

CLORE SHALOM PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority Hertfordshire

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates 8–9 July 2015

Lead Inspector Dr Leon Bernstein

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of Children	3–11
Gender of Children	Mixed
Number on roll	238
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Simon Ezequiel
Headteacher	Sheree Oxenham
Address	Hugo Gryn Way, Shenley, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 9BL
Telephone number	01923 855631
Email address	admin@cloreshalom.herts.sch.uk
School website	http://www.cloreshalom.herts.sch.uk

Introduction

Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Dr Leon Bernstein

Additional Inspector: Janine Kasmir

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days. The inspectors visited 13 classes from Nursery to Year 6 for lessons and parts of lessons, including *tefillot* (prayers). Some of the lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies curriculum and the school's self-evaluation document for Jewish Studies. The headteacher and head of Jewish Studies attended team meetings.

The inspector looked in detail at the following:

- The progress pupils make in Jewish education
- The quality of teaching in Jewish education
- The Jewish education curriculum
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship.
- Leadership and management of Jewish education

Information about the school

- Clore Shalom School is a voluntary aided primary day school that serves the local and wider Jewish community. The school was set up with support by the Reform, Liberal and Masorti Jewish Movements but it is open to families from a wider Jewish background.
- All pupils are from the Jewish community.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- Pupils in the Nursery class attend part-time. Pupils in the Reception class attend full-time.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is around the national average.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2012.
- The head of Jewish Studies is leaving the school in July 2015.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
The achievement of children in their Jewish education	2
The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education	2
The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets children's needs	1
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the duty to fulfil the daily act of collective worship	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish education, including through partnerships	2

Overall Effectiveness:

The quality of Jewish Learning provided in Clore Shalom is good because:

- Pupils thrive in a healthy learning environment which fosters care trust and confidence
- Lessons are engaging and relevant to the lives of the pupils
- The curriculum is stimulating and challenging across the key stages and this provides an excellent platform for pupils' future learning and involvement in Jewish life.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Senior leaders need to drive change and improvement in certain areas more rapidly.
- Standards of Hebrew reading are too low in Years 2, and this has improved only marginally since the previous Pikuach report.
- Tracking of pupils' progress is not as rigorous as it could be in order to ensure that each pupil makes the very best progress over time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Introduce baseline assessments in the early years so that teachers, leaders and governors have a clear picture of children's starting points so that they can effectively measure progress over their time at the school.
- Improve standards of reading from Year 2 and beyond, using level descriptors which are assessed accurately.
- Appoint a new head of Jewish Studies who will build on good practice that has already been established.

Achievement of pupils in their Jewish Learning is good

- Inspectors found that only some pupils start at Clore Shalom knowing relatively little about their Jewish heritage. They make sustained and good progress in their knowledge of Jewish festivals, culture and history over their time at the school.
- Children make a good start to their Jewish learning in the early years. Jewish values are an integral part of their learning. However, the school does not record baseline assessments of what children know at the start of Nursery so that progress from Nursery to Year 6 can be measured accurately.
- Jewish Studies activities are linked to the seven early years areas of learning. For example, activities focused on *Shabbat* in Reception were linked with understanding the world around us and activities linked with light and dark. *Shabbat* activities in Nursery were also linked to the seven areas of learning in terms of work covered in mathematics and art, where the children were designing a *Shabbat* tablecloth with patterns.
- Many examples of Jewish Studies activities and learning are included in the early years learning journals. This is a strength, as it has an impact on the children's overall learning by highlighting cross-curricular links and supports assessment of their learning in Jewish Studies. However, staff do not always identify the next steps that children need to take to move their learning on.
- *Ivrit* (modern Hebrew) in the early years and Year 1 is outstanding and pupils make very rapid progress in the spoken language. *Ivrit* lessons are given in the target language and pupils listen and speak with confidence and understanding. Pupils continue to make outstanding progress in oral *Ivrit* throughout the school, and their understanding of the language is reflected in their excellent communication with staff in *Ivrit* lessons.

In *Ivrit*, there is a new curriculum and this is promoting rapid progress in oral skills. The pupils are actively engaged in their learning. The pupils are making outstanding progress in Hebrew language, where they have been using the new '*Chalav U'Devash*' ('Milk and Honey') curriculum.

- Up until March 2014, pupils' progress in Jewish Studies was tracked very effectively

across different curriculum areas. This was seen in the analysis of the data documentation and the marking of books. Books included pupils' reflections on what they had learnt, indicating their enjoyment as well as the achievement of the learning objectives set for them.

- During maternity cover, an interim head of Jewish Studies introduced a simplified system of tracking. Leaders have evaluated the new system and concluded that it has proven to be less effective than the previous one in identifying how well pupils are doing. The school has agreed a more robust pupil progress monitoring system from September 2015. This will combine the two systems used previously. It is expected to result in more detailed data that will enable leaders and staff to track pupils' progress far more accurately.
- Over the last eighteen months the new *Ivrit* curriculum, '*Chalav U' Devash*', has been introduced and embedded in early years to Year 1. Where the pupils have followed it since starting school, they have made outstanding progress in all areas of *Ivrit*. The new reading scheme *Otiyot Medabrot* ('Talking Letters') for pupils in the older year groups has not created the same improvements as yet. Leaders and staff are aware of this, and they are now providing additional support to improve attainment in reading from Years 2 to year 6.
- Tracking of pupils' progress in reading has been complemented with intervention for those pupils not making expected progress and extension and more variety for the pupils in the higher ability group.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) keeps a detailed account of pupils on her register and drives staff to ensure that these pupils meet their expected targets. Pupils on this register, including those who are gifted and talented, are regularly monitored and challenged to reflect on current achievements and to build on these.
- Pupils acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly and securely in the range of subjects covered in the Jewish curriculum. They learn and apply a wide range of skills to good effect, using critical thinking and comprehension skills, then apply their Jewish knowledge to everyday life. For example, a common theme articulated by the pupils throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 was the importance of helping individuals and the wider community.
- The curriculum creates breadth and balance to support the ethos of the school. This includes *parsha* (the Torah portion of the week), festivals, *kashrus* and the study of diverse cultures. Some topics are revisited in older year groups to build on previous knowledge. To supplement areas where it is felt that greater attention is required to develop breadth – for example, on *Chaggim* (festivals) – informal activity days are linked to the different areas of learning, such as the *Shavuot* Senses Activity Day. This supports the pupils' learning and allows them to build on what they have learnt before.
- Evidence of pupils' work in different subjects supports their achievement in Jewish Studies. The head of Jewish Studies regularly monitors pupils' work from each subject but agrees with inspectors that this commendable sampling of the quality of pupils' work needs to be matched with fuller recording of the extent of the work.

- The school is aware of the need to improve the attainment and progress of Hebrew reading as it is not up to the outstanding levels in spoken *Ivrit* from Year 2 and upwards. Both Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* Departments are aware of the need to support one another and enhance the reading curriculum. The school has begun to embed the new 'Otiyot *Medabrot*' reading programme into the curriculum from Year 2. However, it is in the early stages of implementation and requires more time to gauge the impact on the pupils' overall learning. The school needs to improve the reading skills in all areas to reach a judgement of outstanding.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish Learning is good

- Pupils make good progress because teachers have high expectations of them. The lessons seen by inspectors reflect good planning in terms of selection, sequencing and grading of material appropriate to pupils' particular learning needs. Concepts are taught that deepen students' Jewish knowledge and understanding, and enable them to develop a range of skills across the Jewish curriculum. Such skills include comprehension and analysis.
- Teachers listen carefully to pupils' contributions and skilfully question them in order to reshape tasks and explanations and improve learning. There is a very positive and healthy climate for learning and pupils are, in the main, interested and engaged.
- Teachers monitor and assess pupils' work regularly. Inspectors saw evidence of very effective marking, giving pupils a clear understanding of the quality of their work, and providing targets for improvement. The best marking was seen where pupils were encouraged to respond to teachers' comments. This provided a healthy dialogue between teacher and pupil, which not only promoted academic progress but also displayed a harmonious and respectful interaction.
- Lessons are planned to accommodate classes and groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed to oversee pupils' work with them. There are occasions when teaching assistants could play an even greater part in challenging these pupils by actively encouraging them to focus on the task and join in on more discussions.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding at each stage of the lesson. They anticipate where they may need to intervene and allow pupils the opportunity to discuss a topic and explore ideas together. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils used a Venn diagram as they discussed what it meant to be Jewish, to be a British citizen and to be both. This cross-curricular approach – incorporating mathematics, English, history and citizenship – was skilfully woven into a Jewish framework and pupils enjoyed making links between their heritage and their citizenship. Of the pupils asked whether they felt Jewish or British first, all said that their Judaism came first and felt a great pride in being Jewish, whilst acknowledging the importance of being a British citizen.
- Of the lessons observed by inspectors, most of them were good and some were outstanding. Most notably, inspectors were impressed with the teaching of *Ivrit* in the early years and Year 1. For example, a most impressive display of teaching skills and classroom management was observed in an *Ivrit* Nursery class. The lesson, held

entirely in *Ivrit*, was fully interactive, with children making rapid progress as a result of a highly effective teaching methodology which involved information and communication technology (ICT), flashcards and objects for children to hold. Children were able to make clear distinctions between masculine and feminine nouns, and could then apply this knowledge to the concept of singular and plural objects. The teacher very skilfully used appropriate methods of selection and sequencing of material, then presented it to the children by moving from simple to more complex linguistic structures. By contrast, ICT was not seen in Jewish Studies in the early years.

- In some lessons, learning moved at too slow a pace. Although teachers tried to engage the pupils by getting them involved – for example, by having them choose their own flashcards and then producing sentences based on them – too much time was spent thinking about which cards to choose and what then to say. This resulted in some loss of teaching and learning time.
- Teachers and other adults create a positive climate for learning in their lessons, and pupils are interested and engaged. Teachers constantly ask pupils for their opinions, which creates an environment of trust and encourages pupils to express themselves.
- Effective teaching strategies, including setting appropriate levels of work for groups of pupils, are matched well to pupils' individual needs, including those most and least able, so that pupils learn well in lessons.
- *Ivrit* and Jewish Studies Departments require continued improvement in the accurate tracking of pupils' progress to enable targeting of progress and improvement over time to take place.

The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets children's needs is outstanding

- The school's Jewish curriculum, both formal and informal, provides memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning. This includes outstanding *tefillah* (prayer) experiences, activity days, and a number of good and outstanding lessons observed by inspectors.
- The school's ethos and aims are reflected in the different Jewish curriculum areas of study and the pupils leave with a great love and enjoyment of their Jewish learning, both informal and formal.
- The curriculum has overall breadth, depth and balance, providing pupils with their full entitlement of Jewish knowledge and experience. It is customised to meet the varying needs of individuals. For example, for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, individual educational plans are carefully mapped out to ensure that the pupils meet the demands of the curriculum and can take a full and active part.
- The curriculum shows a respect for the different backgrounds of others and delivers cross-curricular provision, placing the Jewish topics in their broader cultural and scholarly contexts and exploiting the potential of wide reading. This is evidenced in

the fact that the curriculum is delivered sometimes as a topic linked to the wider curriculum. For example, all the secular class teachers deliver the Jewish Studies curriculum, with appropriate levels of support, where necessary, from the head of Jewish Studies

- Provision of Jewish learning is effective within Jewish Studies, including different levels planned for those of different abilities. This was seen by inspectors throughout the school.
- Informal Jewish learning opportunities specified in the curriculum are varied, and enjoyed by all the pupils. For example, for *Shavuot*, an outside actor came in and pretended to be Moses, with the pupils experiencing what it was like to be at Mount Sinai. Events such as these consolidate previous knowledge and enhance pupils' overall learning involvement, resulting in an enjoyable and meaningful experience.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding

- The school meets legal requirements for collective worship through daily *tefillah*. Whole-school *tefillah* begins with a *tefillah* being played on the school public announcement system and pupils walking in to the hall with excellent decorum. *Tefilla* also takes place in classes led by Y6 pupils across the school. The pupils take part with enthusiasm, singing and reciting the daily prayers. Prayers are explained so that pupils learn about their meaning. All are given opportunities to take an active part in *tefillah*, with pupils highlighting blessings of their choice. This supports the egalitarian ethos of the school and allows pupils to consider carefully what they are saying. The atmosphere was one of reflection and calm, made possible by staff leading the *tefillah*, who would pause intermittently so that pupils could reflect.
- Displays in the hall are linked to Jewish themes and promote an interest in and love of Judaism. For example, there was a '*mitzvah* tree' ('good deed') display and a poster showing '*middoh*' (character trait) of the month' – how to be a good friend – both in Hebrew and English. Other displays included all the Hebrew months of the year, the 'Dove of Peace' and cross-curricular links. For example, the theme of freedom in *Pesach* was linked to a large photo of Martin Luther King, with written text to show how the struggle of the Jewish people is related to the plight of others from diverse backgrounds.
- Pupils' good spiritual development is very evident in the very strong opportunities provided for pupils to reflect and empathise with others. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils discussed the importance of *Gemillat Chasadim* (acts of kindness) and the importance of doing acts of kindness for our community, all humans and the planet.
- Each Friday, a *Kaballat Shabbat* (welcoming the Sabbath) assembly is held to which parents are invited. Pupils talk about this with clear enthusiasm and some Year 6 pupils described it as a highlight of their week. Events such as these provide strong links between the school, the pupils and parents.

- Pupils are constantly encouraged to think about others, both locally and in the wider world, using individual and innovative thought processes in a creative way. For example, the Year 6 class, together with Years 4 and 5, and staff, worked hard to produce and perform a musical event entitled *The Healing Hamsa of Peace*, based on the Jewish principle of 'Love Peace and Pursue Peace', which was written in both Hebrew and English on the front page of the programme. The production, based on a fictitious Kibbutz in Israel, had as its main theme the task of '...pupils all around the world [who must] change their ways and become better people'. *The Healing Hamsa of Peace* project, set up by one of Clore Shalom's own staff, reflects the ethos of the school, has cross-curricular links such as music, art and citizenship, and makes a positive impact to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural lives of the pupils, who see the messages of the project in a very real and positive way.
- Pupils show respect for each other and staff. Inspectors found the pupils to be polite, friendly and sociable.
- There is an active school council with pupils from Years 1 to 6, which is democratically elected by the pupils. A 'Middah of the Month' (character trait) focuses on particular traits of positive and moral behaviour. This provides pupils with leadership opportunities resulting in positions of responsibility and improved levels of self-confidence.
- Pupils are curious about the world around them and embrace new experiences. This was exemplified in a Reception class, where pupils could confidently explain that G-d is 'omnipresent' and talk about 'the blessing of light in the world'.
- All pupils recite *Birchot Hamazon* (grace after meals) each day after lunch. The pupils understand that this is a way of being grateful for the food and sustenance they receive from G-d.
- Inspectors met with pupils from Years 1 to 6. Pupils were positive about being in the school and were generally happy with their learning in Jewish Studies and *Ivrit*. A common concern, however, was that a significant number of them stated that they would like subjects revisited more often, to prevent the material learnt in one year being forgotten later on.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish learning is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together as a strong team to pursue excellence in the school's Jewish educational activities. This is demonstrated in their drive to maintain and improve on the high levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils over a sustained period of time. Their management of the school and the staff is good, and much of what they have achieved, and continue to achieve, is outstanding.
- All leaders, managers and governors are ambitious for the pupils and lead by example. They base their actions on a deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance, and of the skills and attributes of staff and pupils.
- Governors hold senior leaders to account for the effective delivery of the Jewish

curriculum.

- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning in Jewish education. Where joint lesson observations took place, the conclusions drawn by the Inspectors and senior leaders were identical.
- Guided by the headteacher, the senior leadership team has a rigorous schedule of performance management: all staff are interviewed at least three times a year, targets are set and agreed, expectations are clearly articulated and these are visited throughout the year to enable staff to meet those expectations.
- Supported by the governing body, the school's leadership team is keen to ensure quality of provision by encouraging continued professional development for staff.
- The head of Jewish Studies is a keen and enthusiastic leader who has high expectations of what can be achieved. She strives to ensure that the pupils leave the school with strong Jewish values and the skills to play an active part in their homes and communities.
- The school self-evaluates effectively all that takes place. For the self-evaluation process to be more beneficial, it should clearly identify areas for improvement and how the leaders plan to achieve them. In addition, leaders self-evaluation could illustrate more the plethora of activities the school offers, and how this impacts positively on the pupils. Furthermore, the school's self-evaluation should acknowledge areas of learning and experiences that dovetail with the formal education programme, so that it can exemplify the overall rich Jewish learning with which each child is provided.
- Senior leaders are not as thorough and critical as they could be regarding analysis and pace of improvement over time. For example, since the last Pikuach report which highlighted a requirement for improvement in reading, standards in Hebrew reading, specifically in Years 2 to 6, still require improvement. This is surprising, given the outstanding progress made over the last eighteen months in early years to Year 1.
- Senior leaders, including those responsible for governance, are aware of the need to improve present monitoring of progress and tracking of data on an individual basis. They are committed to addressing this from September 2015.
- The heads of Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* appreciate the need to work more collaboratively in order to achieve the highest standards of overall Jewish education for the pupils.
- Senior leaders model professional standards in all of their work and demonstrate high levels of respect and courtesy for pupils and others.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Clore Shalom to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. Over 80% of parents agreed with the question 'My child enjoys Jewish Studies' at the school. The comments below encapsulate their views:

'My son is actively encouraged and motivated at school with his Jewish studies and enjoys them immensely. He is proud of learning the language and the meaning of our culture.'

'I would rather my child spend more time on Jewish Studies than on *Ivrit* lessons. Her Hebrew reading is poor and does not equate to the amount of *Ivrit* lessons she attends in a week.'

'My child has gained an extraordinary sense of Jewish values due to excellent teaching, including *Kabbalat* Shabbat Assemblies, *tefillah*, led by Year 6, and celebrations of the *Chaggim*. Moreover, her ability to count in Hebrew, write in Hebrew and communicate when she wants to surprises me (in a good way) constantly. I am so glad my child ended up at Clore Shalom.'

GLOSSARY

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:

GRADE	JUDGEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupil's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.