

PARDES HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Inspection report

LEA	Barnet
Inspection dates	12 th – 13 th November 2008
Reporting Inspector	Rabbi Geoffrey Shisler
Team Inspector	Rabbi Yaakov Heimann
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	Hendon Lane
School category	Voluntary Aided		Finchley
Age range of pupils	4-11		London N3 1SA
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	0208 343 3568
Number on roll	190	Fax number	0208 343 4804
Appropriate authority	Barnet	Chair of governors	Mr A Sprung
Date of previous inspection	12 th – 13 th December 2006	Headteacher	Mr R Leach Rabbi G Abeless

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Introduction

Description of the school

Pardes House Primary School is an orthodox Jewish School for boys, founded in 1952 and located in Finchley Central, London. The majority of pupils come from Golders Green and surrounding areas, although some come from further away. It is one form entry. The religious affiliation of the school is strictly orthodox and is directed by its own Rabbinical Council - *Vaad Hachinuch*. Most of the Year 6 pupils leaving the school go on to the adjoining Pardes House Grammar School.

A large proportion of the timetable is devoted to *Limmudei Kodesh* which occupies most of the morning for all the classes throughout the school. The school day for Years 4 to 6 finishes at 5.20p.m, with the period from 4.30 being used for *Limmudei Kodesh*. On Sundays there are additional sessions in *Limmudei Kodesh* for all classes.

A new *Menahel* had just been appointed at the time of the previous Pikuach Inspection in December 2006. He has since left and there is now an Acting *Menahel* who has only been in place since the beginning of this academic year. Owing to a family bereavement he had to miss a certain amount of time from school, and these factors have contributed to the fact that the *Limmudei Kodesh* Department has not yet made the progress hoped for since the previous inspection.

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 *Limmudei Kodesh* provision in Pardes House Primary School is satisfactory overall. The school provides a warm and caring environment. Pupils are happy and polite and very well behaved. There is an excellent working relationship between the *Menahel* and the new Head Teacher and a complete understanding of the chain of authority within the school which augurs well for the future stability of its leadership.

All members of staff are knowledgeable and display a considerable commitment to the pupils. They are excellent role-models and promotion of good *middos* is emphasised constantly. Traditional methods of planning and assessment have been used in the *Limmudei Kodesh* department, the work revolving around *parashas hashovua* and the forthcoming *Yomim Tovim*, and a regular *Farher* (in depth oral questioning) by the *Menahel*, and most pupils make good progress as they move through the school.

In the past, leadership and management issues created some instability in the school and Governors are to be congratulated on their determination to address weaknesses that were identified in the previous report. It is to be hoped that the new *Menahel*, who is well-liked and respected by both pupils, parents and Governors, and utterly committed to the school, will now deal with those issues, as well as any arising from this inspection.

Full written *Limmudei Kodesh* schemes of work are not in place, and there is very little evidence of planning by the department or by individual members of staff. In the thirteen lessons observed during the inspection, only one teacher had made an attempt to produce a lesson plan. Little evidence of differentiation was seen in the lessons observed. In Key Stage 1 some extra help is given to boys who are having difficulties with their Hebrew reading and a start has been made in producing material for this purpose

Almost every lesson observed was of the traditional teacher-led style. Other than *Chumashim* and *Gemorrohs*, teaching and learning resources available are very few, and only one lesson was observed in which an interactive white board was used. There are countless resources now available to enhance learning of the most complex of subjects in *Limmudei Kodesh* that could be employed to the enormous benefit of all the pupils.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- * Develop and implement a complete, progressive *Limmudei Kodesh* written syllabus, and schemes of work for the whole school.

- *Teachers should keep clear records of all work covered in each class in order to provide a basis for future planning.

- * Establish on-going in-service training for all members of the *Limmudei Kodesh* department to:

- [i] give them the skills to prepare lessons in a professional manner and

- [ii] more effectively assess the progress of their pupils.

- *Develop greater provision for both SEN and Gifted and Talented pupils to stretch the higher achievers and further the progress the lower ability pupils.

Achievement and standards

In spite of the lack of a formal structure to the *Limmudei Kodesh* programme that exists at present, most pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Assessment takes place on an informal basis using traditional methods of weekly questions and *Farher* by the *Menahel*, but this will undoubtedly improve considerably once a syllabus and schemes of work, and clear written assessment procedures are in place and are being effectively implemented.

Since the nursery is run completely independently of the school, the only part of the Foundation Stage that was inspected was the Reception class. Here, the children are nurtured and cared for in an environment of warmth and love. Records of each child's attainment in *Alef Beis* are passed on from the nursery, and reading assessment procedures have recently been introduced. The pupils know how to blend letters and vowels and the *Rebbe* (teacher) has devised a number of games to help them learn to identify the different letters. In one of the lessons observed, the lesson was well-balanced and four different activities took place within half-an-hour. The children participated in telling the story of *Avrohom* and *Sedom*; played a 'catching fish' for *Shabbos* game, in which the fish had different Hebrew letters inscribed on them; were given two pretzels each to make the *Tseirei* vowel, before saying the *Berocho* together and eating their pretzel; and then singing together. However, although there was a good variety of activity taking place, the children sat on their chairs throughout, and several grew restless.

Of the areas listed in the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* document the personal, social and emotional; communication, language and literacy; and mathematical development areas were covered, but there were no discernable elements of creative development, physical development or knowledge and understanding of the world in the lessons observed. Moreover, owing to a lack of forward planning notes, it is not possible to tell to what extent these are to be built into future lessons.

The standard of Hebrew reading throughout the school is generally very good, and workbooks are being produced by the new *Menahel* for pupils in Key Stage 1 to improve pupils' fluency. Work has also recently begun to produce materials to raise the level of *yedioh kelolis* (general Jewish knowledge) in the school.

An outstanding programme called '*Kol Haloshon*' is being utilised by the school which enables pupils, or their parents, to dial a telephone number to hear a recording by the *Menahel* or another *Rebbe*, of the substance of a lesson that they might have missed. This was used recently by a pupil who was in the USA for a family *simcha!* (celebration). The school is to be congratulated on this highly innovative and valuable use of a modern resource.

A *Rebbe* has just been appointed to become the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) for *Limmudei Kodesh*, and the school expects that as he begins to take on more responsibility in this role, pupils will benefit from the more formal structure that he will put in place.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents have the personal telephone numbers of each *Rebbe* and can contact the relevant teacher at any time if they have concerns about their child.

Statutory requirements of a daily act of collective worship are fully complied with. Years 5 and 6 pupils *daven Shacharis* (pray the morning service) jointly each day, with a *minyan* of *Rebbes* (followed by breakfast) and in all the classes *Minchah* is davened daily. Most pupils *daven* with great gusto, and the majority of pupils participate with much enthusiasm.

Attendance is very good and evidence gained from observation of lessons, as well as informal discussion during break times with pupils, evinces the fact that they enjoy *Limmudei Kodesh*. Healthy eating is promoted in the school, with appropriate meals being provided at lunchtime.

Children learn about other countries and peoples in their secular history and geography lessons. Educational visits are made to various venues outside the school and recently classes have visited, among other places, HMS Belfast, the

Thames Barrier, and the local re-cycling centre. The school also participates in inter-school sports in the Borough, as well as mathematical competitions. Pardes House Primary School was recently recognised as 'School of the Month' by Barnet South School Sport Partners, and children are being encouraged to increase their sporting activities.

Behaviour in all lessons observed was very good indeed, and pupils conducted themselves with *derech erez* around the school.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Overall teaching and learning is satisfactory. The *Rebbes* are excellent role-models, and are deeply committed to their pupils and school. They have both the motivation and capacity to improve.

Rebbes are secure in their subject knowledge. They show great enthusiasm and dedication to their teaching, and imbue the boys with an *ahavas HaTorah* (love of the Torah) and *cheishek* (great desire) for learning. Good *middos* (ethical qualities) underpin the whole ethos of the school, and are constantly reinforced during lessons.

Overall of out of 13 lessons observed, most of them were satisfactory, some were good, two outstanding and one was unsatisfactory.

Where teaching was satisfactory, the lessons were entirely teacher-led, and there were few opportunities for independent work. In most lessons observed children were not challenged enough to reason. In none of the lessons observed were worksheets used for support or to enhance learning or to give the pupils the opportunity to extend their thinking and writing skills.

Clear lesson plans would ensure that there is a focused learning objective that can be shared with the children. As there are no fixed schemes of work, teachers do not always know how much ground to cover or what they have previously taught.

There are no written assessments in place to inform future planning, although work has begun in Reading in Reception, and *yedio kelolis*.

Records of work covered consist only of marks given to pupils for the occasional written tests given in class.

There is very little children's work on *Limmudei Kodesh* on display.

Owing to the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff, most children attain a good standard of learning, in spite of the teachers' lack of professional skills. Formalised planning and assessment would raise standards even higher and make sure that all children in the school reach their full potential.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

The quality and range of subjects taught are in line with the aims of the school and are satisfactory. As highlighted in the previous report, there is no formal written curriculum.

In the short time the acting *Menahel* has been in post, he has developed a *kriyah* (reading) curriculum for Reception, and plans to extend it to Year 1 in the near future. Some work has begun to develop a *yedio kelolis* curriculum. The school places emphasis on Hebrew reading, which begins in the lower part of the Foundation Stage. New school-home link *Tehillim* (Psalms) and *Nach* (Prophets) reading record booklets have been created and their use successfully implemented to enhance the accuracy and fluency of the children's reading. This is in addition to the reading in actual lessons.

There is still little emphasis on teaching Grammar. This issue needs to be addressed, since a thorough knowledge of *dikduk* would enable the children to become independent learners.

Pupils gain an *ahavas haTorah* and confidence in their achievements as they progress through the school.

The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities that support the learning. These are very well supported by the children and parents. For example the school brings in *Matza* and *Shofor* workshops before *Pesach*, and *tzitzis* making. The school also has a *Shabbos Hisachdus* for Years 4, 5 and 6 which the Principal, *Rebbes* and students attend. The aim is to create a unity between the children and further strengthen the positive relationships between the *Rebbes* and *talmidim* (pupils). Following this, they have a *Melave Malka* (social gathering at the termination of *Shabbos*) to which parents and grandparents are also invited. Further *Melave Malkas* for children of younger classes and their families follow.

The school choir, which also participates in the JNF inter-school choir festival, entertain residents of a local home for the aged. The children collect *tzedokoh* for poor families, and there are regular speakers for the *Erev Shabbos* (eve of *Shabbos*) assemblies.

Grade 3

Care, guidance and support

The provision for care, guidance and support of pupils is excellent, and the school provides a safe and secure environment. There is a full-time security officer as well as CCTV cameras in place.

There are written policies on anti-bullying, Health and Safety and Child Protection and the school recently held an 'anti-bullying week' to highlight its importance. A display on this topic is on the wall of the corridor which contains some children's work. It also contains Jewish teachings relating to the issue which serve to underscore its importance.

The parents are generally very supportive of the school and out of the 45 completed questionnaires received back, by far the majority are satisfied or very satisfied with the progress their children are making.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school is now good. The Inspectors were most impressed by the governors who demonstrate a complete understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are keen to embrace all means possible to support the *Menahel* and help him bring the *Limmudei Kodesh* department up to modern professional standards. As they told the Inspectors: "The school wants more from itself."

The Head Teacher is totally supportive of the *Menahel* and they have an excellent working relationship.

The *Menahel* is very enthusiastic, and is keen to enhance his personal management skills. He is committed to raising the level of professionalism of every member of the *Limmudei Kodesh* staff and has already organised some in-service training for the Rebbes. It is intended that in-training sessions will become a regular feature of the *Limmudei Kodesh* department. In the very few weeks that he has been in post, he has already begun to make a positive impact on both staff and pupils.

The school is well-aware of its strengths and the areas that need further development. With the enthusiasm and determination of the Head Teacher, *Menahel*, Governors and Rebbes, it is well-placed to move forward and effect improvement.

Grade: 2

Inspection judgement

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 unsatisfactory.	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of pupils?	3	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being?	2	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	

Achievement and standards

How well do pupils achieve?	2	
The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by pupils	2	
How well pupils' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils	2	
How well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the pupils?	1	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including collective worship	1	
The behaviour of pupils	1	
The attendance of pupils	1	
How well pupils enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution to the community.	1	
How well pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of pupils' needs?	3	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils?	3	
How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported including provision for collective worship?	1	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils?	2	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are protected	Yes	
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

The extent to which schools enable pupils to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Pupils are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Pupils are educated about sexual health.	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that pupils stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	No
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Pupils are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Pupils, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable pupils to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote pupils' basic skills.	Yes
Pupils have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	NA
Careers education and guidance is provided to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	NA
Education for all pupils aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment	

and the economy.	NA
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