

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL
(ISC)**

INSPECTION OF

THE MEAD SCHOOL

by the

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

On

14th - 17th May 2007

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

INSPECTION REPORT ON

The Mead School

Full Name of the School	The Mead School
DfES Number	886/6033
Registered Charity Number	N/A
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Headteacher	Mrs Angela Culley
Proprietor	Mrs Angela Culley
Age Range	3 – 11 years
Gender	Mixed
Inspection Dates	14th - 17th May 2007

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 has 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.

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 The Mead School was founded in 1987 by the current headteacher who is also the proprietor. A Limited Company, The Mead School Ltd, has been established recently. The company is in its early stages of development and its directors currently act mainly in an advisory capacity. In the future, it is to act as the proprietor. The school is housed in a Victorian villa in the centre of Tunbridge Wells. A significant amount of adaptation to the building has taken place since the last inspection and currently a large building project is under construction.
- 1.2 The school caters for boys and girls aged three to eleven. A total of 177 pupils attend the school, almost the same number as attended at the time of the last inspection. In the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) there are 40 children: 22 boys and 18 girls. There are 40 pupils, 22 boys and 18 girls, in Years 1 and 2, and 97 pupils, 46 boys and 51 girls, are in Years 3 to 6. Most of the pupils live in urban and rural communities in West Kent and East Sussex and come from a wide variety of family circumstances and backgrounds.
- 1.3 The school seeks to create a happy, secure and enthusiastic atmosphere in which each child can develop both in character and academically so that pupils can face with confidence adolescence and secondary education. At the heart of the school's work is the determination that all pupils should 'feel success'. The Mead is a designated Christian school. To achieve these aims, staff place emphasis on:
 - ensuring pupils are keen to learn and are valued;
 - providing a challenging and supportive learning environment;
 - ensuring that pupils are confident and self-motivated;
 - enabling pupils to learn and think for themselves;
 - ensuring that pupils are well prepared for entry to senior schools of their choice.
- 1.4 Children entering the Foundation Stage are informally assessed in order to ensure that pupils have the potential to thrive in the school's learning environment. Pupils who enter in other year groups are given informal assessments but are not selected by ability.
- 1.5 Standardised tests show that pupils exhibit a wide range of abilities and that their average ability is above that of the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities their results in national tests will be above the national average for all maintained primary schools. Of the 177 pupils, 26 are receiving extra support for their learning difficulties but no pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils have English as an additional language, and those that do are confident in spoken English.

- 1.6 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
Lower Kindergarten	Nursery
Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception
Middle Infants	Year 1
Top Infants	Year 2
J1	Year 3
J2	Year 4
J3	Year 5
J4	Year 6

2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The Educational Experience Provided

- 2.1 Pupils enjoy a broad and interesting range of experiences which are well suited to their ages and aptitudes. The curriculum strongly reflects the school's aim to ensure that all pupils should feel success. The experience provided, an improvement since the last inspection as it is better planned, has a positive impact on the aesthetic, linguistic, mathematical, scientific, creative, technical, human, social and physical development of the pupils. It also enables pupils to reach the academic standards required for them to enter the senior schools of their choice. The development of a scheme of work for pupils' personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) development is needed. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated that they were very pleased with the range of experiences provided for their children.
- 2.2 The curriculum is effectively planned. An improvement since the last inspection is that planning now enables pupils to build more successfully on what they have learnt earlier. Emphasis is placed on pupils' aesthetic and creative development but not at the expense of a secure foundation in English and mathematics. The curriculum is well supported by detailed and thorough schemes of work. PSHE is taught in line with the school's policy and is implicit within other areas of the curriculum. A cup is awarded annually for citizenship. The lack of a scheme of work leads in particular to limited teaching of citizenship. Teachers' specialist expertise in music, French, art, physical education and science is used successfully to the benefit of the pupils.
- 2.3 Teachers pay due attention to the skills particular to each subject but also to the essential skills of speaking and listening, literacy and numeracy. Improvement to the facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) has enabled pupils to make good use of their ICT skills in other subjects. For example, pupils joined the celebrations online for the 400th anniversary of the foundation of Jamestown in the United States of America.
- 2.4 Ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to participate fully in all the activities is at the heart of the school's purpose. The role of the special educational needs co-ordinator has been developed successfully since the last inspection. Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties, both in lessons and on occasion during individual sessions with a specialist teacher. Their progress is monitored regularly. More able pupils are usually suitably challenged but, in the small minority of lessons where the pace of teaching slows, pupils, including the more able, sometimes mark time. The school provides good opportunities for pupils identified as talented, especially in music.
- 2.5 Preparation for the move to senior schools is thorough, especially in the preparation for external examinations. Teachers know their pupils very well and this information is used effectively to help pupils and their parents in choosing their senior schools and meeting the necessary requirements. Pupils in Year 6 were most appreciative of the support they had received.
- 2.6 Lessons are effectively complemented by a programme of extra-curricular activities that are extensive for a school of this size. Pupils speak highly of these activities which are well attended. Despite the inherent limitation posed by the school's site, the range of activities is wide and includes sport, drama, music, dance and yoga. Thoughtful and regular use is made of the local area to enrich the curriculum and to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding. From his knowledge of the area a pupil noticed that a local saint had been missed in a church service. Having pointed this out by letter, the pupil received a gracious reply. Visits to places further afield further extend the pupils' educational experience.

- 2.7 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

Pupils' Learning and Achievements

- 2.8 The school achieves its aim that pupils should experience success in the subjects they learn and in other aspects of the educational provision made for them. Pupils are well grounded in knowledge, skills and understanding, and learn to use them effectively. Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their abilities. In music, pupils attain high standards especially in singing. The results of national tests in Year 6 over the past three years show that standards overall in English, mathematics and science have been well above the national averages for maintained primary schools. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have made good progress as the result of the good teaching they receive and achieve good standards. They attain, and often exceed, the nationally recommended levels for children of that age. The strengths reported in the last inspection have been maintained.
- 2.9 When pupils leave for the senior school of their choice, they have achieved well in all the areas of the education provided by the school. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and the more able pupils achieve well. The number of pupils gaining scholarships to senior schools has been maintained. Pupils with a particular talent are encouraged and are successful, for example in music, drama and in gaining swimming awards. Pupils are successful in a wide range of areas. In sport, the football squad has reached the national final of the Independent Schools Association five-a-side competition and have won a local seven-a-side trophy. Pupils have been successful in art and handwriting competitions.
- 2.10 Pupils' learning skills are well developed. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and work hard in response to the encouraging teaching and interesting lessons. The school's positive ethos encourages pupils always to do their best. Pupils are very articulate. In lessons and discussion, they listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They show confidence in arguing their point, for example in the school council when discussing ideas for a proposed salad bar. Across the school, pupils read fluently for their ages. At times an over-reliance by teachers on the provision of well-constructed worksheets limits pupils' opportunities to write at length and to devise their own ways of recording their work. Nonetheless pupils write fluently for a wide range of purposes and in an appropriate range of styles, from reports of experiments to poetry.
- 2.11 Pupils attain good standards in numeracy. Pupils in Year 2 showed good skills in relation to their age in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In Year 6, pupils worked competently with fractions and decimals. Pupils across the age ranges make effective use of their mathematical skills in other subjects; for example in history, when older pupils compared our decimal currency with that in the 1960s. Other pupils regularly use their mathematical skills in science. Pupils develop competent skills in ICT which they use to good effect, especially in a commercial mathematics package designed for them to work independently and at their own rate.
- 2.12 Pupils usually settle quickly in lessons and activities and concentrate well. Occasionally pupils lose their concentration in a small minority of lessons where the pace of teaching slows. Pupils report that they find lessons interesting and that 'teachers always help when we ask.' Pupils work well on their own and often collaborate very effectively, for example in science, physical education, and when working in the ICT suite. Pupils take great delight in explaining their ideas and thinking for themselves; for example, in Year 2 when pupils discussed their reasons for their choice of books they were reading.
- 2.13 Pupils successfully undertake research both at home and at school. Younger pupils have identified 'things in my house that are magnetic.' In Year 3, research has been undertaken

successfully into the Tudor kings and queens. Although little evidence was seen of pupils taking notes in lessons, their completed work showed that note taking was part of their research.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

- 2.14 Across the school, pupils show good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school's commitment to achieving its aims in relation to these aspects of pupils' personal development is well met: to be confident, respectful of others and self-reliant. The strengths reported in the last inspection have been fully maintained.
- 2.15 Pupils' spiritual development is good. Their use of language embraces the spiritual; for example, in a class of younger pupils, one had noted that the circle in which they were sitting was not complete and was concerned lest 'the love leaked out'. Teachers effectively build pupils' self-esteem through valuing them as individuals. The Christian designation of the school underpins its ethos. In one classroom for example, a poster contributed to by the pupils indicates how the teachings of Jesus are to be incorporated into the working environment of the class. Pupils' self-worth is celebrated regularly through frequent praise in lessons and publicly in assemblies. Visits to places of religious worship enhance pupils' spiritual development, as do assemblies. Pupils respond well to the opportunities made for them to learn about world faiths other than Christianity.
- 2.16 Pupils have a very secure sense of what is right and wrong, not just in terms of obeying rules but also in doing what is right. The school's rules are firmly based on the Christian ethic that pupils must treat others as they themselves would wish to be treated. When talking to inspectors, pupils explained that the rules were fair and were for their benefit. Pupils are courteous to each other, to adults and to visitors. Staff provide pupils with good role models in their relations with pupils and with each other. A clear sense of community and warm relationships are strongly evident throughout the school.
- 2.17 Pupils show well-developed social awareness in terms of accepting responsibility for their behaviour and so contribute to the school's achievement of its aims. Children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to take account of others in their daily routines, by taking turns and sharing responsibilities. Pupils have a strong identity with their 'house' and within it collectively make decisions as to which charities to support and the means by which they will raise money for them. Pupils undertake responsibilities conscientiously. The school council is a very active body and the senior managers listen to its ideas and comments carefully. The new dining area being built is to have a salad bar, partially as the result of the school council. PSHE is integrated into the subjects taught in the curriculum but the knowledge of what it means to be a citizen is not developed consistently. The regular residential visits make a significant contribution to pupils' social awareness and development.
- 2.18 Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities provided for their cultural development. The emphasis placed on the performing arts, such as music, dance and drama leads to all pupils gaining considerable success in these areas; for example when they perform with a local adult choir and when they stage dramatic productions in the local arts centre. Pupils successfully learn about cultures other than their own in lessons such as French and religious education, and through links one house has made with a school in Tibet. They show a good understanding of the way of life in a country very different from their own.
- 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 Strong teaching overall is reflected in pupils' good levels of achievement and their success in gaining places at the senior schools of their choice. Teaching is good across the whole school and a significant proportion of teaching is excellent. In a small minority of lessons the pace slows and pupils do not progress as well as they usually do. Underpinning the quality of the teaching is the good quality of the assessment of pupils' work. The strengths in the teaching reported at the last inspection have been maintained. The support for pupils with learning difficulties has improved.
- 2.21 Teaching is encouraging, and takes place in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between teachers and pupils. A particular strength is the desire of teachers and other staff for their pupils to do well and the way they create an atmosphere of hard work which leads to significant learning. Generally pupils are given useful opportunities to think for themselves and to increase their understanding. The quality of teaching in the school encourages pupils to make the most of their intellectual, physical and creative talents.
- 2.22 Teachers know their pupils well and make good use of the favourable class size. Planning for lessons usually takes due account of pupils' needs and what they have done before. Very good use is made of teachers' specialist subject expertise, for example in French, physical education, and music, and teaching is often of high quality. Also where teaching is very successful, a very good range of activities is provided that cater for pupils' different learning styles and lead to greater opportunities for success. In games and swimming lessons, detailed and thorough planning ensures that all pupils use the time well. At times, highly imaginative lessons lead to pupils becoming engrossed in their work. This happened in a history lesson in Year 6 where pupils were working with everyday objects from the 1950s and 60s so that they could compare their lives with those at that time. In an English lesson in Year 2, the outstanding teaching enabled pupils to imaginatively record information about their favourite authors.
- 2.23 Teachers are hard working and conscientious and have a secure command of the subjects they teach. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Across the school, the pace in most lessons is brisk and effective use is made of time; pupils make good progress as a consequence. In a small minority of lessons the pace is pedestrian and pupils' progress slows. Effective use is made by teachers of the good quality resources provided and pupils' learning benefits. ICT and the library are used to good effect. Teachers hold high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the very good behaviour in the school is regarded by teachers and pupils alike as the norm.
- 2.24 Comprehensive support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties, both in lessons where classroom assistants are deployed to good effect, and through support from a specialist teacher when needed. Where necessary, detailed individual education plans have been written and due account of these is taken by the class teacher. The role of the special educational needs co-ordinator has developed significantly since the last inspection. In most of the teaching, good attention is paid to the needs of pupils that the school has identified as being more able where, again, individual plans are written and followed where needed.
- 2.25 Teachers regularly and thoroughly assess their pupils' work. In the Foundation Stage, teachers frequently make, and record assessments of their children's progress, and they make effective use of the national Foundation Stage Profile. Such practice is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Across the rest of the school a wide range of assessments is used, including the nationally standardised tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 to compare pupils' attainment against national norms. Effective

use is made of this information to plan the curriculum, for example, by the introduction of a commercial computer scheme to enable pupils to improve their individual mathematical understanding. Detailed systems are used to track pupils' progress as they move through the school and this information is used carefully to plan their work. Teachers' marking is thorough and provides pupils with praise and encouragement. In conversations with their pupils about their work, teachers discuss ways in which they can make improvements.

2.26 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 excellent. The care that the staff devote to the well being of their pupils is an outstanding feature of the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Thorough attention is given to the health and safety of pupils. The school is particularly successful in its aim to provide a happy, family atmosphere in which all pupils are valued. One pupil commented that he was proud to be a 'Meadite' and others commented that 'teachers are really kind at The Mead'. Parents very much value this aspect of the school's work. The quality of care provided is supportive of the national Every Child Matters agenda.
- 3.2 The atmosphere in the school is purposeful and caring, with pupils and teachers keen to help one another. At the heart of the very effective pastoral care is the care provided by class teachers, who know their pupils very well. Class teachers are well supported by the headteacher and director of studies. Teachers are also supported by clear and well-organised pastoral arrangements. Staff are familiar with the school's policies and procedures, and ensure that they are implemented successfully. Pupils feel secure, and know that they can rely on teachers to support them and to overcome difficulties when they occur. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils is excellent.
- 3.3 Effective arrangements are implemented to promote good behaviour. These are known and respected by the pupils who regard them as being fair: 'they are to keep us safe' commented pupils in a house meeting. Careful attention is paid to the prevention of bullying and harassment. The anti-bullying policy is clear and implemented very effectively. Pupils readily indicated that they would confide in a teacher should they be experiencing such difficulties, and that any issue would be dealt with seriously and swiftly.
- 3.4 Secure arrangements are made and implemented satisfactorily, to promote and safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. Attendance and admission registers are completed correctly. Prompt checks are made should a pupil be absent without an explanation. Fire protection is thorough. All appliances and evacuation procedures are tested regularly. Fire risk assessments are up to date. First aid is well provided for. Thorough risk assessments are made for educational visits.
- 3.5 Conscientious attention is given to child protection. Procedures are regularly updated. The policy is up to date and staff have received the necessary training. Criminal Records Bureau checks have been made on all adults and are central to the school's recruitment arrangements. The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, has effective oversight of all safety measures and ensures that these are checked regularly and thoroughly. As The Mead School Ltd moves from its transitional arrangements to becoming the proprietor, it will be necessary for the company to ensure that careful oversight of these issues is maintained.
- 3.6 Attention is given to healthy living and is reflected in the 'Healthy School' award gained by the school. Emphasis is placed in science and physical education on the importance of developing healthy lifestyles. Pupils have many opportunities to take exercise and are encouraged to do so. Pupils commented that they had seen improvements in the school meals in respect to healthy eating and they are looking forward to the establishment of a salad bar in the new dining area. Due attention is paid to teaching pupils about the dangers of the misuse of drugs and of smoking.
- 3.7 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

- 3.8 The school has an effective partnership with parents, who are very supportive of its aims and value the useful links they have with The Mead. Strong links have been forged with the local community. The links the school has with parents and the community benefit the pupils.
- 3.9 Parents are particularly appreciative of the teaching, the attitudes and views the school promotes, the extra curricular activities, the standards of behaviour, the range of subjects taught, and the information they receive about their children's progress. This was evident from the parents' response to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspection evidence confirms parents' positive views. A small minority who replied to the questionnaire expressed concerns about support for pupils with learning difficulties. Inspectors found that the support for these pupils was comprehensive.
- 3.10 Useful opportunities are provided for parents to be involved in the life of the school. They have contributed significantly to the library, especially in its organisation. At times parents help in lessons, for example when they assist in a 'habitat hunt' in science lessons. Parents accompany pupils on educational visits, and join their children on the annual ski-trip. The active Friends of the Mead is open to all parents and is supportive of the school through its organisation of social and fundraising events.
- 3.11 Parents are provided with a wide range of helpful information which keeps them well informed. The school has responded well to the results of a questionnaire it sent to parents earlier in the school year, particularly in the area of information for parents which was identified by parents as needing improvement. Regular newsletters, an informative prospectus, and a parental handbook provide a useful insight into school life and encourage parents to feel part of the school. Useful booklets help parents with their involvement in their children's reading. Increasingly, the school's website provides useful information and a means of communication, especially through its bulletin board. The placing of a plasma television screen facing the area where parents wait for their children is a further response by the school to improve communication with parents.
- 3.12 Regular reports are sent to all parents, who acknowledge them as being helpful. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties are kept well informed about the provision being made for their children and are fully involved in any reviews of progress. The commercial computer scheme introduced to support pupils' mathematical development enables parents to access directly details of their children's progress within the scheme.
- 3.13 The small number of parental concerns are handled with due care. A considerable majority of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that the school had handled any concerns well. Parents have access to a recently updated complaints procedure. The headteacher and staff are approachable and accessible, creating an atmosphere in which parents are made to feel welcome.
- 3.14 A good number of useful links have been established with the local community. Regular use is made of the local area, such as The Pantiles, within the curriculum. Frequent use is made of local sporting facilities and the arts centre. The school regularly participates in local sporting events. The choir sings in the nearby church of King Charles The Martyr. Local and national charities are supported by each of the three houses. Links have been established with a school in Tibet. The range and extent of links with the community contribute significantly to pupils' all round personal development.
- 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].

4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Quality of Governance

- 4.1 A company, The Mead School Ltd, has been established since the last inspection. Currently its members act in an advisory capacity. Plans are in hand for it to assume the responsibilities of the proprietor. The pupils at The Mead benefit from a good quality education sustained by outstanding governance from the proprietor, who is also the headteacher.
- 4.2 The proprietor takes her responsibilities very seriously and has very effective oversight of the school. She is fully involved in all aspects of the development of the school, ensuring suitable provision of staff and resources. She sets a clear direction for the school's educational development as well as making the best of the school's limited site. The proprietor, with assistance from The Mead School Ltd, prudently manages the financial planning, as can be seen in the current development of the building to provide better facilities for the pupils.

The Quality of Leadership and Management

- 4.3 Leadership and management are strong. Effective leadership ensures that the school provides its pupils with an education based firmly on the school's values and its specific aim to be a school where pupils feel success. The strengths in the leadership and management reported on previously have been maintained. The success of the leadership and management is seen in the quality of pupils' personal development, the curriculum, the high quality pastoral care, and in the standards the pupils achieve.
- 4.4 Leadership and management from the top are outstanding. They are characterised by careful attention to detail, together with the desire and determination to provide the pupils with as good an education as possible. The headteacher is very actively involved with teachers and pupils in the management of the school on a daily basis. The director of studies ably supports the headteacher and together they form a strong management team. Pupils are seen as individuals and the school is led and managed with this as the focus.
- 4.5 A strong feature of the school is the opportunities provided for all staff to be involved in leadership and management through their role as subject co-ordinators. The co-ordination of their subjects is generally effective. They are very enthusiastic and are keen to ensure that pupils do as well as they can. Regular reviews are undertaken by them of the provision being made and standards achieved. Although teachers share their expertise with each other, insufficient attention is paid to the evaluation of the quality of teaching.
- 4.6 The information gained from such reviews is then used by the co-ordinators to draw up detailed plans for the development of each subject. The headteacher takes due account of these plans when the plan for the development of the school as a whole is drawn up. The school development plan is clearly laid out with targets, action plans, time scales and arrangements for evaluation. Although success criteria for defining improvement are indicated, their usefulness is reduced by them being often set in terms of completed action rather than in terms of gains in pupils' learning or personal development.
- 4.7 The successful management is reflected in the good teamwork shown by all the staff. Effective staff development underpins the educational experiences provided and the care provided for pupils. Teacher appraisal is being used well to support individuals and also to

support school developments. Helpful arrangements are in place for the induction of staff new to the school and for newly qualified teachers.

- 4.8 The prudent management of finances by the headteacher and bursar ensures that resources are of good quality and are sufficient for the curriculum that has been planned. Much has been done to improve the accommodation since the last inspection. For example, the headteacher's accommodation has been incorporated into the school and a major building project is underway to provide additional teaching space, a new dining area and to locate the library in the main part of the school. Colourful and carefully constructed displays of pupils' completed work add considerably to the learning environment. The school is well maintained and is in a good state of decoration. The quality of cleanliness is of a high standard. Administration is characterised by considerable attention to detail. Consequently, the school runs smoothly.
- 4.9 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].
- 4.10 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 is very effective in meeting its aim to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to feel success within a secure family ethos. Pastoral care is excellent and good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are provided with a broad curriculum and an extensive range of educational activities. The effectiveness of an aspect of PSHE, citizenship, is hindered by the lack of a scheme of work. Pupils speak highly of their school. Levels of achievement are good. Pupils are particularly successful in the creative aspects of the curriculum, especially in music. Teaching is good. At times an over-reliance on well-constructed worksheets limits opportunities for pupils' own writing. Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties. The headteacher, who is also the proprietor, provides excellent governance and outstanding leadership and management. The monitoring of provision and her active interest in all that takes place ensures that she is very well informed in her role as proprietor. In turn she is ably supported by the director of studies. The enthusiastic subject co-ordinators are keen to ensure that pupils succeed but their evaluation of the quality of teaching is underdeveloped. They are actively involved in drawing up plans which feed into the whole school development plan.
- 5.2 Since the last inspection, good progress has been made. The recording of children's progress in the Foundation Stage has improved considerably. The curriculum is much better organised so that pupils build successfully on what they have learnt earlier. The role of the special educational needs co-ordinator has been much strengthened. The development of the ICT suite and teachers' competency in the use of ICT have enabled pupils to make much more use of ICT in their learning.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

Next Steps

- 5.4 In order to build on the improvement since the last inspection and on the successful education it currently provides, the school should:
1. draw up a scheme of work in PSHE;
 2. develop the evaluation of the quality of teaching by subject co-ordinators;
 3. ensure an effective balance between the use of worksheets and providing more opportunities for pupils to choose their own ways of recording their work.
- 5.5 No action in respect of regulatory requirements is required.

6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 14th - 17th May 2007. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff, with directors of The Mead School Ltd and with parents, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 A bursar from another school joined the reporting inspector on the preliminary visit as part of the Independent Schools' Bursars Association (ISBA) scheme, spending the day with the bursar's department. The principal findings have been included in the relevant sections of this report.

List of Inspectors

Mr Rod Sharman	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Ann Gilchrist	Deputy Head and Head of Pre-prep, IAPS school
Mrs Janice Greenland	Principal, ISA school
Mr Bryan Kane	Director of Studies, IAPS school