



# KING SOLOMON HIGH SCHOOL

## Inspection report

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>LEA</b>                             | Redbridge           |
| <b>Inspected under the auspices of</b> | Pikuach             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>                | 9 -10 December 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>             | Jean Shindler       |

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

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Comprehensive  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary Aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 11-18  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Coeducational  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School (total)                            | 868  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | Local Authority  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs D Lazarus  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 23-24 January 2007   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Forest Road<br>Barkingside, Ilford, Essex<br>IG6 3HB       |
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Pikuach inspectors and one shadow inspector. The inspectors visited eleven lessons, and held meetings with staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at samples of pupils' written work and parental questionnaires, as well as Departmental documentation.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at aspects of the following:

- Teaching and learning, marking and assessment
- Achievements and standards
- Involving parents in school events
- Community cohesion and the role Kehilla plays in the school

### Information about the school

King Solomon is an average-sized mixed Jewish secondary school in Barkingside. It mostly serves the local Jewish communities of Ilford and Chigwell, but a small number of students come to the school from North West London. The official religious status of the school is modern orthodox and Zionist, but students come from families which represent a wide spectrum of Jewish observance and practice, including a large number who are non-observant. The school has recently started to admit non-Jewish children when places are available.

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## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

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## Main findings

The Jewish Studies Department at King Solomon High School provides a warm friendly and supportive environment for staff and pupils. The quality of provision of Jewish education is good overall, and the Head of Department (who has been in post just over a year) is leading a team of teachers committed to implementing appropriate changes and developments in order to strengthen the Department and take it forward.

There are good partnerships between King Solomon High School and the wider community (for example JNF, World Jewish Relief and Three Faiths Forum) which promote learning and well-being, and which give a high level of care, support and guidance in order to enhance the pupils' learning experience. The creation of the Kehilla (Informal Jewish Education) Department has added another dimension to the growth and development of Jewish Studies. A pupil informed inspectors that Kehilla is creating a Jewish life "buzz" at the school. It is providing wide-ranging opportunities for building community relationships both inside and outside the school. King Solomon High School works with Jewish schools in Barcelona and Israel and non-Jewish schools within the local community.

Pupils attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall, and often outstanding. Pupils are happy to come to school, and they speak enthusiastically, articulately and with real knowledge and understanding about both formal and informal learning and about the activities available to them. A range of school trips provide pupils with stimulating and life-changing opportunities, enabling them to grow individually and spiritually and helping them to become independent young adults.

Teaching is good with some outstanding features to it. Lessons are well planned and enable pupils from the range of ability groups to access the curriculum and sustain progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and good procedures have been put in place that ensure sufficient support is given to those with special educational needs including gifted and talented pupils. Behaviour was outstanding during the lessons inspected and around the school with pupils showing real *Derech Eretz* (respect) to visiting inspectors. ICT was used impressively in the majority of lessons that were observed. Teachers use creative methods where appropriate, and pupils are given many opportunities for individualised and paired learning. All staff requested, and were given feedback after observation and showed themselves to be reflective practitioners and demonstrated a keenness to develop.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement is outstanding and has had a major impact on the development of the Department during the last year. The Head of Department has introduced a number of new measures and strategies designed to raise levels of knowledge, understanding and achievement and improve efficiency; in particular at key stages four and five. The positive results of these changes are already being seen, but in terms of public examination results they should filter through during the next two or three years. Extremely effective systems have been introduced in order to monitor pupils' progress, and they are being constantly reviewed.

The Department has a clear picture of its performance, and this has resulted in good progress and demonstrated the capacity to develop the provision of Jewish Studies and sustain improvement. The support of the Head Teacher who is himself a Jewish educator and governors has contributed significantly to these developments.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

To ensure marking of pupils’ work in KS3 is consistent and includes guidance to help pupils progress by more explicit coaching comments and target setting

To continue developing procedures to raise achievement at key stages four and five

To continue to develop the innovative Kehilla (Informal Jewish Education) programme

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

|          |
|----------|
| <b>2</b> |
|----------|

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Pupils’ attainment  | 2   |
| The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress  | 2   |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress            | 2   |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?  | 2   |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe?   | 1   |
| How well do pupils behave?  | 1   |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?  | N/A |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?  | 1   |
| Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 1   |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 1   |
| What is the extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?                                | 1   |

In all their encounters with pupils, the inspectors found a warm, friendly and supportive environment. Pupils on the whole were very happy to come to school and that they were making good progress; and felt comfortable to speak with, and if necessary confide in, their teachers. A harmonious atmosphere pervaded the school.

Pupils demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of Jewish Studies, and they continue to practise their skills, and are developing their competence as learners in a

wide range of areas. Pupils enjoy learning as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and engagement across a range of subjects in Jewish education. The behaviour of pupils in lessons observed was outstanding, and they seemed respectful of each others' needs; for instance, this was the case when individualised learning was taking place and during question and answer sessions when pupils listened intently and were highly considerate and supportive of each other.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider communities under the auspices of the Kehilla Department and through initiatives such as the school's partnership with World Jewish Relief which included a packathon on Purim and a visit to the Ukraine in October. Chagim provide opportunities to bring together the formal and informal Jewish educational provision at the same time as enhancing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*Shacharit* (morning service) takes place on a voluntary basis once a week and residential activities include daily services and *Birchat Hamazon* (Grace after Meals). The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

### How effective is the provision?

These are the grades for the quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The quality of teaching   | 2 |
| The use of assessment to support learning   | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support   | 1 |

Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of subject knowledge, understanding, attitudes and behaviour; good procedures have been put in place that ensure sufficient support is given to those with special educational needs including gifted and talented pupils. The Jewish Studies curriculum that has been developed demonstrates structured progression within each topic covered through the different key stages. The key stage three curriculum is values based underpinned by the study of texts which is appropriate for the current intake of the school. Hebrew skills, both reading and writing are taught by the Modern Hebrew Department.

Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and are very good role models for the pupils. Excellent examples of uses of technology were observed and pupils themselves were able to interact with this technology with ease. Teachers used creative methods where appropriate, and pupils are given many opportunities for individualised and paired learning. All staff requested and were given feedback after observation and showed themselves to be reflective practitioners and demonstrated a keenness to develop.

Praise and encouragement by teachers was well received by pupils, and this had a very positive impact on the pupils and the overall atmosphere of lessons.

The inspectors were extremely impressed with the level of planning and preparation. In the majority of lessons observed, appropriate provision was made for pupils with special educational needs and in most cases there was a clear link between lesson objectives and learning outcomes.

An assessment procedure has been put in place which is likely to have a significant impact on the consistency of assessment throughout the Department.

Marking of exercise books was overall satisfactory; however it did not consistently include comments to make pupils understand what they had done well and what they needed to do to improve.

**How effective are leadership and management?**

These are the grades for leadership and management

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement  | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination   | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures  | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers  | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being  | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion   | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money  | 1 |

Leadership and Management in the Department are outstanding. A clear direction by the Head of Jewish Studies has been set leading to improvement and the drive towards high quality Jewish education. There is an impressive level of commitment, encouragement and assistance from the Head Teacher who also teaches in the Department. Outstanding leadership is also shown by the Kehilla team.

The creation of Kehilla has undoubtedly enhanced Jewish learning in the school, and enabled the Department to offer a varied exciting and enriching curriculum (formal and informal) to the pupils. Kehilla and the range of trips have helped to improve the school’s effectiveness in developing partnerships promoting learning and well-being and community cohesion with the local and wider Jewish community. An example of this is the partnership with World Jewish Relief, which led to the Year 12 mission to the Ukraine. Regular meetings enable key areas of development to be discussed and shared vision and strategies help drive improvement. Kehilla offers enormous leadership opportunities to pupils, particularly sixth form students. Inspectors were



impressed by preparations that sixth form students were undertaking to organise Chanukah activities for the rest of the school; this included working in teams and presenting to peers.

Key initiatives designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning have led to a raising of standards for both teachers and pupils. The introduction of generic feedback forms, the regular audit of books and files and new schemes of work enable the curriculum to be developed in a clear and structured way throughout the school, and help ensure that progress is maintained.

### Sixth form

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form     | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form  | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 1 |
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form     | 2 |

The effectiveness and efficiency of sixth form Jewish education is good overall, and there is a wide provision offered to the students. Students in the sixth form learn well and are very enthusiastic about their courses and teachers. Inspectors found that there was an excellent relationship between students and their teachers in the sixth form, which enables very good progress to be made, academically, personally and socially.

A good number of students take the Religious Studies AS and A2 courses, but for those who do not follow an innovative General Jewish Studies Programme that is offered for one period a week covering a range of courses and classes, for example the Ambassadors Programme and Lunch and Learn which is organised in conjunction with local visiting speakers. The General Jewish Studies programme has its challenges, not least because it is compulsory, and there is no examination or assessment at the end of the year.

In addition to these Religious Studies and General Jewish Studies courses, the Kehilla Department is involved in developing and introducing a wide range of extra-curricular activities in which sixth form students can participate. The Ambassadors Programme impresses upon students the fact that they have an important role to play in the community and that they are ambassadors for the school, local and national communities as well as for the State of Israel. Students make a positive contribution to the school and the wider communities through their participation in, and leadership of, a variety of activities. The school trip to Poland which is led by the Head Teacher is an important experience for Year 12 students and helps their social emotional spiritual and cultural development, and the visit to the Ukraine enables them to discover what Jewish life is like in Eastern Europe and to experience a community which contrasts with their own.

The Head of Jewish Studies also has responsibility for leading and managing the sixth form and has introduced a number of very good initiatives during the last year,

in particular in the area of assessment. Regular examination essays and standard assessment criteria are now in place and aim to develop key skills required for examination success together with a more consistent approach to marking and assessing students' work. Included in this initiative are target setting and coaching comments designed to help students' progress. This development was the result of a careful analysis of last year's A Level results in Religious Studies which demonstrated that students clearly found the textual study papers more challenging than those in the Judaism section.

### Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at King Solomon High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 19 completed questionnaires.

|   | Always | Most of the time | Occasionally | Never |
|---|--------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school |        | X                |              |       |

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 What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description  |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.   |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.  |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.  |
| 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. Pikuach inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

## Common terminology used by inspectors

**Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.

**Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.

**Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.

**Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the Headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



Sign off  
Lead inspector/HMI

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