

Brodetsky Primary School

Inspection report

LEA	Leeds
Inspection dates	4 – 5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Rev Michael Binstock
Team inspector	Mrs Esther Colman

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	George Lyttleton Centre
School category	Voluntary Aided		Wentworth Avenue
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Leeds
			LS17 7TN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 293 0578
Number on roll	248	Fax number	0113 269 3176
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Dunwell
Date of previous inspection	24 – 25 May 2006	Headteacher	Mr Simon Camby

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Introduction

Description of the school

Brodetsky Primary School is situated in the Alwoodley area of North Leeds. It is a voluntary aided co-educational Orthodox Jewish primary school for children aged 3-11 and is the only state funded Jewish school in the city.

The school is committed to excellence in education, learning and achievement. It aims to educate its pupils within a framework that reflects and promotes religious beliefs and practices, fostering a pride in their Jewish identity.

The school includes a state-funded nursery of 32 children. In addition, there is a private nursery for children aged 2-3. The pupils are drawn from a wide religious spectrum of mainly Ashkenazi plus a few Sephardi families. There are currently 248 pupils on roll including the Nursery.

Approximately 20% of the school timetable is devoted to *Limmudei Kodesh* (Jewish Studies).

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 quality of *Limmudei Kodesh* at Brodetsky Primary School is good with some outstanding features and there is strong determination and capacity to continue to improve. Enormous progress has been made since the previous Pikuach inspection when significant weaknesses were identified in the *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum, assessment procedures, attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 and provision for pupils with SEN (Special Educational Needs). Much has been achieved under the leadership of the new headteacher in addressing these weaknesses. As a result, the curriculum and procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are now outstanding and the attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 and provision for pupils with SEN are good.

The school knows itself well and takes effective action to improve the academic achievement and personal successes of the pupils. The headteacher and the leader of *Limmudei Kodesh* provide strong professional leadership so that teachers feel well supported and receive every help and encouragement in performing their duties effectively.

Teaching and learning are good and often outstanding. Teachers relate to pupils in a most positive way, giving much encouragement and praise. They have good Jewish subject knowledge and are very good role models.

Pupils are happy at the school and feel secure and the overwhelming majority of parents indicate very strong support for the leadership and management of the school. Pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school is excellent and the manner in which they conduct themselves during *Tefillah* (davening) is exemplary.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

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

- fully implement the new long-term plans and assessment procedures
- further improve the outcomes for Hebrew reading
- further improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- further support and mentor teachers

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage

The learning environment in the Foundation Stage is stimulating and exciting and children enjoy the excellent facilities the school offers.

The *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum contributes significantly to achieving national Early Learning goals, particularly with regard to Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication, Language and Literacy; and Knowledge and Understanding of the World. This was notable in a nursery class observed where children were learning about the Jewish term '*Baruch Hashem*' (Blessed is Hashem) and the social context in which it is used.

There are some wonderful resources in the Foundation Stage to stimulate the children's learning including a mini *Aron Kodesh* (Holy Ark) and Hebrew reading games. However, the resources used to support 'Aleph Champ' in Reception are not entirely appropriate for that age range.

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards have improved since the previous Pikuach inspection. Whilst pupils' prior attainment is varied, most including the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties achieve well and make good progress as they advance from year to year.

The standards of Hebrew reading are generally good as evidenced from lesson observation and testing of a representative sample of pupils from years 2 and 6. The school anticipates that this will further improve as a result of the recent introduction of the 'Aleph Champ' Hebrew reading scheme which is proving popular with pupils. Script writing is introduced in Year 3 for those of higher ability and in Year 4 for other pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, most are able to write with confidence and accuracy.

Standards achieved in other areas of the *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum are good and mostly in line with the school's expectations. The weakness identified in the previous inspection report of insufficiently high standards of attainment at Key Stage 2 has been addressed and pupils ably demonstrated good levels of Jewish general knowledge.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school fully complies with statutory requirements by providing daily acts of collective worship (*davening*) for all pupils. The manner in which *davening* is conducted is a strength of the school

and admirably reflects its ethos and Jewish values. The excellent behaviour of pupils during lessons and as they move around the school premises does them and the school great credit. They display an impressive degree of *derech erez* (courtesy) to visitors, teachers and peers. Pupils' *midot tovot* (good character traits) are developed through the *Mitzvah* of the Week. This is a focus in assembly and is linked to the weekly *Parashah* (Torah portion) throughout the school.

Attendance is good and evidence from lesson observation and informal discussions with pupils confirms that pupils have extremely positive attitudes towards their school and teachers and greatly enjoy their *Limmudei Kodesh* lessons.

The views of pupils are taken seriously and issues of concern to them are effectively dealt with when raised at meetings of the school council. Examples of improvements achieved as a direct result of recommendations of the council include better playground equipment.

The school encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle and healthy food choices are available at lunchtime. Pupils contribute to the Jewish and wider community in a variety of ways; for example, they collect money for *tzedakah* (charity) which benefits Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is mostly good and in Key Stage 2 it is outstanding. Teachers are highly motivated and act as excellent role models by inspiring their pupils. They plan their lessons well and employ a range of teaching methodologies to take account of pupils' varying levels of ability. Most lessons are enhanced by the use of interactive white boards which are used to great effect. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and pupils respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

All teachers have good subject knowledge and are actively involved in professional development in the school. There is a good range of teaching resources available and the introduction of the 'Aleph Champ' reading scheme in September 2008 is proving a great success.

The lack of an assessment policy identified in the previous inspection report has been admirably addressed and there are now excellent procedures in place to track and record pupils' progress and attainment consistently throughout the school.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The quality of the curriculum has greatly improved since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. It demonstrates both breadth and balance in expressing the orthodox Jewish values of the school and is most appropriate for the needs of the pupils. It includes Hebrew reading and writing, *Tefillah* (prayers), *Parashah*, *Chumash*, Jewish calendar and Jewish Way of Life. The curriculum incorporates end of year targets and level descriptors for each subject and for each year group. As these have only been in place since September 2008, they may need to be adjusted at the end of the school year to reflect the realities of classroom practice.

The school is a partner of the JSCP (Jewish Studies Curriculum Partnership). This is a project to support schools in the development of their *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum. The school teaches the JSCP *Parashat Hashavua* programme (weekly Torah portion), and has recently introduced its *Chumash* programme in Year 4.

The school is committed to linking the *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum with the National Curriculum and there is evidence of this throughout the school. For example, Israeli dancing is taught during PE (physical education lessons), Year 3 pupils produced picture frames as *Chanukah* gifts in their D&T (design and technology) lessons, and pupils in years 3 and 4 created a beautiful *Shabbat* display board in their art lessons. The excellent integration with secular studies reinforces the feeling that this is one unified school with one staff working towards shared goals.

Extra-curricular activities in *Limmudei Kodesh* include an *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew language) club in Year 5 and an Israel Club in Year 6. These provide the opportunity for pupils to develop their Jewish identity in an informal setting.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The school provides its pupils with an outstanding level of care, guidance and support. Pupils are valued and their successes are shared and celebrated so that they feel proud of their achievements. Pastoral care and support are excellent and underpin the school's commitment to its 'Golden Rules' of behaviour. Pupils at the school feel safe and secure. They relate to staff extremely well and know to whom they should turn for advice and guidance. To quote one pupil 'teachers support you in difficult times.'

The previous inspection report judged the provision for pupils with SEN (special educational needs) to be inadequate. An enormous improvement has taken place since then and pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support in a variety of ways. A significant example is the system of 'Pen Portraits' devised by the leader of *Limmudei Kodesh* in conjunction with the assistant

headteacher. The information that is provided by the pen portraits enables the *Limmudei Kodesh* teachers to meet the specific needs of each pupil more fully.

Another key issue in the previous Pikuach report was the need to improve the quality of marking pupils' written work. This has been addressed and marking is now rigorous. Teachers' comments give pupils clear information so that they know what they must do to correct and improve their work.

The school has useful links with secondary schools and pupils in Year 6 are given advice and guidance, so that they are well prepared for the transition to the next stage in their education.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is good and has greatly improved since the previous Pikuach inspection. The present headteacher has been in post since June 2007 and is the driving force behind the determination to improve *Limmudei Kodesh* provision at the school. His strong and inspirational leadership provides the leader of *Limmudei Kodesh* and the *Limmudei Kodesh* department with a clear educational direction and much progress has been made in addressing the many weaknesses that he inherited at the time of his appointment. The manner in which the headteacher and leader of *Limmudei Kodesh* work together in harmony and mutual respect is a major strength of the school and this sets the tone for all members of staff. There is a strong Jewish ethos which permeates every area of the school's work and this is due to the support of all teachers including those in the secular department.

Teachers feel well supported. Monitoring of standards takes place mainly through scrutinising pupils' written work and teachers' planning. Lessons are also observed, but further development is required in this area to ensure consistency.

Due to severe weather conditions, the school, in keeping with many others in the country, was closed the day before the commencement of the inspection so that the Pikuach parents' questionnaires could not be sent out. However, the school conducted its own parent/carer survey in January 2009 and the responses received indicate a very high level of satisfaction with the leadership and management of the school and an appreciation of the importance of the school to the Jewish community of Leeds.

The school can feel proud of the enormous progress it has made since its previous inspection in providing the best Jewish education possible for its pupils. The supportive governors and senior management team strive constantly to improve the provision of *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: 2

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

