



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**MOON HALL SCHOOL
STANDARD INSPECTION**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

Moon Hall School

Full Name of School	Moon Hall School		
DfE Number	936/6551		
Registered Charity Number	803481		
Address	Moon Hall School Pasturewood Road Holmbury St Mary Dorking Surrey RH5 6LQ		
Telephone Number	01306 731464		
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Email Address	enquiries@moonhall.surrey.sch.uk		
Head Teacher	Mrs P M Loré		
Chairman of Governors	Mr D Baker		
Age Range	7 to 13		
Total Number of Pupils	64		
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (49 boys; 15 girls)		
Numbers by Age	0-2 (EYFS):	0	5-11: 48
	3-5 (EYFS):	0	11-18: 16
Number of Day Pupils	Total:	58	Capacity for flexi-boarding: 21
Number of Boarders	Total:	6	
	Full:	0	Weekly: 6
Inspection dates	5 Oct 2010 to 6 Oct 2010		
	1 Nov 2010 to 3 Nov 2010		

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous inspection was carried out by Ofsted in May 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

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

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Moon Hall School is a specialist school for dyslexic pupils, situated in a rural location in Surrey approximately eight miles from Dorking. The school was established in 1985 in the private home of the founder. The school moved to its present premises in the grounds of Belmont School, when the pupil numbers had reached twelve. Moon Hall School continues to have close association with Belmont School, sharing the provision of some facilities along with non-academic services and mutual governorships. Six Moon Hall pupils have weekly boarding places at Belmont.
- 1.2 At the time of the inspection there were 64 pupils on roll, of whom 49 were boys and 15 were girls. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds; some with a family history of independent education and others from the maintained sector. All are of white European heritage. A majority of pupils transfer to other senior independent schools, especially where these schools have units or learning centres that provide for the needs of dyslexic pupils.
- 1.3 The school provides for pupils with a wide ability profile and who are dyslexic; their wider educational achievement has been compromised by the presence of this condition. There are four full-time classes in the school and two part-time groups; the latter comprise former Moon Hall pupils who attend the school for English tuition but who receive the remainder of their education at Belmont School. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs. Where any pupil meets the school's criteria, a bursary may be offered. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- 1.4 Moon Hall School aims to enable pupils to attain literacy and numeracy skills commensurate with their ability and which will ultimately enable them to achieve their academic potential throughout the wider curriculum.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

School	NC name
Alpha P	Years 3/4
Delta M	Years 4/5
Delta W	Years 5/6
6MHS	Year 6
Part-time	Years 7/8

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Moon Hall School comprehensively meets its aims in enabling pupils with dyslexia to successfully attain skills in literacy and numeracy. In so doing, it provides an outstanding educational experience for its pupils within a concerned and caring ethos. Pupils achieve well and make excellent and rapid progress in their learning. This is because of a curriculum that is focused on their essential need for skills in literacy and enables them to consolidate these skills in other subjects. Pupils' achievements are nurtured by teaching that is of a high order. Teachers constantly challenge pupils to accomplish more and are able to provide one-to-one support. The consistent use of a reading and spelling programme that also addresses phonological difficulties, and in which teachers have received extensive training, ensures that pupils learn effectively. Individual attention from teachers and support staff, along with supportive provision from speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, provides a comprehensive structure that enhances pupils' all-round academic achievement. These achievements are improved by pupils' outstanding attitudes to their work; their behaviour is of equal quality.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school fully achieves its aim to nurture pupils' confidence and particularly their self-esteem. The outcome of this is that most pupils successfully move to the school of their choice. An outstanding feature of the pupils' attitudes is the tolerance and respect they have for each other. Coming, as many do, from other settings where their dyslexia may have been a focus of negative attention, the pupils are wholeheartedly supportive of each other, respecting one another's backgrounds and beliefs. Their pastoral care and well-being are effectively supported by rigorous health and safety procedures. Pupils say they enjoy being at the school. They particularly enjoy the educational visits that support their learning along with the opportunities to take part in sport and other activities.
- 2.3 The governing body oversees the work of the school and ensures that its aims are fulfilled. Through the three sub-committees of curriculum, health and safety, and bursary they ensure their responsibility for good educational standards. The guidance they provide is thoroughly supportive of the work of the school and its aims. The high quality of leadership has ensured that the school has responded fully to the requirements of the last report and has also continued to promote best practice in teaching and learning. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive and these indicated that they are very happy with the range and quality of the school's work. Parents are especially appreciative of the variety of activities the school offers and the ways in which it encourages the personal development of their children. All parents are impressed with the standard of behaviour and the ways in which the school responds to their concerns.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Enable pupils to have use of individual laptops in order to support the further development of their literacy skills.
2. Consider the reconstitution of the school council so as to provide a means for pupils to express their views and become more involved in decision making processes.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The quality of pupils' achievements is outstanding. On their admission to the school pupils frequently have poor skills in literacy and this has compromised their wider learning and achievement. The outcomes are fully in line with the school's aims to enable pupils to attain literacy and numeracy skills that they then use to maximise their educational potential. From low baselines, on entry to the school, pupils make excellent progress over time. Most pupils are entered for the national tests at the end of Year 6. The latest results show that all pupils attained at least level three in their reading, with the majority attaining level four. One in five pupils attained level five. In numeracy most pupils attained level four, a figure that represents significant improvement on previous performance. For a majority of pupils their levels of attainment have improved significantly during their time in the school.
- 3.2 A course accredited by the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art provides structure and opportunity for pupils to develop their public speaking confidence. This also helps pupils to assemble their ideas and to present cogent and cohesive arguments. Some pupils have additional difficulties with speech and language or co-ordination. The work undertaken by the speech and language therapist and by the occupational therapist provides valuable assistance to the wider progress the pupils make.
- 3.3 To support pupils' developing literacy skills the school also provides lessons in touch typing that lead to nationally recognised accreditation. All pupils who have taken this examination have been successful, gaining at least a distinction and achieving a minimum of fifteen words per minute. The school recognises that pupils lack access to more personal laptop computers to enable them to use these skills alongside their developing skills of literacy. Pupils effectively use their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. The confidence that pupils also gain results in outstanding attitudes to work undertaken in these other subjects. Their knowledge, skills and understanding are developed successfully so that by the time they leave the school they are prepared well to meet the challenges of their next phase of learning.
- 3.4 Pupils have good skills in numeracy and in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). In ICT lessons pupils are competent users of the technology, and in other lessons their effective use of interactive whiteboards enables them to consolidate and develop their skills in literacy. Discussion with pupils shows them to be very articulate and confidently able to express ideas and concepts. In numeracy, for example, pupils fully understand the relative proportion of different fractions and can place these in a correct sequence. Pupils appreciate the effort of staff who teach not only the content of each subject but provide sound and consistent meta-cognitive techniques that they can use to work out responses in different tasks.
- 3.5 The composition of the curriculum is appropriate, with a suitable emphasis on the acquisition of literacy skills. All other subjects and areas of learning, including ICT, are adequately covered and these provide many opportunities for pupils to rehearse and consolidate their developing skills. For example, in a drama lesson pupils used the alliteration in a poem as a stimulus for their performance and in a science lesson

they plotted the distribution of plants in the school garden using the initial letter of the plant's name.

- 3.6 Pupils' outstanding achievement is enhanced by their excellent attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary, something that many parents commented upon in their questionnaires. The caring ethos of the school results in extremely good relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves. The effort that pupils put into their studies shows them to be enthusiastic learners, well motivated and determined. A common response from pupils was that they like being at the school because everyone is positive and keen to help.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.7 The school provides a curriculum that is designed to address the specific needs of its pupils. The school retains an appropriate emphasis on literacy while at the same time providing sufficiently broad experiences in other areas of learning. A programme of personal, social and health education is provided along with mathematics, science, ICT, religious studies, design technology, art, games, drama and music. The timetable is structured effectively to enable pupils to receive a good balance of opportunity in all subjects.
- 3.8 The planning of the curriculum is outstanding because it enables all pupils to have the opportunity to make individual progress while at the same time allowing the wider progression in learning. All subjects are supported by appropriate long-, medium- and short-term plans that fully support and underpin the learning achieved in lessons. These plans, especially those for lessons, address the specific needs of the pupils and allied to high quality one-to-one attention, the outcomes are excellent. Individual education plans are produced at regular intervals and their contents are shared with parents, who then become active partners in their children's learning by supporting activities, such as reading at home.
- 3.9 As part of its specialist provision, the school also provides access to speech and language therapy as well as occupational therapy. This provision makes a valuable contribution to pupils' wider academic development.
- 3.10 The school benefits mutually from its close association with Belmont School. This enables Moon Hall to offer many after-school clubs in a wide range of activities, as well as extra-curricular activities for those older pupils based at Belmont School. In sport, Moon Hall pupils are also selected to play in school teams alongside their peers at Belmont School. In music, they join with pupils at Belmont School and sing in the choir, providing concerts within the local area.
- 3.11 Full-time pupils at Moon Hall are also provided with many extra-curricular activities by the school; among these is included the role of 'Guardians of Leith Hill' (a National Trust area close to the school). Through their association with the National Trust the pupils are producing a guide for the public that provides information about a bluebell trail. This project incorporates a wide range of the curriculum but especially skills in ICT and art. Pupils mentioned that they have enjoyed the many educational visits, such as those to Parliament and Portsmouth Dockyard. Older pupils were particularly rapturous in recalling their memories of these visits. Pupils value the opportunities that this fieldwork provides. Many recall that the visits to London museums bring their learning vividly to life.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.12 The teaching is effective and challenging, never less than good, and at times outstanding. In this respect, the teachers support and fulfil the aims of the school. Much of the initial literacy work involves the use of the reading and phonological skills programme in which all staff have had extensive training. The consistent manner in which this programme is implemented and transmitted enables pupils to make good progress in all areas of their learning. Their progress emanates from the teaching of skills and techniques that allow the pupils to tackle unfamiliar work, and gives them the confidence to challenge themselves and to be able to work independently.
- 3.13 An excellent staff to pupil ratio allows for generous and individual attention. Small class groups enable teachers to fully understand and respond to the individual needs of pupils; they are able to adjust their interactions with pupils accordingly. A significant strength of the teaching is the manner in which teachers and support staff use all the answers provided by pupils to further develop the pupils' understanding and knowledge.
- 3.14 Teaching and support staff work as a cohesive unit. The staff's knowledge and professional expertise in understanding the difficulties experienced by dyslexic pupils enable the pupils to overcome barriers to learning. This empathy is a strong feature of lessons though does not affect levels of challenge. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and pupils respond appropriately.
- 3.15 Assessment is thorough. It occurs at all levels of the school's work, from immediate feedback to pupils in lessons, and helpful and supportive comments on homework, to end-of-module tests and the use of a commercial computer program that provides a clear picture of pupils' wider progress and translates into National Curriculum levels. Standardised assessment scores enable comparisons in performance to be drawn against national criteria. The use of such data provides a comprehensive basis for the monitoring of pupils' progress. The greatest strength of the assessment practice is that teachers use the outcomes to plan individual responses to their pupils' learning. Strengths and areas for improvement are identified and used well to plan the next stages of learning.
- 3.16 All classrooms are well resourced. All have interactive whiteboards that are skilfully used to increase the involvement of pupils in their learning. Staff are also very skilled at varying the tasks that pupils undertake whilst retaining an emphasis on what pupils need to learn. The school provides an environment that is rich in literature, where pupils are exposed to a wide range of reading opportunities. The impact of this was fully endorsed by a parent who commented that her son, who had not been a reader on his admission to the school, now brings books home to read for pleasure.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The quality of pupils' personal development is excellent. Parents are grateful to the school for what it does on behalf of their children. These outcomes are promoted by the high quality care shown by the staff towards their pupils. Pupils develop outstanding personal qualities that reflect the aims of the school. Most significant is the increase in confidence and self-esteem that pupils gain. They are given roles of responsibility commensurate with their maturity. Each class elects a form captain who works under the direction of the class teacher in the execution of tasks to support the class.
- 4.2 Pupils have empathy towards others. They are understanding and respectful of others' views and responsive to their feelings. In a religious studies lesson, pupils considered the plight of those throughout the world who had contracted leprosy. Their art work indicates their appreciation of a spiritual dimension. The pupils' empathy is derived from the good role models provided by staff. Nine out of ten pupils indicated that they believe staff care for them as individuals.
- 4.3 The school's discipline policy is implemented in an understated manner because all pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong. Pupils' behaviour is generally exemplary. Where these standards may occasionally lapse they are the result, especially in younger pupils, of responding in similar ways to those they might have previously used in other schools. These responses are attributable to frustrations resulting from their dyslexia. Older pupils have embraced the ethos of the school, which enables them to develop the positive side to their characters.
- 4.4 Pupils have good social skills and put these to good use in a variety of settings. They are courteous to visitors and ready to assist where they can. When asked, they readily accept tasks they are given. The school has previously had a school council through which pupils could express views and feel part of the decision making process. A significant number of pupils, through the pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussion, indicated they would like to see the council re-formed. The inspection team agree. Through the programme for personal, social and health education pupils learn about the community in which they live, as well as local and wider civic institutions. Pupils are active in their charity fund-raising initiatives.
- 4.5 Pupils gain an understanding of the diverse cultural nature of British society through their religious studies lessons, along with contributions in geography and art. Their own cultural awareness comes from field trips to London museums that are allied to work they do in the classroom, along with visits, for example to the Victorian School House and to a Shakespeare workshop for children.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.6 The school provides considerate and meticulous pastoral care for its pupils and this contributes to fulfilling its aim of being a caring community. The pastoral structure of the school, along with the small overall number of pupils, enables any necessary support to be provided to pupils with immediate effect. Form teachers know their pupils extremely well and quickly recognise when any is having difficulty. The pastoral system effectively supports the personal, emotional and academic development of pupils. The development of pupils' self-confidence is central to the support provided by all staff. Some pupils have come to the school, from previously negative experiences of education, with low levels of self-confidence. Over time, the staff build the pupils' self-esteem through the manner of their teaching and in their everyday and informal dealings with pupils. By the time they leave the school, pupils are prepared well to face confidently most of the challenges and opportunities they meet.
- 4.7 The very good relationships between pupils and staff are the bedrock on which the ethos of the school is founded. Such relationships benefit the pupils because the philosophy and atmosphere of the school are based on mutual respect. Bullying is not an issue that pupils recognise and discussion with them confirms they make firm friends at the school. They also indicate that, should they wish, there are adults available at all times to whom they can turn.
- 4.8 Arrangements for safeguarding are robust, and checks on staff and recruitment procedures are rigorously implemented. All staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding matters, and the advice they additionally receive from the school, in order to discharge their duty, is exemplary. The school also has a full complement of other policies to ensure that pupils are safe in and around the site. Fire safety procedures are meticulous, and practices such as the weekly checks on the building and testing of electrical appliances are painstakingly carried out. The daily attendance registers and the admission register are completed appropriately. The school also discharges its duties in fulfilment of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.
- 4.9 Pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay healthy. They take part in vigorous exercise and are aware of the need for a nutritious diet. Water is freely available and they use this facility to keep themselves refreshed and alert. The provision for pupils who may become ill during the course of the school day is good.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governors are fully aware of the work of the school and ensure that it keeps a focus on the fulfilment of its aims. Although their involvement appears as light touch this belies the effectiveness and efficiency of the ways in which they discharge their duties in support of the aims of the school and the standards that prevail. Governors meet regularly and the chairman retains an active oversight of the school's activity. Governors also ensure that the regulatory requirements are fully met. The work they do secures and supports the work of staff in developing pupils' personal and academic achievements.
- 5.2 Through its sub-committee structure the governing body maintains a firm understanding of all the work of the school. Governors are involved effectively in financial and strategic planning, and maintain an overview of the curriculum provision. The outcomes of this are seen in the good accommodation and best use of material and human resources to meet the needs of the pupils. The governors accept that the provision of additional laptop computers for pupils' individual use would be a realistic target. Governors receive comprehensive and regular reports from the head teacher and make occasional visits to the school in order to ensure that their strategic decisions are implemented. One governor has specific responsibility to ensure the safeguarding of pupils.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.3 The quality of leadership and management is excellent. Throughout the school, management at all levels is effective in maintaining and improving the standards of provision. The senior leadership team has a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and how these can be used to further any developments. The head teacher is responsible for the day-to-day running and management of the school. Her clarity of vision, supported by senior leadership colleagues, benefits the whole school and is exemplified in the outstanding quality of education and personal development of the pupils. Leadership's strategic view is embodied within the school development plan; this has succinctly evaluated the previous work of the school and put in place measures to raise standards further. The team also uses dedicated computer software to monitor the progress made by individuals as well as groups of pupils. This ensures that information about pupils alerts the teachers to any drop in performance.
- 5.4 The senior leadership team is fully supported by able and dedicated staff. The work undertaken by all staff fully supports the aims of the school. The expertise of support staff is a particularly strong feature of the provision. Subject co-ordinators are wholly involved in the development of their areas of learning and are required to produce a development plan in order to secure further improvement in their subject. The head teacher has ensured that all staff are appropriately trained to work with dyslexic pupils and this has underpinned the high quality effort noted in the classrooms. The school is generally well resourced and the buildings well maintained. The school has responded well to a recommendation within the last report that it should increase the range of ICT provision, along with supporting software. Interactive whiteboards are now available throughout the school and their use enhances the quality of learning that pupils achieve.

- 5.5 The centralised record of checks on staff is maintained appropriately and fully completed.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.6 The school maintains full and effective links with parents. The pre-inspection questionnaire responses were overwhelmingly positive. Parents perceive that the structure of teaching is tailored to the needs of every pupil whilst encouraging ambition. The inspection team endorse that view.
- 5.7 Parents feel that they have good channels of communication with the school. The Friends of Moon Hall School group is active and supportive to the school, and is generous in its financial contributions. Since the last inspection the school has improved the quality of the information it provides within pupils' reports. These now include more detailed reference to pupils' progress using the data gained from tests and teachers' assessments. Parents receive three reports each year, with one of these being in more depth than the others. Most notably, the reports include clear indicators of what each pupil needs to do in order to improve further.
- 5.8 Parents have a number of channels through which they can find out about school activities as well as communicate with the school directly. In addition to an informative website, the school provides a newsletter and uses electronic communication with parents. Of those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, all indicated that communication with the school is effective and timely.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chairman of governors, and attended registration sessions. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Mr Tom Fisher-Smith

Mrs Patricia Guy

Reporting Inspector

Head of Learning Needs, GSA school