

King Solomon High School

Inspection report

Local authority	Redbridge
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach
Inspection dates	11-12 December 2013
Lead inspector	Richard Felsenstein

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Co-educational
Number on roll	870
Appropriate authority	Local Authority
Chair	Stephanie Sollosi
Headteacher	Jo Shuter
Date of previous school inspection	9-10 December 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Richard Felsenstein	Lead Inspector
Sharon Raphael	Team Inspector
Alan Shaw	Team Inspector

This inspection was carried out by three inspectors. They visited thirteen lessons or parts of lessons in addition to *Tefillah* (prayer). They held meetings with the Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, governors, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including students' written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies and Kehila curriculum, self-evaluation document, performance management, professional development, recording and tracking data. Joint lesson observations took place and the conclusions reached by Inspector and Head of Jewish Studies Department were almost identical.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- The Jewish Studies curriculum
- The achievement and progress pupils make in Jewish education
- The quality of teaching and learning and assessment in Jewish education
- Leadership, Management and Governance in Jewish education
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship.

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. The official religious status of the school is modern orthodox and Zionist, but its students come from families which represent a wide spectrum of Jewish observance and practice, including a large number who are non-observant. The school now has a large intake of non-Jewish students which has necessitated a great deal of thought and planning in relation to the Jewish Studies curriculum.

In Years 7-9 in Jewish Studies, the students are taught in mixed ability sets; there are two sets of Jewish students (including some non-Jewish students who have attended Jewish primary schools) and two sets of non-Jewish students. In Year 10, there are two sets of Jewish students and a third set containing Jewish and non-Jewish students. The increase in non-Jewish students at King Solomon during the last few years has necessitated curriculum development which has taken into account the changing clientele.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
The achievement of students in their Jewish education	2
The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education	2
The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
The extent of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the duty to fulfill 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 education provided at King Solomon High School is good because:

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because diversity and difference are valued and celebrated and the school is very successful in meeting its aims.
- Achievement is good and the systems of tracking and recording that are in place enable the students to make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching overall is good and relationships are excellent. Teachers have high expectations and plan and teach lessons that deepen students' knowledge and understanding.
- The curriculum has been well planned, developed and thought through and enables the students to link Jewish learning and values to their everyday lives.
- Leadership and Management of Jewish Studies and *Kehila* are of a very high quality and ensure that the students make good progress and achieve well in their Jewish education.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The quality of teaching needs to be outstanding and never less than consistently good.
- Taking into account their starting points, the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress should be higher in relation to their potential.
- Marking, target setting and differentiation need further development.
- The school's Jewish curriculum needs to provide highly tailored programmes for students with different needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that marking of students' work is more frequent and consistent. It should include target setting and coaching comments in order to help progress.
- Ensure that the differentiation of work for different ability levels is considered when planning lessons, operates in practice during the lesson and when setting homework.
- Ensure that support staff are well briefed prior to lessons
- Introduce a daily act of collective worship.

Achievement of students at the school in their Jewish education is good

Taking into account the different starting points of the students at King Solomon, achievement is good. The majority of both Jewish and non-Jewish students are making or exceeding expected progress.

The school closely tracks progress of individuals and groups and data systems have been put in place which show progress against set targets for older students. King Solomon uses the "Go 4 Schools" system and the Fischer Family Trust to set targets for the students. Inspectors were impressed that students are aware of their targets and how to meet them and Year 11 and above know their targets particularly well.

Overall progress is good and a newly instigated "Raising Achievement Plan" will inform interventions necessary to further raise standards of achievement. Data is collected and collated each half-term and is then passed to teachers for appropriate student intervention. The evidence clearly shows that most students are working at or beyond their targets, and that often those not meeting targets will be having difficulties in other subjects. Progress of the more able is good, however inspectors noted that progress of the less able is not as good, but this is acknowledged and is being addressed.

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and those with English as an Additional Language are very well catered for in some instances, for example, a worksheet was translated into Bulgarian. The committed team of support staff know their students well and understand their needs and skills. These students are mostly fully included in class and they make appropriate levels of progress. Work is not always appropriately suited to differing needs; this is an area for development.

Each unit of work in Jewish Studies is graded, thus progress can be seen across different aspects of the curriculum. Achievement has to be judged in the context of some learners having no prior Jewish knowledge, others are observant and knowledgeable. Non-Jewish students demonstrate steadily improving knowledge and progress. Jewish students have a wide range of base knowledge and practice; some of these learners gain much whilst others progress less well than their non-Jewish peers.

At Key stage 5, 2013 A2 Religious Studies results were generally as expected. From 16 entries, 5 students (31%) exceeded their target grades and 9 students (56%) achieved their target grade; the overall A* - C pass rate was 88%. At AS level results were similarly high, with 76% of students exceeding their target grades. At GCSE, where there was a slight drop in the pass rate from 2012 and 2011, the department now offers Philosophy and Ethics, as this provides a more relevant course for the changing student intake.

The quality of teaching and learning in Jewish education is good

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good because students make good progress, and teachers have high expectations. The lessons seen by inspectors showed good planning and concepts are taught that deepen students' Jewish knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop a range of skills across the Jewish curriculum.

During the lessons observed, teachers listened to students' thoughts and ideas, and skilfully questioned them in order to reshape tasks and explanations and improve learning. There is a positive climate for learning, and students are interested and engaged. During the lessons, behaviour was excellent and teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge.

In Year 10 GCSE Religious Studies lessons on marriage, there were extremely well planned and creative methods and activities used for teaching and learning. Inspectors observed some excellent discussions on: "What students know about a Jewish wedding," and extremely imaginative ways of developing the students' understanding of different aspects of a Jewish wedding. Also in Year 10 lessons, inspectors saw a teacher's *tallit* being used to demonstrate what a *Chupah* looks like (a good way of presenting the educational points to kinaesthetic learners,) watched the wedding scene from "Fiddler on the Roof," and had a plenary session based on the quiz show "Who wants to be a millionaire!" At the end of these good lessons, teachers had assessed students' learning and progress regularly and

accurately. In the overwhelming majority of lessons observed, teachers ensured that students knew how well they had done and what they needed to do to improve.

Good teaching occurred when the students were engaged in discussions about *Kasher* and *Treifa*. In one particular lesson, a variety of activities and methods were used to develop knowledge and understanding about land animals, fish, birds and insects. Students were assessed at each stage of the lesson and were engaged and interested throughout.

In the lessons observed, there were effective teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework, and appropriately targeted support and intervention by Learning Support Assistants. Year 11 lessons were described by a member of support staff as 'wonderful; pitched perfectly, everyone gets involved'. *Kehila* is described as the 'lifblood of the school' by a member of support staff, another explained its 'lovely spirit, it's a community'.

In those lessons that were outstanding teachers engaged pupils using humour, anecdotes, well researched and interesting resources, and a variety of tasks that led to independent thought and work. In a lesson on Ethics and Fair Play for example, the work was meaningful and relevant to the students and fair play was demonstrated through stories about sport.

The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets students' needs is good

The school's curriculum provides well-organised, imaginative and effective opportunities for learning and a broad range of experiences which contribute well to the students' development and well-being.

The Jewish Studies Department has objectives for all students and specific objectives for Jewish and non-Jewish students, for example, Jewish students have objectives "to read Hebrew and traditional Jewish texts," whereas non-Jewish students have objectives such as "to learn about Jewish traditions and their place alongside traditions of other faiths."

Outcomes are specified for all students and additional outcomes for Jewish students, for example, all students "will know a number of Jewish values that impact on contemporary life." Jewish students in addition will "leave us as proud, identifying Jews who will take up their place within and beyond the Jewish community."

Classes are taught separately for Jewish and non-Jewish students up to Year 10. Students' statements to inspectors validated that these aims are shared and being met. The framework in Key Stage Three is structured for each year group for both Jewish and non-Jewish learners. It is based on Chapter 1 *Mishna* 14 of *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) and identifies (1) personal religious responsibilities ("If I am not for myself, who will be for me?"), (2) communal religious responsibilities ("If I am only for myself, what am I?") and (3) future responsibilities ("If not now when?").

Key Stage Four curriculum now offers the GCSE Philosophy and Ethics course. Key stage 5 offers the AS/A2 programmes and enrichment courses. Detailed units of work have been produced by the staff for use by the students.

The school provides a sixth form programme of Jewish education and enrichment through its General Jewish Studies Programme for Years 12 and 13. Students have the opportunity

to volunteer, and to undertake leadership training, including being involved in programmes which aim to equip students for the many issues that arise on university campuses. Inspectors observed a Year 12 General Jewish Studies session which gave students the opportunity to meet and question Union of Jewish Students chaplaincy officers to help prepare them for university life. Questions included: "Which is a good university to go to for Jewish students?" and "Is there anti-Semitism on campus?"

The *Kehila* department augments the Jewish Studies department by providing a plethora of Jewish and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) activities including charity events, inter-faith activities, trips and residentials, Jewish focused visits to other organisations, visiting speakers, and events such as Holocaust Memorial Day. Students related to the inspectors how much the curriculum provided by the Jewish Studies and *Kehila* departments has enhanced their learning and enjoyment of school life and how it has made them feel part of the Jewish and wider community.

Non-Jewish students expressed their views as to how the school has given them an understanding of Judaism as well as showing respect for all faiths.

The extent of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students at King Solomon is outstanding. High quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural education permeates both the formal and informal Jewish Studies provision throughout the school. Students think deeply about their own and others' experiences and try to relate them to a clear set of personal and Jewish values. The students have a good insight, based on first-hand experience, into similarities and difference between Jewish and other cultures and how these may change.

Chagim and other national and international events provide many opportunities to bring together the formal and informal education provision at the same time as enhancing the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The statutory duty of daily collective worship is not being met. A weekly *Mincha* service has been introduced and takes place on Thursday afternoons (which inspectors observed); it was quite well attended and extremely conducive to *davening*. A daily act of collective worship does take place on school trips, but the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students and this is an area for improvement.

Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider Jewish and non-Jewish communities through the outstanding *Kehila* Department. There are community partnerships, support for charities such as raising money for the disaster in the Philippines, inter-school and twinning activities, links with Year 5 at Ilford Jewish Primary School, visits to elderly care homes and other Jewish and non-Jewish organisations. The school holds a *Tzedakah* awareness week that benefits a number of varied Jewish and wider community charities, and is involved in volunteering support activities such as Yoni Jesner, JLGB, and participating in events such as Remembrance Day and Holocaust Memorial Day.

The *Kehila* department has developed close links with a school in Ghana enabling students to learn about each other and to benefit by cross curricular links with geography, personal, social, health and citizenship education and art and design.

Discussions in lessons included "Spiritual versus Physical tensions," "inter-faith issues," the universality of the Ten Commandments and human rights. Inspectors also observed good lessons on marriage where a *Chupah* was constructed in the classroom using a *tallit*, and Fiddler on the Roof was shown, to show the students a scene from a Jewish wedding. A *Ketubah* was brought into class for the pupils to see. Explanations were also given in connection with the spiritual aspects of a Jewish wedding for example, the breaking of a glass.

In a Year 7 lesson, inspectors saw real understanding of the importance of listening to each other, and respect for each other's views; this was a general theme observed by inspectors, that all students' views are valued in Jewish Studies lessons. Behaviour was consistently of a high standard. Students attempt to answer questions even when unsure of the response, in the confident knowledge that they will be commended for trying.

The school objectives include "to gain an appreciation of the UK Jewish and wider faith community both past and present and appreciation of its place in contemporary, wider UK society." This can be seen by looking at examples of both the work of *Kehila* and the Jewish Studies Department mentioned within the Curriculum and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural sections of this report. This also includes inter-school activities, lunchtime discussions, twinning programmes, and informal faith lessons.

The digital screen in the entrance foyer displays details of the weekly *sidra* together with *Shabbat* times. Easy to read, well presented information about the *sidra* enables all students, teachers and visitors to the school to see at a glance what is contained in the weekly *Torah* reading.

Jewish and non-Jewish children learn from each other in what is a rich and rewarding experience. In one lesson, a Muslim girl talked about why she wears a scarf and an excellent discussion followed about covering hair and the Jewish and Moslem attitudes towards modesty.

Inspectors met with a group of twelve pupils from Years 8 to 10, and questioned them about the different aspects of formal and informal Jewish education at King Solomon. The first response sums up what every student felt: "The Jewishness of the school binds everyone together." Inspectors asked what it was like being a non-Jewish student in a Jewish school and one Hindu pupil in Year 10 responded: "It's fun; I really feel part of the school." The students who inspectors interviewed were knowledgeable, articulate and enthusiastic; they were highly complementary about *Kehila*, the *Kehila* drop-in lounge at lunchtime and all its activities and volunteering. They spoke with great enthusiasm about *Haderech* – the student leadership group, the school council, student voice, the student-run Mincha Service on Thursday afternoons, and "Lunch and learn" with a local *Chabad* Rabbi.

Students spoke about "strong" Jewish Studies lessons, and "strong" *Kehila* and that "there is a good balance between formal and informal Jewish education". Links between Jewish life and Remembrance Day were discussed articulately and the meeting concluded with one student saying "*Kehila* is the soul of Judaism in this school – without it the school would not be what it is."

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish education is good

The Heads of Jewish Studies and *Kehila* provide very high quality leadership to both formal and informal Jewish Studies teaching, and pursue excellence in the provision and delivery of Jewish Education. During a period of transition for Jewish Education at King Solomon the governing body is committed to the Jewish ethos of the school being an integral part of its development (an Ethos Committee has been set up), and one which should permeate every part of life at the school.

Key priorities were identified by the Head of Jewish Studies by looking at the School Improvement Plan, monitoring of teaching and learning through quality assurance, data and progress, and consultation with stakeholders for example department staff, line manager and governors. Last year the Senior Leadership Team reviewed the department and also helped identify key priorities. Individual teaching and learning targets are then created through the appraisal cycle set annually which feed into the priorities for leadership and management of the department.

A clear direction has been set by the Heads of Jewish Studies and *Kehila* leading to very good developments in both formal and informal education. For example, in Jewish Studies, changes to the school's intake has necessitated the development of a parallel curriculum, and as far as *Kehila* is concerned there is a very exciting, constantly developing curriculum which permeates every aspect of life at King Solomon.

Staff from both the Jewish Studies and *Kehila* departments are very well supported by the Heads of Departments. They are readily available for advice, support and mentoring. Feedback from a joint observation was judged to be outstanding reflecting the leaders' strengths in teacher training.

The Head of *Kehila* and the *Kehila* department continue to develop and forge links with many "partner" organisations such as Yoni Jesner; JLGB; Three Faiths Forum and Gift. *Kehila* offers many and varied leadership opportunities to students throughout the school, and inspectors were particularly impressed with participation in School Voice and the School Council and *Hadracha* Leadership that includes buddy training and a course for leading *Shabbatonim*.

The Head of Jewish Studies oversees a very good cycle of performance management. Details of meetings were discussed, as were target setting and Professional Development. An example of a target was to "create and implement effective Key Stage 3 assessments." Evidence is added to the system throughout the year, and this includes lesson observations. Professional Development feeds into overall performance management targets.

Teaching is good and improving strongly as a result of accurate monitoring, effective performance management and professional development, which are closely matched to the needs of the school and the staff.

Views of parents and carers

The Pikuach Parental Survey showed that parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the Jewish life and education at the school.

Some of the things parents said included: "Amazing staff in the JS department," "The subject is extremely well led by dedicated, enthusiastic, members of staff," "My son is not Jewish but he seems happy to study Jewish education."

Of the responses received, some parents expressed their wish that the school should further promote its Jewish character and ethos.

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 pupils' 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. Pikuach inspectors will make further visits until it improves.