rat, Face Painting, Bouncy Castles, Tombolas, Penalty Shootout and the most popular money making activity "Soak the Teacher". At this event the parents and pupils were able to use our outdoor classroom which has been kindly bought and constructed by the PTA to celebrate our 60th birthday. Many

thanks must go to Mr. Porter and Mr. Sharkey who spent many evenings building it in time for the Fete. At this event alone an amazing £1,500 was raised.

Other events organised and run by the PTA include Carol's by Candlelight in December, a tabletop sale in February, a film night and Social Evening in March and an end of term disco here at the Batch in April. I would like to say a special thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Brown for the use again this year of their lovely hotel for the disco and our Prize Giving.

In total, during this Academic Year, the PTA have raised a staggering **£3420** for the school. My heartfelt thanks go to all of you who have worked so hard and supported the events during the year.

This is the end of my second year as Headteacher of Ashbrooke House School. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of my dedicated and loyal staff, without whose help and support our school would not be the success it is. One of the key roles of any school is the Secretary and sadly we are saying good-bye to Mrs. Biddle who is retiring after ten years of loyal service. We thank her for her friendship, hard work and dedication to the smooth running of the school. We wish her well and hope she enjoys many happy hours on the golf course!

We also wish Charlotte Downes, our After School Club helper, every success as she moves on to University.

On a happy note we congratulate Mrs. Blackwell who is expecting her first child in November.

As I close my report on our school year's activities I would like to say to you all how immensely proud I am of our school and extremely proud of your children. To our leavers I would say thank you. It has been a pleasure having you with us, getting to know you, teaching you and seeing you develop during your time with us and I urge you to grasp all the future opportunities that come your way with both hands. To those of you who will return to us in September I wish you a happy and fun filled summer and look forward to seeing you all next term. Thank you all very much.