

Beis Yaakov Primary School

Inspection report

LEA	Barnet
Inspection dates	18 & 22 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Rev Michael Binstock
Team inspector	Rabbi Malcolm Lebrecht

This inspection was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of School	Primary	School address	373 Edgware Rd
School category	Voluntary Aided		London NW9 6NQ
Age range of pupils	3 - 11	3 - 11	
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	020 8905 9590
Number on roll	549	Fax number	020 8200 7130
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Rabson
Date of previous inspection	November 2002	Headteacher	Mrs H Cohen

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Introduction

Description of the school

Beis Yaakov Primary School is a larger than average two-form entry voluntary aided school for strictly orthodox Jewish girls aged three to eleven. The school was founded in 1972 and has been on its present site in Colindale, North West London for fifteen years. The school's mission is to serve the orthodox Jewish community by offering a broad, balanced and inclusive education, rooted in an ethos of Torah values. 50% of the school curriculum is devoted to Jewish Studies.

The school roll has increased considerably since the previous inspection in November 2002. There are currently 459 pupils on roll including 50 in the Nursery. Most pupils live in the Golders Green, Hendon and Edgware areas within the London Borough of Barnet. At the end of Key Stage 2, the overwhelming majority of pupils graduate to Beis Yaakov Grammar School, Menorah High School for Girls and Tiferes.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of its provision for Jewish education

The *Limmudei Kodesh* Department of Beis Yaakov Primary school is outstanding. The school admirably achieves its mission of serving the orthodox Jewish community by offering a broad, balanced and inclusive education, rooted in an ethos of Torah values. It has successfully built on its strengths and addressed its weaknesses as identified in the previous inspection report. The management structure that drives the *Limmudei Kodesh* Department is outstanding and provides strong professional leadership so that teachers feel well supported and are given every help and encouragement to improve. The Governing Body is highly dedicated and supportive and there is a very high degree of parental satisfaction with the school. A significant feature that contributes to the school's success is the unity that exists between the *Limmudei Kodesh* and *Limmudei Chol* staff. They work together to create a whole school community that reinforces its religious ethos.

Teaching and learning are very good overall and teachers relate to pupils in a most positive way. Teachers have secure Jewish subject knowledge and are excellent role models. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding and enables pupils of all levels of ability to achieve well. The *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum is outstanding and has improved since the previous inspection.

In discussions with pupils, very positive views were expressed that indicate they enjoy their lessons and feel secure in the school. They appreciate the high level of care, guidance and support that is available to them.

Another significant strength is the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Behaviour is very good and admirably reflects the Jewish values and ethos of the school.

The school's Self Evaluation Form indicates that the school knows itself well and has the determination and capacity to continue to improve its provision for Jewish education.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

The inspectors found no significant weakness and they agree with the school's view regarding those areas identified for further development. They are:

- continuing professional development of staff
- further development of the *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum

Achievement and standards

The standards achieved by pupils including those of above and below average ability are mostly good and often outstanding, and in line with the school's high expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported and this enables them to achieve their full potential. This was confirmed by observation of lessons throughout the school, a scrutiny of pupils' written work and the testing of a representative sample of pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6.

Ability to read and write Hebrew is considered fundamental to the ethos of the school and high standards are achieved in these skills due to the constant reinforcement in all classes across the school.

Most pupils meet challenging targets. This was particularly evident in the textual studies of *Chumash and Rashi* plus the study of *Nach* in Key Stage 2. Many examples were observed of pupils giving well considered answers to challenging questions, with good recall of previously learned knowledge. Great emphasis is placed on *dikduk* (grammar) which contributes greatly to the pupils' translation and comprehension skills.

The previous inspection report noted that standards achieved in *Yedioh Kelolis* (General Jewish Knowledge) were not as high as those in other subjects. This weakness has now been addressed with the introduction of a newly developed *Yedioh Kelolis* curriculum. Good standards are now achieved in this subject.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and a major strength of the school. There is full compliance with statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Inspectors observed four davening sessions and these were very impressive both in terms of the appropriate length and content for the year group, and the exemplary manner in which pupils conducted themselves. In all groups, pupils were observed davening with deep *kavonah*.

Evidence gained during lesson observation and from discussions with pupils confirms that they have very positive attitudes towards the school. They are happy to be at the school and they enjoy their *Limmudei Kodesh* lessons. They participate in their lessons eagerly and respond to their teachers' questions with enthusiasm. Pupils are taught about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles and are encouraged to bring healthy foods for lunch.

Behaviour is mostly of a very high standard. Pupils conduct themselves with *derech erez*, thus putting into practice *halochah lema'aseh*, the *middos tovot* taught in the lessons.

Pupils contribute to the Jewish and wider communities in a variety of ways. For example, they collect money for *Tzedakah* (charity) and they visit and entertain the sick and the aged.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching throughout the school is mostly good and often outstanding. No lessons seen were less than satisfactory. Teachers are excellent role models and conduct themselves in a most professional manner showing much commitment to the school and their pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and pupils respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment. In most lessons seen, there was excellent interaction between teacher and pupils and opportunities were given for pupils to contribute. The pace of the lessons was mostly brisk and pupils' attention was sustained throughout. There was a good balance between traditional rote-learning and reinforcement through clear explanation and questioning to ensure that pupils understood the subject matter. Where lessons were satisfactory, pupils were not always kept on task. All teachers produce clear lesson plans and maintain accurate assessment records.

Clear targets are set at the beginning of lessons as delineated in the comprehensive lesson plans completed meticulously by all teachers. Classes are well managed, discipline is good and teachers offer praise and encouragement on a regular basis. They show care and support towards their pupils. There was much evidence of teachers displaying good differentiation strategies so that all pupils were included and involved in the lessons.

There are some high quality resources available to support teaching, notably for *Keriah* (Hebrew reading) and *Loshon HaKodesh* (the Hebrew language).

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The quality of the *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum is outstanding. It is very appropriate to the needs of the pupils and enables the school to achieve its aim of providing pupils with the opportunities to achieve the highest possible standards, thereby ensuring that they are well prepared for the next stage in their Jewish religious education.

The school is in the continuous process of developing and improving the curriculum and an enormous amount of work has been done in upgrading and broadening the curriculum so that it has built further on its strengths and also addressed weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. The new

curriculum documents include the topic of '*Biur Tefilloh*'. This provides pupils with an in-depth understanding and appreciation of key *tefillos*.

The *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum includes the teaching of Citizenship which contributes to the pupils' capacity to stay healthy and safe. A significant feature of the Citizenship curriculum is the inclusion of *middos* which encourage positive interpersonal relationships and appropriate speech.

The curriculum is enhanced by some very good extra-curricular activities. These include storytelling sessions held in the school library and activities relating to *Shemitoh*.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is outstanding. The school provides a safe and secure environment for its pupils. Security in the school is very effective. There is a full-time security officer who carefully vets all visitors before they are admitted onto the premises. Discussions with pupils reveal that they feel very safe and secure and know to whom they should turn in the event they have a problem. Pupils are appropriately supervised during break and at lunchtime.

Teachers show care and sensitivity towards pupils of lower attainment and those who have learning difficulties. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding. There is a designated *Limmudei Kodesh* SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) who carries out her duties conscientiously. Under her guidance, statemented pupils receive effective support. All classes at Key Stage 1 have a full-time *Limmudei Kodesh* support assistant.

Parents are very supportive of the school as is evidenced from the parents' questionnaire responses, the overwhelming majority of which were extremely positive.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the *Limmudei Kodesh* Department are outstanding. The weakness identified previously in the management structure has now been well addressed with the appointment of an Acting Head of *Limmudei Kodesh* and Co-ordinators for Key Stages 1 and 2. They have a clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school, its pupils and staff. They give strong and inspirational leadership and teachers appreciate the support they receive. This in turn motivates them to give of their best for the good of the school.

Another key issue in the previous inspection report was the need to produce a development plan for *Limmudei Kodesh*, setting out the key objectives. This issue has been addressed and as a result, there is in place a comprehensive curriculum with clear attainment targets for each year group throughout the school.

Performance management is in place for all *Limmudei Kodesh* staff. Teachers benefit from a programme of comprehensive and continuing professional development and they receive encouragement and support in gaining professional qualifications. Regular staff meetings are held and teachers are involved in curriculum development.

The school recruits seminary graduates of high calibre who provide enthusiasm and energy. This year, an innovative induction course was piloted with a comprehensive programme that ensured a smooth transition for the new teachers.

The Governors and Senior Management Team strive constantly to improve the provision for *Limmudei Kodesh*. As a result, the school is well aware of its strengths and the areas that need further development. It is therefore well placed to take the school forward.

Grade: 1

The following annex should be completed and attached to this report:

1. The **Inspection Judgement Form** (Annex A)

The inspection report should be published as a single document.

We will not publish Annex A.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY
Inspection judgements

Annex A

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 unsatisfactory.</i>	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of pupils?	1	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being?	1	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	

Achievement and standards

How well do pupils achieve?	1	
The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by pupils	1	
How well pupils' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils	1	
How well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the pupils?	1	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including collective worship	1	
The behaviour of pupils	1	
The attendance of pupils	1	
How well pupils enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution to the community.	1	
How well pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of pupils' needs?	2	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils?	1	
How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported including provision for collective worship?	1	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils?	1	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are protected	Yes	
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

The extent to which schools enable pupils to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Pupils are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Pupils are educated about sexual health.	No
The extent to which providers ensure that pupils stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Pupils are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Pupils, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable pupils to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote pupils' basic skills.	Yes
Pupils have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	NA
Education for all pupils aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	NA

