



Lubavitch House School (Senior Girls)

Inspection report

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| Local authority | Hackney Learning Trust |
| Inspected under the auspices of | Pikuach |
| Inspection dates | 15-16 October 2013 |
| Lead inspector | Leon Bernstein |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 11-18 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Number on roll | 113 |
| Appropriate authority | The Governing Body |
| Chair | Mrs Hinda Lew |
| Headteacher | Mrs Helen Freeman |
| Date of previous school inspection | No previous inspection |
| Address | Lubavitch House 107-115 Stamford Hill London N16 5RP |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Leon Bernstein Lead Inspector

Natalie Barwin Team Inspector

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors. They visited 26 lessons or part of lessons including *Tefillah* (prayers). They held meetings with the Chair of Governors, the Deputy Chair, staff and groups of children. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including children's written work, teachers' lesson plans, the *Kodesh* (Jewish Studies) Curriculum, the school's Self-Evaluation document and the school's Improvement Plan. School leaders also participated in joint lesson observations and the conclusions reached by both school leaders and inspectors were almost identical.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- The achievement and progress students make in Jewish education
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education
- Leadership and Management in Jewish education
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including Collective Worship.

Information about this school

Lubavitch House School (Senior Girls) is a one-form entry Orthodox Jewish School in the heart of Stamford Hill, North London. The school was independent, but has recently become a maintained school and is now federated with Lubavitch Ruth Lunzer Girls' Primary School and the Lubavitch House Boys' School.

The school serves the Orthodox Jewish community and caters specifically, but not exclusively, for families who follow Chabad Lubavitch customs and tradition. Many students travel from areas as far as Wimbledon in South-West London and a large percentage of students commute daily from across Greater London.

The school has implemented an excellent system of vertical streaming in years 9 – 12 for *Chumash*. This has had a marked positive effect across the board, where migration from one group to another allows for the least able and most able to be stretched at their own academic levels, rather than limited to just their own age group. This system works for the girls because of the school's sensitivity in, for example, consulting with parents of sisters, who might otherwise feel some rivalry.

The school bases its ethos generally on the following three principles:

- Developing traditional values of modesty, loyalty, generosity and *Ahavas Yisroel* – love of one’s fellow
- Instilling a sense of pride in being a *Bas Chabad* – Daughter of Chabad – happy to accept leadership roles in the Jewish Community especially *Shlichus* (dedication to the community)
- Developing each girl’s social and moral values, encouraging respect for, and tolerance of, all members of society.

The school totally embraces the ethos of Lubavitch which, in the words of the Head, fosters “a warm approach to *Yiddishkeit* (being Jewish) which is non-judgemental”. The school’s mission statement is one passionately felt by the Head, and which permeates the school: “This school believes that being Jewish is so good it needs to be shared with others!”.

It should be noted that OFSTED inspected the school on 18th and 19th June 2013, while the school was involved with examinations. Pikuach decided to postpone its inspection to maximise observations in the *Kodesh* classes.

Inspection judgements

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| Overall effectiveness | 3 |
| The achievement of pupils in their Jewish education | 3 |
| The quality of teaching and assessment | 3 |
| The extent to which the Jewish Education curriculum meets pupils’ needs | 1 |
| The extent of pupils’ 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 | 3 |

Overall effectiveness: the quality of Jewish education provided in Lubavitch House Senior School (Girls) requires improvement because:

- At present it lacks an overall approach to teaching and learning which fosters high expectations of all students to challenge them academically and monitor their progress over time. The Senior Leadership team is currently working hard to address this.

It is not yet good because:

- The school's curriculum does not yet provide well-organised, planned and imaginative, effective opportunities for learning and a broad range of experiences which contribute well to the students' development and well-being.

The school has the following strengths:

School leaders have been working very hard to address issues of concern and are making progress with this.

There is evidence of very good teaching, and some outstanding teaching in *Kodesh*

- Students are well prepared for the post-school seminary system, an institution of advanced studies in Jewish education.

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of students is outstanding. Pupils are polite, sensitive to the needs of others and show exemplary behaviour throughout the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- Ensuring that *all* teaching is at least good or better, building in systems for Jewish education that will inform future planning to enable children to make even better progress
- Improving standards of assessing, monitoring and marking so that students are clear of their developments and how to improve
- Fully implementing a rigorous tracking system especially for students with special educational needs, so that all stakeholders can monitor performance and help to improve standards

- Developing ways in which Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be integrated into the Jewish educational curriculum so that it becomes part of 21st century learning. This can be put into effect by training the staff to use the very good ICT facilities and software in the classrooms.
- Expanding the use of the newly-implemented Lesson Plan template and train staff in Lesson Planning, focusing for example, on differences between Learning Objectives and Learning Outcomes. Different expectations of Learning Outcomes need to have more depth so that students (and the teachers themselves) are clear about teachers' expectations. The school is currently employing a consultant from The Learning Trust who has plans to develop this and other areas, such as a carefully planned skills grid. The school is also investigating the possibility of bringing in consultants to support teachers in various areas of delivery, ICT etc. Inspectors found staff to be very receptive to constructive criticism and all staff were keen to improve in various areas of pedagogy.
- Reinforcing the ideas and ideals so enthusiastically put over in many *Kodesh* lessons through effective wall displays and students' work in the corridors. Some corridors and classroom had displays and evidence of students' work, while other areas were bare. Given the strong Jewish ethos embedded in the school, there could be much more display work of students' work in *Kodesh* (of the *Kodesh* displays seen, some were very much out of date: *Parshas Tazria/Lag B'Omer* – at the time of the inspection this would make them some six months old). Displays need to be more imaginative and thought-provoking e.g. "What would you do if/when ...?" or "How would you feel if ...?" or "Have you thought about ...?" etc, related to Torah/moral issues, to animate the corridors and bring them more to life. This will be simple to achieve with the school's ideals, which thrive on, and have such a passion for, Jewish education.

Achievement of students at the school requires improvement because:

- Students are progressing at least as well as expected. Groups of students including those with special educational needs are also making progress in line with similar groups of students. Inspectors were unable to ascertain clearly achievement over time because currently there is not an overall agreed and fully implemented system of assessing, monitoring and tracking (there is some baseline testing for Year 7 – CATS and a reading assessment; there is also self-evaluation, as well as teacher evaluation, in *Chumash*, and this is certainly the way forward). Students read well and were able to make inferences from *Meforashim* (classical commentators). This will result in even greater achievement, which can be clearly evaluated, when assessment and tracking systems have been in place over time. Making is an issue as much of the marking is summative. There was some evidence of formative marking and some teachers showed very good practice through the use of 'WWW – What We Like...' and 'EBI – Even Better If ...' systems. Where this was used those students were clearly shown their current standard and how to improve. More teachers need to take this on board and there should be a standard accepted format for written work e.g. dates, title etc. This would equip students to know when work was completed, and would also aid teachers and students to see progress over time.

- There needs to be more evidence of AfL (Assessment for Learning) through a variety of methods beyond individual question and answer techniques. Useful and imaginative techniques such as the use of students' individual whiteboards were seen on inspection, and when this happened there was a healthy 'buzz' of excitement around the classroom. This strategy, as well as others, needs to be more prevalent in a wider range of classrooms and, when in place, will help inform overall teaching strategies.

The quality of teaching and learning and assessment in the school requires improvement because:

- A significant amount of the teaching seen was either didactic or relied on question and answer work which was not graded from the simple to the more complex, but rather appeared to be thought out on the spot. A variety of question types, as well as higher-order questions, would keep the pace in some lessons observed, and would also stretch the higher ability students. Inspectors did see teaching which was either good with outstanding features or outstanding and some teachers would benefit by observing these lessons. In these lessons, students were really challenged to think for themselves and invited to challenge the teacher herself. A significant increase in the number and range of these types of lessons would serve the school well and would raise the overall grade of teaching and learning. Inspectors are cognizant of the fact that senior leaders take this very seriously and are making great efforts to address this.
- Students need to be challenged more to think for themselves. Where inspectors saw paired work it was very good, and students enjoyed the task of working things out for themselves. Wider opportunities, such as group work, would enable students to engage in greater dialogue and become active participants in the learning process, rather than passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge, as was noted in a number of cases. In one class, there was a very healthy atmosphere of academic challenge, as a pupil objected (politely) to the teacher's reasoning. The teacher took up the challenge, checked the point, then conceded that the pupil was right. This was excellent as it fostered not only a trusting teacher-class relationship but also encouraged the students to think for themselves.
- Greater use could be made of ICT in *Kodesh*, especially using the excellent IWB/software facilities provided by the school. Staff need to be trained on how to exploit the IWB more, link it to *Kodesh* areas then use it engage and enthuse students. In one lesson, for example, too much time was spent trying to locate various *posukim* (verses), which could have been avoided by displaying the *posukim* on the board, then annotating the text with the IWB's highlighter. In lessons where this procedure was seen it was excellent, and all the girls were thoroughly engaged and enthused.

The quality of leadership and management of governance of the school requires improvement because:

- Leaders and managers have not yet embedded a robust overall system which ensures that teaching in most areas is at least good. Teaching strategies in a significant number of teachers need to be honed and developed beyond a didactic approach, in order to present students with challenges beyond individual question and answer work. Staff training, as well as peer-to-peer mentoring, should go some way to addressing this issue.
- There is not yet a strong link between teaching and student's achievement over time. A significant amount of teachers do not yet assess students' learning and progress regularly and accurately.
- The School Improvement Plan needs to be clearly articulated to all stakeholders, implemented, and then monitored. The Senior Leadership Team has made tremendous efforts to put together a solid and comprehensive School Improvement Plan, with key actions, success criteria and target dates. It has been well thought through and plans are already underway to cascade this to stakeholders. The strong and committed team has clearly demonstrated the capacity to secure improvement in the school.
- Key leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, have a clear vision for overall improvement, and are determined to see the school's success through a carefully planned strategic mapping of desired improvements. The Chair of Governors is clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and is currently keen to ensure that Governors are trained in lesson observations.
- Robust systems of overall monitoring and assessment are required to inform general planning and strategic planning for the future. The Senior Leadership Team is committed to this and some of this has already begun. The Head of *Kodesh* is putting much time and effort into setting up systems of assessment. The SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) is firmly committed to raising standards of students with Special Educational Needs and is undergoing training to develop this area. There needs to be a stronger support in middle management and the school is currently investigating this. The Head, in particular, with her unbound enthusiasm, dedication and passion for the school and its ethos, is determined to lead the school forward in this period of great change and promise.

The quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because:

- *Tefillah* (Prayer) fulfills the statutory requirement for Collective Worship. It is sincere, organized and takes place every day.
- Students think deeply about their own and other's experiences and relate them to a clear set of personal values.
- Students show exemplary behavior towards their teachers and towards each other, treating visitors with the utmost respect and politeness. They listen to each other respectfully and offer challenging comments when working together in pairs, not being afraid to air their views, whilst remaining sensitive to the feelings of others.
- Students display a quiet confidence and show great potential for future leadership roles, which they are encouraged to undertake and bring into the wider community.
- They are very involved with community activities and are caring of and sensitive to wider world issues by contributing to their designated *Tzedakkah* (charity) boxes, for example in aid of 'Hurricane Sandy' last year. The message of collegiate responsibility was seen to be reinforced at an Assembly, where the overall message was the responsibility of the *Chabad* Movement in general, and the girls there in particular, to reach out to everyone regardless of background or level of observance, and bring them closer to *Hashem*. The school stands as a model of excellent practice for other schools in this respect.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach used Survey Monkey during the inspection visit to canvas the views of parents, who are unanimously supportive of the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| 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. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |