

Ilford Jewish Primary School

Inspection report

LEA	Redbridge
Inspection dates	5 th - 6 th July 2006
Reporting inspector	Enid Korn
Team inspector	Rafi Salasnik

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

Type of School	Primary School	School address	Carlton Drive
School category	Voluntary Aided		Barkingside
Age range of pupils	3-11		Essex IG6 1LZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8551 4294
Number on roll	342	Fax number	020 8551 4295
Appropriate authority	The Governing body	Chair of governors	Mr H Kemp
Date of previous inspection	2-4 July 2002	Headteacher	Mrs R Levin

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Introduction

Description of the school

The Ilford Jewish Primary school is a larger than average voluntary aided primary school serving the diverse Jewish communities of north east London. The United Synagogue is the denominational foundation body and the school accepts the *halachic* authority of the Chief Rabbi. The school's analysis is that the majority of the parents are affiliated to orthodox synagogues but that only a small minority are orthodox in their life style.

The school was placed into special measures by Ofsted inspectors in 2002 and successfully came out of this category in 2004. The school was a three form entry primary school, but has now reduced to a two form entry school and the last three form entry cohort leaves in July 2006. The decline in numbers has now stabilised and there are fifty six pupils in the nursery.

The school's assessments show that attainment on entry is broadly average. Under 5% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is a lower than average figure. The four pupils who have English as an additional language are all Israeli. There are forty-eight pupils on the special needs register, of whom eleven have a statement of needs. The Deputy Headteacher and Head of Jewish Studies at the time of the previous inspection is now the Headteacher of the school.

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 overall effectiveness of the Jewish studies provision at Ilford Jewish primary school is good. Children make a very good start to their Jewish education in the nursery, particularly within *tephillah* and standards in the Foundation Stage are high. Throughout the school, there has been a substantial improvement in the provision for *tephillah* since the previous inspection and this aspect of the provision is now excellent.

The leadership has been effective in establishing good partnership links with other United Synagogue schools and Jewish education providers. These partnerships are introducing a new approach to the teaching of Chumash and the innovations in learning experiences are resulting in improved standards. The school's self-evaluation strategies are satisfactory and these have led to an improvement in the overall co-ordination of the *Limmudei Kodesh* department, but the progress of the pupils could be better monitored. The Governing Body are committed and they are actively supportive and help guide the direction of the school.

Three key issues for improvement were identified in the previous inspection. There has been action taken on each one. In the development of the curriculum there has been good improvement. In relation to the marking policy and also the special needs provision, the school has made progress but in each of these there remains room for improvement.

At the time of the last inspection Ivrit was taught from Year 3 upwards and there are plans to re-instate this subject as a modern foreign language in Year 3.

By the end of Year 6, the standards that the pupils achieve and the progress that they make are satisfactory. The younger pupils, who have the benefit of the new curriculum structure, generally make good progress. Good examples of Hebrew writing were seen throughout the school and pupils take pride in the presentation of their work. Hebrew reading skills are developed well amongst younger pupils. Higher up the school a lack of teaching assistants affects the progress of many pupils. Consequently a significant proportion of the pupils are not attaining the school's expectations in Hebrew reading by the end of Year 6. High ability pupils would also benefit from more opportunities that encourage independence in their learning.

The personal development and well being of the pupils is good. There is excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that links well with the National Curriculum expectations. There is excellent provision for collective worship that includes extended opportunities, such as the *leyening* club. The school places great emphasis on Jewish moral values in every aspect and this

is an outstanding feature and characteristic of the school. The behaviour of the pupils is good. The younger pupils thoroughly and enthusiastically enjoy their Jewish education.

Grade 2

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards in Hebrew reading and comprehension

Expand the range of teaching opportunities in order to better meet the needs of all the pupils in the class.

Improve monitoring and evaluation systems such as by establishing a tracking and target setting system.

Achievement and standards

The schools self-evaluation is that standards and achievement are good. The inspectors agree with this evaluation for the younger classes of the school but judge standards and achievement to be only satisfactory by the end of Year 6. The achievement and progress of the older, higher ability pupils is restricted at times due to a lack of opportunity for independent, extended work. The support provided for the lower attaining pupils lacks parity with that provided in the secular subjects; this impacts upon these pupils' achievement and progress.

The overall picture within the school is one of rising standards. This is taking place in the younger classes and progressing steadily throughout the school, brought about by innovations within the curriculum. These new methods are about to be introduced into the oldest two years of the school.

Achievement and standards in Hebrew writing skills as observed in lessons and in the pupils' written work are good and the pupils achieve well. Knowledge of script is attained by the end of Year 2. Standards of presentation are good throughout the school and the pupils take an obvious pride in their work.

The Jewish Studies co-ordinator has rightly identified the raising of standards in Hebrew reading as a priority. The majority of the pupils, by the end of Year 2, are slow but accurate readers and in Year 4 many are fluent readers. However, by the end of Year 6, a significant proportion of the pupils have not mastered the skills of reading Hebrew. This is below the expectations in the school's curriculum. The pupils' comprehension of their reading texts is limited, as was also noted in the previous inspection.

Standards in general Jewish knowledge are extended due to the breadth of the curriculum. All pupils know the Hebrew date and some in Year 6 have a broad knowledge, as evidenced in their recall of the 'Dreyfus case'. The achievements in *tephillah* are very good and are excellent in the nursery. The pupils who attend the voluntary '*leyening*' club reach excellent standards, achieving very highly.

Grade 3

Personal development and well-being

The school provides many opportunities for the pupils to actively live and practice a Jewish lifestyle. The range and depth of opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Moral aspects are particularly well developed by practicing a wide range of *mitzvot*. The standards of behaviour are generally good; the school has high expectations and the teachers are good at monitoring the pupils as they work. Attendance is satisfactory.

The younger pupils' enjoyment of their Jewish education is exceptionally good, but by Year 4 the pupils' enthusiasm has declined although they gave no specific reason for their changed attitudes. The pupils can express their views at the school council. Their views in relation to their Jewish Studies are also ascertained at the end of the year, when the pupils identify and record their favourite subject. However, the school would benefit from more extensive research into the pupils' changing attitudes.

The pupils' knowledge of safe and healthy lifestyles, including a healthy Jewish lifestyle is good. The boys all wear *tzitzit* and *kippot*. All the food and snacks are *kosher* as well as healthy. *Tzedakah* and acts of kindness are encouraged and practised. The school provides good preparation for the pupil's future Jewish well-being by making the pupils familiar with the traditional synagogue services including the tunes and codes of behaviour.

Grade 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

There has been an improvement in the consistency of the teaching since the previous inspection; all of the teaching observed was satisfactory or good and no unsatisfactory teaching took place. This reflects the school's internal evaluations.

The school has three Jewish Studies teachers, each of whom demonstrates good subject knowledge, a good model of orthodox Jewish practice and a very strong commitment to their pupils as learners.

The introductions to the lessons are usually good, with the teachers providing the pupils with clear explanations of the learning objectives and reviews of previous learning. New information is regularly conveyed using computers, interactive whiteboards and overhead projectors and this good use of technology stimulates the pupils and includes them all. In the best lessons, the pupils have the opportunity to clarify and consolidate their new knowledge through discussion with partners.

The teachers' questioning skills vary. In one excellent example, the pupils' maturely reflected upon the situation of the 'golden calf' and the smashing of the first tablets of the Ten Commandments. Their learning was extended when they discussed the underlying messages and significance for their own Jewish living and conduct. In some other lessons observed, the questioning was limited to requiring factual

answers; the class teacher then elaborated upon these responses without giving other pupils the opportunity to become involved. Over time, this approach has a detrimental impact upon the pupils' enthusiasm.

The learning tasks in the lessons observed were all interesting and many of these supported well the school's National Curriculum priority related to English writing. In contrast, Hebrew writing and reading skills were not used in many of the Jewish Studies lessons in the years 3 to 6.

The teachers monitor the pupils well as they work, but they do not sit and work with a group of pupils to carefully assess and extend the pupil's learning by providing individualised teaching. There are no individual learning targets for the pupils. The marking follows the school's policy but there is a lack of explanatory comments and as a result the pupils do not gain an understanding of their strengths or what they need to do to improve their work.

Grade 3

Curriculum and other activities

There has been good improvement in relation to the curriculum since the previous inspection. The current basic curriculum has been remodelled to a good standard and it is relevant to the needs and interests of the pupils. There are clearly stated standards that the pupils are expected to achieve for each year group in each subject. At present it is unclear what impact the inclusion of Ivrit will have on the Jewish Studies curriculum. The school is pioneering a new and innovative *Chumash* curriculum. This starts in Year 2 and has been successfully introduced into years 3 and 4. The school identifies that standards have risen dramatically as a consequence of these actions. During the forthcoming academic year the current Year 5 pupils will be introduced to this curriculum as it is developed. The present curriculum for Year 6 strongly promotes personal development and aspects of citizenship such as relating to anti-Semitism. It introduces the pupils to moral, social and cultural issues and includes a more detailed topic on the holocaust and on the history of the State of Israel than that frequently found in Jewish primary schools. The prayer topic just completed has some good elements but it is primarily teacher directed, lacking individual work that would reflect the pupils' varying standards. Links between the Jewish Studies curriculum and the National Curriculum are good and they extend the pupils' understanding.

The wider curriculum of the school, such as performances for *Chaggigat Siddur*, music and singing, strongly enhance the Jewish ethos and teachings. The curriculum is enhanced by some good extra-curricular activities such as *shabbatonim* in the local synagogue and attendance at a *Purim megillah* reading in a local synagogue.

Grade 2

Care, guidance and support

The pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support in their Jewish living during the school day. This is brought about by the school's ethos of celebrating Judaism and the pupils' achievements in song and performance, the healthy Kosher meals and the emphasis upon the school's motto of 'love your neighbour as yourself' together with the guidance given within the lessons. The provision for collective worship is excellent. There are opportunities for formalised *tephillah* in the mornings for *Shacharit* and for grace before and after meals; these progressively expand the pupils' skills from the nursery to Year 6. There are also assemblies where the whole school gathers as a community to celebrate and reflect in song and prayer.

Grade 1

Leadership and management

The co-ordinator of Jewish Studies has ensured that the department runs smoothly and in a unified and well co-ordinated manner. She has brought about some effective improvements to the teaching. The excellent standards in spiritual moral and social development and the integration of these Jewish values with the secular curriculum and across the school are a tribute to Jewish Studies leadership.

The previous inspection report identified three areas for further development. The curriculum improvements successfully address this issue and they are having a positive impact. The issue related to marking has been fully addressed in the marking policy and partially so in practice. In relation to the issue regarding special educational needs, some of the teaching issues have been addressed but further improvements are needed. Many of the actions required to achieve this improvement such as the provision of support staff, are outside the remit of the co-ordinator's responsibility.

The co-ordinator, who is not a member of the senior management team of the school, is supported by the Headteacher who is very actively involved and who has retained a very prominent role in the decision making process for Jewish Studies. Together they have maintained a very strong Jewish ethos.

The Jewish Studies department currently has some satisfactory systems for identifying its effectiveness, such as reviewing the pupils' written work and observations of teachers in lessons. Systems for tracking progress, setting targets for future learning and monitoring progress as the pupils move through the school are not established. The co-ordinator recognises the need for completing a Jewish Studies self-evaluation form and this is an action point for the coming year.

The governors are very committed and supportive and they benefit from the long term leadership of the Chair of the Governors. They are very aware of the school's involvement with the community and they have actively developed and improved the transition arrangements to the main feeder secondary school, in relation to Jewish

Studies. The Governors monitor the work of the school but in terms of assessing standards their monitoring could be more rigorous.

The Governors provide opportunities for the parents to state their views and from these the decision to implement *Ivrit* has been taken. The majority of the parents expressed complete satisfaction with the Jewish Studies provision but a significant minority expressed some concerns.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and actively tackles discrimination. The staffing and resources for Jewish studies are primarily dependent upon parental voluntary contributions but not all of the parents make a full contribution. The school has indicated that if more parents made the full financial contribution, then the school would be in a position to provide learning support staff. The money that is available is spent wisely.

Grade 2

