

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

Moulsford Preparatory School

Full Name of the School	Moulsford Preparatory School
DCSF Number	931/6087
Registered Charity Number	309643
Address	Moulsford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire OX10 9HR.
Telephone Number	01491 651438
Fax Number	01491 651868
Email Address	headmaster@moulsford.com
Headmaster	Mr Mike Higham
Chairman of Governors	Mr Bill Lazarus
Age Range	4 to 13
Gender	Boys
Inspection Dates	21st to 24th January 2008

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

The inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the School

- 1.1 Moulsford Preparatory School was founded in 1961. It is a charitable company which is administered by a board of governors. Set on the banks of the Thames, it provides education for boys between the ages of four and thirteen. The aims of the school are to encourage each boy to reach the highest standards in all aspects of his school life, by giving to each individual the greatest possible opportunities in a caring, exciting and disciplined community. Enjoyment of school is seen as central to these aims. The school is a Church of England foundation, but welcomes pupils from other faiths.
- 1.2 Since the last inspection in 2002, the school has undertaken an extensive building programme. A new sports hall, all-weather games area, swimming pool and learning resource centre have been built, and a further twelve acres of land have been acquired for games fields. The former gymnasium has recently been converted into a theatre. Pupils now start Reception in the September before their fifth birthday. The curriculum has been reviewed, detailed job specifications for the senior management team and heads of department have been drawn up, more boarding staff are residential and the number of school teams has been increased. The school website has been redesigned and extended.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, 247 pupils were on the school roll. Of these, 12 were in the Foundation Stage, 29 in Years 1 and 2, 138 in Years 3 to 6 and 68 in Years 7 and 8. In total, 25 pupils were weekly boarders, living at school from Mondays to Fridays. The two main ages for entry are at Reception, when no assessment of ability is made, and at Year 3, when all pupils are assessed, and a report from the previous school is required. However, brothers of pupils already at Moulsford are guaranteed places.
- 1.4 The school identifies 37 pupils as having learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) and one of these has a statement of special educational needs. All pupils speak English as their first language. From Year 4, pupils are divided by ability for some subjects and this increases so that by Year 8 almost all teaching is in sets, with the top set in each of Years 7 and 8 being a scholarship class.
- 1.5 Pupils are drawn from the local area and most transfer to independent schools at the age of thirteen, although a few leave at eleven each year to transfer either to senior independent schools which take their main entry at that age, or occasionally to maintained schools. The majority of the pupils take Common Entrance, and a number of pupils take scholarship examinations for entry to their senior schools. Pupils' ability, in general, is above that of the national average.
- 1.6 National Curriculum nomenclature is mostly used by the school and is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 The school provides an all-round education of high quality. It successfully meets its aim of offering a curriculum that excites and extends pupils' interest and builds their confidence and self-esteem in all areas. The academic, sporting and cultural curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of creative opportunities. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and in interviews, pupils indicated that they were very pleased with the range of educational experiences offered by the school. However, they found the break at lunch time too short to allow for the relaxation necessary in a busy school day.
- 2.2 The broad education offered at Moulsford encourages all pupils to develop well and enables them to communicate effectively, learn with enthusiasm and think creatively. French is taught from Year 2 and Spanish and Latin are introduced in Year 5. Throughout the school, good provision is made for the development of skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy. Pupils' experience has been further enriched, since the last inspection, through the opportunities provided by the new facilities. A useful outdoor area enables classes to take place outside when appropriate, as well as offering adventurous play for the younger pupils.
- 2.3 An interesting programme of extra-curricular activities is provided and many opportunities are created for good links with the local and wider community. Activities at lunch time are restricted because the break is short, but those during the morning break and after school enhance the pupils' learning experiences. Pupils are able to choose from a wide variety of activities during the Thursday hobbies session at the end of the day; in the last year these have included cookery, 'nature detectives', survival skills and current affairs. Judo and fencing are offered throughout the year. Many pupils participate in the choir, which has sung in both Winchester and Wells cathedrals, and the orchestra flourishes. Games opportunities are extensive and considerable success has been achieved in rugby, cricket and swimming. A full programme of day visits, field trips and residential journeys enhances the curriculum even further; such trips as the Year 6 geography field trip to Devon and the Year 8 journey to Normandy offer pupils good opportunities for independent study and investigative work.
- 2.4 Preparation for transfer to senior school is thorough, with appropriate focus on external examinations. Teachers know their pupils well and support them and their parents effectively in choosing senior schools and meeting the necessary requirements. Potential scholars are identified and prepared for scholarship examinations. Results at Common Entrance have enabled all pupils to go to their first choice school for a number of years. The opportunity to board at Moulsford, which some pupils do on a weekly basis, means that those transferring to boarding schools have already been able to participate in the boarding experience.
- 2.5 The curriculum is largely well balanced and planned well overall, although the time for science in Years 1 and 3 is restricted and opportunities for drama are inconsistent throughout the school. Subject policies and schemes of work enable good progression and continuity in all age groups. Good setting arrangements enable teachers to tailor their teaching to the needs of pupils. Although the scheme of work in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is not yet fully developed and the range of topics is limited, some helpful opportunities are made to involve visiting specialists. For example, a local doctor comes to talk to Year 8 about drugs, and a Life Education Centre bus visits the school for a week in the Summer term, offering a programme of life skills from Reception to Year 6.

- 2.6 The school provides well for those pupils with LDD. The special needs co-ordinator liaises closely with teachers in Reception to Year 2, to ensure that any difficulties are identified and addressed, and all pupils entering Year 3 are assessed. Individual education plans are produced for any pupils identified as having LDD; these are reviewed regularly and are shared with parents. Pupils feel that they are well supported and that learning support lessons are very helpful.
- 2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.8 Pupils receive a strong grounding in knowledge, skills and understanding across a broad curriculum and they respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. They learn effectively, apply their knowledge and think and act critically and creatively. Evidence of their creativity is apparent in both written and practical work. They achieve the high standards to which the school aspires. Pupils demonstrate considerable inquisitiveness and outstanding speaking skills in all age groups. For example, pupils in Year 1 discussed avidly and displayed excitement when exploring the 'dark house' in their science topic on light and dark. Critical evaluation of historical sources about King John was completed with aplomb by Year 7. Reception pupils could identify which toys and everyday objects contained batteries and explain their use. Throughout the school pupils read well and a significant number benefit from the structured learning support programme. Mathematical competence is good at all levels and pupils apply their mathematical skills well in other subjects, such as geography and design technology (DT). Scientific knowledge and understanding are also developed appropriately. When given the opportunity, pupils turn naturally to the use of information and communications technology (ICT). Year 7 geographers had designed excellent news pages about volcanoes for the "Icelander's Weekly". Displays around the school illustrate pupils' very good use of ICT.
- 2.9 No significant differences in relative attainment were found between groups of pupils, subjects or curriculum areas. The attainment of all pupils, including those with LDD and high achievers, is good in relation to their abilities.
- 2.10 Musical, artistic and physical skills are strong across the school, with the majority of pupils reaching extremely high standards. Pupils in Year 6 showed excellent technical drawing skills in their work on perspective and Year 3 were enthusiastic, and obviously enjoyed, playing the recorder. The standard of singing in assembly and the instrumental work observed in Years 6 and 7 class ensembles were impressive. The attainment of more than 100 passes in Associated Board music examinations last year, with achievements up to Grade 7, both in performance and theory, is testimony to pupils' enthusiasm and high achievement in music. Pupils display a high level of skill in many sports and the school has earned an excellent reputation, competing successfully and regularly at national level in rugby, football, cricket, judo and fencing. During the inspection the school rugby teams won five of the seven matches played.
- 2.11 Pupils perform extremely well in a wide range of entry examinations for senior schools; over the past three years thirty-four major awards have been gained. Pupils enjoy a significant level of achievement, in a diversity of fields, both individually and collectively. The choir and orchestra perform at a high standard and pupils have achieved notable individual success in ballet and drama. School teams won the Magdalen College maths challenge, the Bradfield College technology competition and a number of rugby competitions, with the under nines team winning the south-east national championships; such successes indicate the range of opportunities that exist for the development of the pupils' talent. The breadth and scale of these achievements, particularly in consideration of the size of the school, are outstanding.

- 2.12 Pupils take notes competently, both in lessons and when undertaking research. This was demonstrated in a Year 8 English lesson when pupils planned, in draft form, a poem about relationships. Books are organised carefully and presentation is predominantly neat. Projects in religious education (RE) and geography revealed good independent research and study, while scientific experiments were written up methodically and logically.
- 2.13 In the majority of lessons, pupils worked with initiative and showed good focus and concentration. Behaviour was generally excellent and this facilitated a positive approach to their study. Pupils respect each other's views, offer support to each other and work co-operatively; they settle quickly to work in an atmosphere conducive to learning. They become absorbed in their studies and show determination to finish set tasks and to achieve their aims, displaying an air of self-confidence. They derive much enjoyment from their work and activities and team spirit is very evident.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.14 The strength of pupils' personal development and awareness is a tribute to the emphasis which the school places on this aspect of their education. The high standards of behaviour and excellent relationships mark an improvement on the good provision reported at the last inspection. The school successfully meets its aim of creating a happy environment in which pupils' personal qualities can flourish.
- 2.15 Pupils' spiritual development is good. They develop notable self-esteem and confidence from their relationships with adults in the school and from the supportive relationships with their peers. They gain spiritual insight through assemblies and subjects such as music, RE and PSHE. The school's Christian ethos is evident and services are taken regularly by a visiting clergyman. Pupils in Year 6 learnt about Judaism and rites of passage; good classroom displays, related to different faiths, aid understanding and tolerance. In a Year 6 form assembly, the hymn singing was excellent and Aesop's fable of the tortoise and hare was related to a modern day situation. The pervasive atmosphere of encouragement at Moulsford contributes significantly to the development of pupils' character.
- 2.16 Pupils have a strongly developed moral awareness and their sense of right and wrong is outstanding. Pupils from Year 3 have all contributed to the code of conduct for the school. The main emphasis is on good behaviour and this is seen in the high level of courtesy they show to each other and to adults. Pupils also learn how to contribute to the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. The well-developed reward system recognises and fosters good work and behaviour.
- 2.17 Social responsibility is developed exceptionally well as a result of the school's success in creating a genuine community based on the principles of care and trust. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility from an early age, taking on positions such as form captains, school council representatives, 'eco-prefects' and prefects. A buddy system operates, with Year 7 pupils looking after Year 3 at the start of the academic year; this promotes good relationships between pupils of different ages. Duties are carried out with enjoyment and rigour. During one lunch there was no shortage of volunteers willing to stay behind to help clear up. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of games and activities which encourage social interaction. They learn from their charitable activities how they can contribute to a wider world. Recent projects have included raising funds for the Royal British Legion in conjunction with their Remembrance Day commemorations, and supporting schools in Afghanistan and South Africa.
- 2.18 Pupils respond exceptionally well to the rich and varied opportunities provided for their cultural development. Pupils enjoy making music, they visit museums and theatres and

celebrations are held for the Chinese New Year. Themed meals have included an Italian lunch and a French breakfast. All these experiences, as well as opportunities for overseas travel, help pupils to understand and respect different faiths and cultures.

- 2.19 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)

- 2.20 The predominantly high quality of teaching is a strength of the school, as it was in the previous inspection. It enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress. A substantial proportion of very good teaching, together with some outstanding practice, ensures that the curriculum is delivered in the lively and exciting manner enshrined in the school's philosophy. Teaching and support for pupils with LDD is effective. The interest in their work, and the application of effort displayed by pupils, reflect the positive attitudes of their teachers.
- 2.21 The best lessons seen were characterised by excellent pupil-teacher relationships, brisk pace, varied activities and well-considered provision for different needs. An extra assistant in mathematics in Year 4 works for five out of six lessons with a group of pupils who need extra reinforcement. In a Year 8 mathematics group, pupils either worked on a standard Common Entrance paper or on a higher paper on Pythagoras' theorem. Occasionally, planning does not include well-targeted reinforcement activities or extension tasks, or relies too heavily on worksheets set for the whole class; in these lessons pupils do not have suitable opportunities to work at an appropriate pace. However, most teaching is well planned and time is used effectively. For example, a Year 6 mathematics lesson on fractions was well paced and included a range of challenging activities. Good teaching enabled Year 3 pupils to deliver a lively and considered performance of a poem in their English lesson, and encouraged a high level of skill in a football practice session for Years 3 and 4. In the occasional lessons which were less successful, the pace was slower.
- 2.22 In most lessons observed, teachers' high expectations of their pupils' courtesy and behaviour were met, and they encouraged them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- 2.23 Teachers know their pupils well. The school maintains a register of pupils with LDD and their teachers are well supported by specialists who advise on appropriate help. Regular pupil reviews allow for the identification and targeting of any pupils causing concern. The wide range of assessment data collected provides teachers with the necessary information to give them understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of all pupils.
- 2.24 Learning is well supported by teachers' thorough subject knowledge and their expertise in the age ranges they teach. Teachers are always ready to offer extra time, help and support, both in and out of lessons, and pupils appreciate their commitment.
- 2.25 Teaching is supported by a very good range of resources; deficiencies noted at the time of the last inspection have been remedied. Excellent use of interactive whiteboards was observed and the imaginative displays of pupils' work around the school provided further stimulus. In a Year 2 lesson in mathematics, pupils raced against the clock to complete missing numbers on a number grid square on the interactive board. Teaching is also very well supported by the many excellent specialist facilities, for instance in games, ICT, art, DT, science, music and drama.
- 2.26 Regular and thorough assessment of pupils' progress occurs, using a variety of assessment tools. Teachers and senior management are therefore able to track pupil progress and to

identify pupils requiring extra help. However, this assessment data is not yet fully used in order to inform planning and teaching; the school is aware of this and measures to address this weakness are included in the development plan. Marking is generally thorough and helpful although some variation occurs in the quality of supportive comments and guidance, and in the effectiveness of target setting to support further improvement.

- 2.27 The school evaluates pupils' performance and progress through the comprehensive use of nationally standardised tests, baseline assessments in Reception and Year 1, internal subject examinations and assessments, Common Entrance and scholarship examinations.
- 2.28 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils

- 3.1 The quality of pastoral care is outstanding and the school is successful in ensuring the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. The school achieves its aim of creating a caring and disciplined environment. Teachers know the pupils very well and provide them with effective support and guidance. They understand their roles and responsibilities, and carry them out with diligence and professionalism, showing commitment to the pastoral care of all those in their charge. The deputy head in charge of pastoral care has overall responsibility; he liaises with teachers and provides helpful support and guidance where necessary. All pupils attend school regularly and punctually and registration procedures are effective and efficient.
- 3.2 Excellent pastoral arrangements are in place. The school's strong, caring atmosphere provides an environment in which good relationships are fostered by mutual respect. This is illustrated by the impressive manner in which pupils listen to each other and how well they work together in small groups. Pupils in Reception recognised the need to take turns and demonstrated a caring approach towards their classmates. The school council gives pupils a genuine opportunity to play a part in the positive development of their community. In the pre-inspection questionnaire pupils said they were happy at school and they recognised how well new pupils are helped to feel part of the community. However, many pupils raised concerns about the pressurised nature of the long school day, and the inspection team agreed that the length of the lunch break was rather short.
- 3.3 Relations amongst pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. In and out of the classroom, pupils relate well to each other and to the adults around them, in a relaxed but appropriate manner. The prefect system is respected and valued by all pupils. The dining room arrangement of mixed age seating works well, and this, together with the buddy system, promotes positive links between pupils from different years. Pupils with LDD value the extra support they receive.
- 3.4 Measures to promote good discipline and behaviour, including procedures to guard against harassment and bullying, are effective. A variety of rewards supports the school's approach to pupils' welfare, including house points and 'top dog' awards. The pupils strongly support this system and are very keen to earn points for their house. Pupils are confident of the school's response should an isolated incident of poor behaviour take place and they know the steps they should take to resolve any difficulty.
- 3.5 Arrangements for child protection are very good and all necessary checks are made. The headmaster is the nominated child protection officer and all staff have regular and effective training. Pupils identify a wide range of adults to whom they can turn, should a need arise. The medical staff provide an excellent service for pupils, and additional staff are trained in the administration of first aid. Medical records are meticulous and prescribed medication is administered in accordance with the detailed policy.
- 3.6 Appropriate measures have been taken to deal with risk from fire and other hazards, although some updating of assessments is needed. Fire drills are undertaken regularly and are correctly recorded, and the health and safety policy is comprehensive and effective. All minibus drivers have been suitably trained.

3.7 The catering arrangements are good, with meals being nutritious, plentiful and well balanced, although some pupils would like to have more choice. All pupils have lunch at school and it is a pleasant social occasion where they learn the good manners that accompany social eating. Pupils benefit from the exercise provided by the full programme of physical education and many academic subjects incorporate aspects of healthy eating into their schemes. They practised Spanish vocabulary in a Year 6 lesson when sorting foods into those which were good for them and those which were less healthy.

3.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community

3.9 The school has established the positive partnership it seeks with its parents and with the wider community. In their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents expressed overwhelming approval for the breadth of the curriculum and the quality of the teaching and pastoral care. A small number of parents felt that insufficient support was given to pupils with LDD, but the inspection team considered it to be effective. Parents praised the professional, warm and nurturing atmosphere, the accessibility of teachers and the excellent buddy system. They recognised the strength of the school's anti-bullying policy and how it operates in practice, and were delighted that their children enjoyed attending school.

3.10 Parents have many opportunities to be involved in school life. The parents' association is especially active, and effective, in raising funds and organising a range of events. Recent initiatives have included a bonfire and fireworks night, a Christmas fair and a Summer ball, all of which were well supported. Parents are kept well informed through the association's notice board in the car park and useful liaison with the parent form representatives occurs at regular coffee mornings. In conjunction with the English department, parents act as reading partners with pupils from Year 3 each week; this provides a useful opportunity for parental involvement as well as assisting the development of reading. The Old Moles society was formed in 2005, and encourages former pupils to maintain their links with the school.

3.11 A minority of parents felt they would welcome more information from the school, and opportunities to discuss their children's progress at different times of the year. However, the inspection team considered that parents are provided with extensive information about the school, and that arrangements for consultations, both formal and informal, are suitable. All letters and publications are posted on the school website and a regular publication, 'Beyond the Car Park', highlights views and pastoral matters. Diary planners are not only used for recording homework but as a useful means of communication between home and school. Pupils in receipt of extra support for their learning have a special homework file to support effective communication. Reports to parents include details of the topics covered and give helpful guidance for making further progress.

3.12 The substantial majority of parents who returned the questionnaire felt that their concerns were handled quickly and well. In discussion they recognised that teachers responded promptly to any requests and were always ready to talk to them about their children. The school's complaints procedure clearly sets out steps to be followed for those wanting to register a complaint, although no formal complaints have been received in the last two years.

3.13 The school promotes strong links with the wider community. Charities are supported at local, national and international levels. Recent donations have been made to the local Air Ambulance and 'Jeans for Genes', and pupils in Year 8 have formed companies in their DT lessons and are designing and making products to sell for charity. The school has developed close links with others at home and abroad, thus widening pupils' experience of the local and

wider community. Locally, a joint debating society with a nearby school has been organised and Moulsford has shared resources, expertise and equipment with a primary school. The village cricket team uses the school's cricket nets and the parish newsletter is printed by the school. The choir performs to residents of a residential care home. Numerous sporting links have been forged with other schools and organisations; these include a national fencing squad who recently held a competition in the sports hall. These activities ensure that pupils, and the school as a whole, have good opportunities to benefit the local community.

- 3.14 Outings and residential trips are regularly organised to places of interest, for example to HMS Belfast and The Globe Theatre in London, and many overseas trips are arranged. This has a further beneficial impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world and aids their appreciation of other cultures.
- 3.15 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

The Quality of Boarding Education

- 3.16 Despite having relatively few boarders, boarding remains an important and integral aspect of the school and it provides a useful and worthwhile experience, especially for those seeking to transfer to senior boarding schools. Although the number of boarders was small at the time of the inspection, during the Summer term many additional pupils choose to board. The care and opportunities given to the pupils reflect the school aims of developing the whole person and providing an environment where each pupil is treated and respected as an individual. A detailed handbook is available for parents; this outlines all aspects of boarding. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated that they were happy with the provision and feel that the pupils are well cared for.
- 3.17 Relationships within the boarding environment are excellent, being both positive and supportive. Pupils enjoy the whole boarding experience. The atmosphere is relaxed but pupils are respectful and appreciative of the level of care provided by the staff. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility. Sanctions are clearly defined and fairly administered. An atmosphere of mutual trust and respect exists.
- 3.18 Boarders greatly appreciate the good range of activities offered in the evenings. The sports hall is an excellent facility and the majority of the pupils enjoy the well-staffed programme of sports held there. During their free time pupils welcome the opportunity to visit the ICT suite, listen to music, play pool or table tennis, or generally relax. The Summer months afford numerous outdoor activities, including swimming.
- 3.19 Overall the quality of accommodation is satisfactory. The rooms are light, clean and warm but some dormitories are rather compact and there is little provision for storage of personal items. The school is aware of the need for some refurbishment. Systems for laundry and medical care are effective and pupils enjoy a good range of modern resources in their common room. Boarders are complimentary about the food, and the catering department ensures a balanced, healthy diet is provided.

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 The governing body is well structured, exceptionally well led and includes a wide range of expertise. All governors play a full part in the life of the school, and teachers and support staff recognise their dedication and effectiveness. Meetings, both of the full board once a term, and of additional finance committee sessions, are well documented. The recommendation at the time of the last inspection, for governors to approve the definition of all roles within the school, has been fully met. Governance has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory.
- 4.2 Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are kept well informed through their professional organisation and by regular updates from the bursar, who acts as clerk to the governors. In recent years, planning has focussed particularly on new developments, with the successful completion of an ambitious programme of improved sports and drama facilities at the end of 2007. However, governors have continued to give high priority to teaching and learning, with presentations by senior staff ensuring that they keep abreast of educational initiatives.
- 4.3 Through their close involvement with staff and their regular attendance at school events, governors gain very good insight into the working of the school. They are supportive and constantly striving to improve, even further, the education offered at Moulsford. The harmonious relationships and mutual respect evident between staff and governors are most beneficial.
- 4.4 Governors recognise the duties they have to ensure the welfare and health and safety of pupils and have sought external expertise in assessing risks. However, some of these assessments now need to be updated. A nominated governor attends meetings of the health and safety committee, ensuring continued oversight of pupils' care. All necessary measures have been taken in respect of child protection.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.5 The school is very well led. Recommendations in the previous inspection report have been addressed and the leadership and management of the school are stronger than at that time. The headmaster and senior management team work hard to ensure that the pupils achieve high standards and experience the exciting and varied programme which the school aims to offer. The pupils appreciate that the headmaster knows everyone and they feel that he is approachable and fair.
- 4.6 Development planning has been much improved. The recent emphasis of the school development plan has been on additional and enhanced facilities, but due attention has also been paid to all aspects of the education offered at Moulsford. The restructuring of the senior management team, to include an additional deputy head with responsibility for pupils' pastoral care, has proved to be most beneficial.
- 4.7 Appropriate policies and procedures have been drawn up and helpful monitoring of these, and of teaching, has been established. The school recognises in its self-evaluation that this system of monitoring is not yet sufficiently well developed to allow good practice to be shared effectively in all subject departments. A well-structured programme of appraisals has been implemented.

- 4.8 Moulsford is generously staffed with well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers who bring a sense of energy to the school. They value the strong support they receive from technicians, and from teaching assistants. However, the management of the teaching assistants does not always ensure that best use is made of their time. Although the school takes part in the scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers, no such teachers are on the staff at present. Useful whole-school training has been organised in areas such as child protection and the use of interactive whiteboards, and staff regularly attend a variety of courses, which increase their knowledge and motivation.
- 4.9 The school is very well served by its non-teaching staff, who all take pride in their work and in being part of the community. Pupils and staff value the quality of the catering, and cleaning, grounds and maintenance teams are assiduous in their care of the school environment. Sports fields are kept in very good condition, even in inclement weather. The school matrons play an important role in the pastoral care and welfare of the pupils, who find them responsive and kind.
- 4.10 The school is now very well resourced, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The new facilities for sport and drama are outstanding. The learning resource centre provides valuable opportunities for research, the library is a light and airy room with a scenic view over the Thames, and all teaching accommodation is suitable and in excellent decorative order. Financial planning by the bursarial staff, with emphasis on strong support for teaching and learning, is effective.
- 4.11 The school runs most efficiently and quick communication at all levels is the norm. The friendliness and warmth of the office staff ensure that parents and pupils can be sure of a sympathetic hearing for any difficulties and know that they will be resolved in a capable manner.
- 4.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.13 The school participates in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers and meets its requirements.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The school provides a good all-round education and successfully meets its aims. The curriculum is wide and well balanced in most areas, although drama and science are allocated limited time in some years and the programme for PSHE is under-developed. The school day is very full and pupils and staff have a particularly short break at lunch time. Pupils are provided with the excitement and impetus which enable them to achieve high standards in all aspects of their work and play. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Relationships at all levels are excellent. The high quality of teaching is a strength of the school. The school collects appropriate assessment data but it is not yet used to best advantage, with insufficient planning in some lessons which does not fully address the needs of both high achievers and those requiring further reinforcement. The pastoral care of the pupils is outstanding and the school is successful in ensuring the welfare, health and safety of its pupils, although some risk assessments need updating. Good links have been forged with parents and with the wider community. Boarding remains an important and integral part of the school, providing a worthwhile experience for all, especially those seeking to transfer to senior boarding schools. The school benefits from particularly good governance. Moulsford Preparatory School is very well led, the senior management team is cohesive and effective, and management throughout the school is strong.
- 5.2 The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in 2002. The additional games fields and outstanding quality of the new facilities have had a major impact on the life of the school. Governors have worked closely with the senior management team to draw up and implement the school development plans and the roles and responsibilities of the school's senior managers and heads of department have been clearly defined. Monitoring of the work of the school has improved and the balance of the curriculum has been reviewed so that nearly all subjects are allocated sufficient time. A continuous curriculum from Reception to Year 8 has been established. Effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' work have been developed and further use of assessment data is planned. Planning and resources in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 have been transformed, and specialist staff from Years 3 to 8 liaise closely with those in Reception to Year 2.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 In this school, strengths far outweigh the few weaknesses, but in order to improve further it should consider the following:
1. review the shape of the school day, in particular the length of lunch time;
 2. ensure that reinforcement and extension activities are built into the planning for all lessons to support the highest achieving pupils.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from the 21st to 24th January 2008. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding accommodation and medical facilities. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by an Ofsted inspector over three days.

List of Inspectors

Mrs Elisabeth Mimpriss	Reporting Inspector
Mr Edwin Brown	Head, IAPS school
Mr Keith Crombie	Head, IAPS school
Mrs Andrea Florey	Head of Department, IAPS school
Mr Martin Watson	Head, HMC and SHMIS school