





# Pardes House Primary School

#### Inspection report

LEA Barnet
Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates22 - 23 March 2011Reporting inspectorRev Michael Binstock

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

**Type of school** Primary

School category Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils 4 - 11
Gender of pupils Boys

**Number on roll** 

School (total) 164

**Appropriate authority** The governing body

ChairMr A SprungHeadteacherMr R LeachMenahelRabbi R Abeless

**Date of previous school inspection** 12 – 13 November 2008 **School address** Hendon Lane, Finchley

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#### **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by two Pikuach inspectors. The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's provision for Jewish Education. They observed 10 lessons covering all year groups and all Rebbes plus three davening sessions. They held meetings with the Governor with responsibility for the Kodesh department, staff and pupils, and scrutinised the school's documentation plus samples of pupils' written work. In addition, 12 questionnaire responses from parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of the curriculum
- the quality of teaching, planning and assessment
- the quality of provision and outcomes for all groups of pupils
- the impact of the school's actions to bring about improvement

#### Information about the school

Pardes House Primary School is a one-form entry voluntary aided primary school for boys aged 4-11 located in the London Borough of Barnet The school has occupied its present site in Finchley, north-west London since 1990. The school was established in 1952 to serve the needs of the growing Chareidi community in the area. There are currently 164 pupils on roll and they come principally from Golders Green and surrounding areas although some come further afield including Boreham Wood and Stamford Hill. Approximately 10% speak English as an additional language (EAL), but only a small number need support as most are able to speak and write fluently in English. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils transfer to Pardes House Grammar School.

### **Inspection judgements**

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

#### **Overall effectiveness**

2

# **Capacity for sustained improvement**

1

# Main findings

The quality of Jewish education at Pardes House is good overall and there are some outstanding features that characterise the school. Significantly, it offers an excellent environment for providing a full orthodox Jewish education with Limmudei Kodesh being a core component of the school's daily curriculum. The warmth and beauty of Yiddishkeit permeates every aspect of school life and provides pupils with a superb foundation for their development as fully committed B'nei Torah. Pupils have extremely positive views about the school. They enjoy their lessons and feel well protected and supported. There are very good links with outside agencies which promote learning and well-being and enhance the pupils' personal development. This underpins the schools commitment to provide a high level of care, guidance and support. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour, both in class and around the school is good overall and often outstanding.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching is good overall with some lessons judged as outstanding. This ensures that the rate of learning and progress of most pupils are good to outstanding. As a result, high standards are attained by pupils by the time they reach Year 6. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Further development is needed in this department so that the children are exposed to a more varied and stimulating range of activities that will develop their independence, confidence and social skills.

Considerable progress has been made since the previous Pikuach inspection when various weaknesses relating to curriculum, teaching, planning and assessment were identified. Under the inspiring leadership of the Menahel, much has been achieved in addressing these weaknesses and the inspectors now judge the standards reached as good. The senior leadership team strongly supported by the governors are to be warmly commended for this excellent improvement. The school's view of itself is accurate and its track record of implementing change shows it is well placed to build on its strengths. Its capacity to improve further is excellent.

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

- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have the same opportunities for active learning that they receive in their secular lessons
- Further develop teachers' skills in providing more differentiated tasks in their lesson planning so as to enable all groups, including the more able and gifted and talented pupils, to make progress commensurate with their abilities
- Extend pupils' skills by providing more opportunities for creative writing
- Produce a curriculum document with detailed schemes of work for the teaching of Yedioh Kelolis (General Jewish Knowledge)

# **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

2

Pupils' achievement in Limmudei Kodesh is good overall and in Key Stage 2, it is mostly outstanding. This was particularly evident when testing a representative group of pupils from Years 3 and 6 when it was noted that the older pupils had grasped concepts and were able to explain what they had learned at an impressive level. It is noteworthy that from Year 4 upwards, Kodesh lessons are now conducted in English whereas for the earlier years the policy remains to teach in Yiddish. Discussions with the group of Year 3 pupils reveal that they too would prefer to learn in English.

Hebrew reading standards overall are good and in some cases, older pupils read with great accuracy and confidence. In textual studies including Mishnah and Gemoro, high standards are achieved by most pupils.

Discussions with Key Stage 2 pupils reveal that they have extremely positive feelings about their school. They enjoy their lessons and have great respect for their Rebbes and teachers. 'We know that they look after us and we learn a lot' was a view expressed by a Year 5 pupil to the approval of others in the group. A Year 6 pupil said 'I always get the help I need in my lessons'. Evidence gained from discussions with older pupils reveal that they are thoughtful and articulate. They grow in confidence and enjoy taking responsibility through the school council which provides them with a valuable opportunity to express their views for the benefit of the whole school community. They raise tzedokoh which benefits Jewish and non-Jewish causes. An example is the money raised for the victims of the Haiti earthquake. Pupils throughout the school displayed outstanding courtesy with many holding doors open for inspectors with a polite 'good morning'. Pupils' behaviour and concentration

during davening is exemplary. In lessons and around the school, behaviour is good overall and in the best lessons observed, it is outstanding.

Pupils are knowledgeable about safety issues and have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They are provided with a healthy choice of menu at lunchtime and only healthy snacks may be brought into school for their break. Their positive attitudes together with their good academic achievement make a valuable contribution to their development of skills for their future economic well-being.

#### These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

### How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has greatly improved since the previous inspection. It is now good overall with a significant number of lessons judged as outstanding. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory. The best lessons seen were mostly in Years 5 and 6. All Rebbes are immensely secure in their subject knowledge and are wonderful role models for pupils to emulate. They exude a warmth and love of Torah and display great enthusiasm which inspires the pupils. Lessons frequently start with a review of previous learning and provide opportunities for consolidation and reflection. In the best classes seen, lessons are exciting and fun and pupils are motivated to learn and they greatly enjoy their lessons. Rebbes generally have high expectations and are able to stimulate pupils and keep them focused even when the subject matter is difficult. With the benefit of accurate assessments, Rebbes are able to set work which is challenging and as a result, pupils respond enthusiastically. Some examples of differentiated teaching were observed that meet the needs of pupils' varying abilities but this is an area marked for further development. Satisfactory lessons are characterised by a slower pace and subject matter that is not always suitably matched to each pupil's needs. As a result, there is some loss of concentration and difficulty in remaining on task.

The previous Pikuach inspection noted that there was little evidence of planning and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

a lack of formal assessment procedures. Good progress has been made in addressing these weaknesses. All teachers plan their lessons carefully and clear assessment procedures are now in place which have led to the improved quality of teaching and learning. The standard of reading of all pupils is assessed regularly by the reading coordinator and other subjects are assessed by means of oral and written tests. Results are recorded meticulously and pupils are given feedback so they know what they must do to improve.

The quality of the curriculum is good overall and outstanding in Key Stage 1 and Year 3. This represents a major improvement since the previous Pikuach inspection when it was judged as satisfactory. At that time, there was no formal written curriculum and the newly appointed Menahel had only just commenced the process of producing a Hebrew reading curriculum for the Reception class. Since then, he has overseen the production of a detailed developmental Kodesh curriculum including schemes of work. There is an excellent Hebrew reading scheme for Key Stage 1 that underpins the school's major focus of further improving reading standards. The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets the needs of all pupils and appropriately reflects the religious ethos of the school. The teaching of Rashi is introduced in the last term of Year 1. The study of Mishnah commences in Year 3 and Gemoro in Year 5.

There is good integration of the Kodesh and secular curricula, and this too is a significant area of improvement as it was raised as a key issue in the previous Ofsted inspection. Examples of integration include the use of ITC (information and communication technology) to produce model succohs, mathematics linked to halochos (Jewish law) involving weights and measures, and Key Stage 1 lessons about the characteristics of kosher animals prior to a school visit to London Zoo.

There has been a significant improvement in the provision to take account of pupils' varying abilities. In Key Stage 1, a specially designated and suitably qualified parttime teacher provides one-to-reading support. Pupils including those of lower and higher ability are withdrawn from classes throughout the school so they can receive additional support in their Kodesh lessons. Provision is also made for two pupils with special educational needs. They are taught together each day by their own designated teacher who plans appropriate lessons to meet their specific needs. The school communicates regularly with parents of all pupils receiving additional support to inform them of their children's progress. There are some examples of more advanced tasks to challenge pupils of higher ability, for example, the memorising of many sections of Mishnayos and the thirty-nine Ovos Melochos. The Menahel has plans for further curriculum development which includes a formal document for the teaching of Yedioh Kelolis. The curriculum is enhanced by various extra-curricular activities including a school choir, dancing instruction (for religious celebrations) and training to act as Ba'alei Tefilloh (leading the davening). Further enrichment is provided by regular visits from local community and visiting Rabbonim who come to address the pupils at assemblies. The school admirably fulfils its requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. Pupils daven and say Birkas Hamozon and in addition, older pupils recite Tehillim each morning before lessons commence. There are strong links with external agencies such as Binoh which underpin the school's commitment to provide outstanding levels of care, guidance and support for all pupils.

#### 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

# How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in driving improvement since the previous Pikuach inspection is impressive and admirably reflects the school's vision and commitment, as was indicated in the declaration to the previous inspection team that 'the school wants more from itself'. Most of the key issues in the previous inspection report have been tackled head on and there is a clear determination to continue to strive in pursuit of excellence.

In September 2010, the appointment of the Menahel was confirmed after he had acted in that role for two years. His appointment has created stability in the senior leadership team which augurs well for the future. The Menahel works closely with the headteacher, Rebbes and governors in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. He supports the Rebbes and they in turn, regard him highly. He monitors classes, organises continuing professional development and regularly farhers the pupils. Lesson planning and assessment procedures are now in place and record keeping is meticulous.

Samples of end of year reports were scrutinised. These indicate that more information needs to be provided to parents. For example, one report commented that the child had improved greatly in the given topic but did not describe what improvement had been made. Similarly, the description 'good' and 'excellent' were noted on reports but no explanation given as to what criteria are applied in arriving at these judgements.

The governing body makes a highly significant contribution to the work and direction of the school. They provide a high level of support as well as challenge and insight to hold the school to account. Discussions with the Governor with responsibility for the Kodesh department reveal that he and his colleagues have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to take the school to the next level.

The school is a highly cohesive community with a good mix from Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Chassidic kehillos. Pupils are knowledgeable about other faiths, contribute to the wider community and are aware of the importance of treating everyone with respect.

#### These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	1

tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	N/A
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes Jewish community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

# **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one reception class of twenty-three children. The Rebbes display great enthusiasm and patience and carefully plan lessons and maintain accurate records of children's attainment and progress. Children are eager to participate in davening and singing which they do with great gusto. Emphasis is placed on teaching the children to recognise the letters of the Aleph Beis so as to build a firm foundation on which to develop their Hebrew reading skills. However, much of the good practice that can be seen in the secular class was not evident in the Kodesh teaching and learning. Children spend too much time sitting passively listening to the Rebbes and this inevitably leads to some fidgeting, restlessness and loss of concentration. More opportunities should be provided for them to enjoy a range of varied and stimulating active learning experiences that will enable them to develop their independence, confidence and social skills.

### Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pardes House Primary 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.

There was a delay in sending out the questionnaires to parents due to the occurrence of Shushan Purim prior to the inspection when the school was closed. Therefore, only twelve completed questionnaires were received. These indicate that the majority of parents responding are extremely happy with the school in relation to its Jewish Studies provision.

# 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,

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.