ROSH PINAH PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

LEA London Borough of Barnet

Inspection Dates 26th and 27th September 2006

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

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

Type of School Primary

School Category Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils 3 - 11

Gender of pupils Mixed

Number on Roll 490 (including 130 Nursery: Private and State and

Reception)

Appropriate Authority The governing body

Date of Previous inspection 19th-21st November 2001, 4-6 Kisley 5762

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Chair of Governors Mr. Howard Berg

Head Teacher Mrs. Anthea Abery

Honorary Principal Rabbi Yitzchok Schochet

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Introduction

Description of the School

Rosh Pinah Primary is a modern orthodox Zionist school serving the communities in and around Edgware, North West London. The school is on two sites, with the Foundation Stage a short drive from the main school. Early years' provision includes a private nursery as well as a State nursery and reception classes. The school is two forms of entry, with an average of thirty pupils in each class. The school admits pupils who are recognised as Jewish by the Office of the Chief Rabbi and they come from a wide range of Jewish family backgrounds in terms of religious knowledge and practice. There is no uniformity of previous knowledge and commitment identifiable in any cohort on entry to the school although the admissions criteria contain an ethos requirement of communal involvement.

The school has thirteen pupils with a statement of special needs, with an additional 23% with special needs on School Action/School Action Plus. Approximately 50% of pupils are identified as high achievers.

Currently, the school does not have in post an overall Head of the Jewish Studies Department responsible for planning and co-ordinating both its kodesh (religious) and Ivrit (modern Hebrew language) curricula. The school has had a history of difficulty in recruiting and retaining a suitably qualified and experienced candidate for this senior post. Indeed, when Pikuach last inspected the school in 2001, there also was no Head of Jewish Studies in post. Furthermore, the strand leader co-ordinating *kodesh* teaching left in the Spring Term 2006 and it has not yet been possible to replace him. A strand leader for Ivrit is currently in post. The head teacher has, however, put into place strategies and a support system to address the needs of Jewish Education at the school. The appointment of Rabbi Radomsky, a highly experienced Jewish educator, as consultant to the school, has helped stabilise and prioritise strategies for further developing Jewish Education at Rosh Pinah School. The current inspection has been carried out within the parameters, and with full understanding, of the difficulties that this situation is causing.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of the School's Provision for Jewish Education

Overall, the school's provision for Jewish Education is satisfactory, with some good and some outstanding features. The Jewish atmosphere in the school is very positive. Very enthusiastic pupils and teachers are a strength of the school. Despite the fact that there is currently no head of Jewish Studies, there is a feeling of excitement from the Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* staff that the school is entering a new era of development. A good support structure has been put in place by the head teacher and governors to develop Jewish Studies and there is a great deal of potential with new Jewish Studies staff having been appointed this term. The new *chumash* (Hebrew Bible) curriculum, being taught for the first time this term, and the supporting Jewish Studies programme in *chagim* (Jewish festivals) and Jewish practice, as well as the new *Ivrit* programme, should begin to have considerable effect on standards and achievement throughout the school.

The school's outstanding feature is the overall personal development and Jewish well-being of the pupils through the Jewish Education they receive. Behaviour throughout is very good, and the excellent manner in which pupils conduct themselves during *tefillah* (prayer), in lessons and as they move around the school reflects the Jewish values and ethos of the school. Teachers and pupils relate very well to each other and obviously enjoy working together.

Since the last Pikuach inspection, the school has made many improvements, but the lack of leadership in Jewish Studies makes it difficult for the school to reach its potential.

The school has made a very helpful and accurate evaluation of its Jewish Education. The Pikuach self-evaluation form is insightful, self-reflective and honest. The school evidentally knows itself very well and the evidence highlighted within the form was borne out by the experiences of the inspectors.

The inspectors acknowledge the efforts that are being made by the school to improve its provision for Jewish education. Providing the issues below are addressed, the school has enormous potential and could easily improve its grades on those published below.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- Recruit a Head of Jewish Studies
- Continue to develop the Jewish Studies curriculum avoiding duplication of initiatives by building further links with existing networks of curriculum development.

- Continue to develop and evaluate a coherent *Ivrit* curriculum from Foundation Stage to year six.
- Put into place training for new staff and provide professional development opportunities for all Jewish studies and *Ivrit* staff through monitoring and reflective practice.
- Review the structure of the timetable to address the issue of lessons being too short in many instances.
- Governors should continue to prioritise financial support for the development of Jewish Studies and *Ivrit*.

Achievement and Standards

Whilst pupils' background and prior knowledge is very varied, most pupils progress well and achieve satisfactory knowledge and understanding in both Jewish studies and Hebrew. The school acknowledges that *chumash* teaching was seriously disrupted last year and has addressed that issue by putting into place a new curriculum. This should enable pupils to make good progress and achieve good knowledge and understanding. A significant minority of parents indicated concern about their children's progress in *lvrit*, and the school has also invested in a new curriculum and resources to address this issue. Teachers need to be clearer about when and how Hebrew reading is taught and there needs to be greater coherence between Foundation, key stages 1 and 2 Hebrew curriculum aims and content. The majority of pupils in key stage 2 are able to read the Hebrew related to their lessons. Hebrew writing is satisfactory, although in most classes observed, some pupils are writing in script, while others write in block letters.

All these initiatives must continue to be supported by regular and systematic professional development for the staff. This has already started to happen in the form of a four-day preparation period for staff during the summer holidays.

At both Key stages 1 and 2, evidence of differentiated learning could be seen in almost all lessons, enabling children of all abilities to work towards achieving their potential.

Grade: 3

Personal Development and Well-being

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Evidence of this was seen continuously throughout the inspection. A good Key Stage 2 *tefillah*/assembly was seen, where children were engaged and participating well. The children sung *Birkat Hamazon* (Grace after Meals) and said *brachot* (blessings) with enthusiasm and respect at each key stage, the teachers reminding them about the purpose and

content of the prayers they were singing. Evidence on the walls shows the variety of opportunities available for the children to contribute to the general well-being of the school, for example through the School Council. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through a variety of means, from before and after school clubs (for example Israeli dancing) and through the provision of a variety of healthy lunchtime meal options.

Pupils behaviour towards each other and to adults in the school is very good and pupils display an impressive degree of *derech eretz* (respect and courtesy) to visitors, teachers and peers.

Pupils make extremely good progress in understanding their identity and their heritage. This permeates all aspects of teaching, as well as extra curricular opportunities. Some of the many examples of this throughout the school include the Golden Rules board, the *Tzedakah* (charity/justice) board andthe many displays of work around the school. Evidence of awareness of other cultures and religions is noted, for example a joint Muslim-Jewish football project to take place later this term. The children are given much scope for social interaction and taking responsibility both in and out of the Jewish community. Photographs and letters are testimony to the many initiatives in which the pupils involve themselves, for example Jewish Care and Make Poverty History.

Grade: 1

Quality of Provision

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some good and outstanding features. Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* teachers have good subject knowledge. Their expectations of pupils' behaviour is high and lessons are organised efficiently. Teachers have a good rapport with the pupils and pupils enjoy their lessons. All lessons observed were satisfactory or better, with a minority graded as good or outstanding.

The new lesson planning pro forma put into place this year has helped teachers to plan clearly. Learning objectives are highlighted for pupils in most lessons, but teachers sometimes need to think more clearly about the focus for the pupils as some of these objectives are actually descriptions of content or methodology and are not expressed as intended outcomes for pupils in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding. The monitoring of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 needs addressing, through observations and self-reflection.

This term, lessons have been shortened to thirty minutes for Jewish Studies and *Ivrit*. This appeared too short in most of the lessons observed as teachers could not complete their learning objectives or planned activities.

Teaching and learning through classroom *tefillah*, *brachot* and *birkat hamazon* is good and evidence was seen during the inspection of teaching about prayer as well as experiencing prayer.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and Other Activities

The curriculum is in a period of change. This term, new curricula have been put into place for Jewish Studies in Key Stage 2 and *Ivrit*. Both these initiatives have huge potential for the improvement of the quality of Jewish education at the school. The new curricula are very good in quality and range and should, in time, provide a solid foundation of Jewish knowledge, Hebrew language and textual skills. The school is already a partnership school of the Jewish Studies Curriculum Project (JSCP) and teaches its *parashat hashavua* (weekly *Torah* portion) programme. In order to gain additional support and resources, and to avoid duplication of curriculum initiatives, the school should consider putting itself forward as a pilot school for the JSCP *chumash* track which is currently being developed. At present, there is still lack of coherence between key stages in both *Ivrit* and Jewish Studies, with some teaching, particularly in the lower years, employing inappropriate content for the developmental stage of their pupils.

The new curricula provide for good links between Jewish Studies and the National Curriculum. Evidence on displays in the corridor shows this to be happening to a small extent, for example on a display on "Ancient Greeks".

Extra curricular opportunities for Jewish Studies are very good, with *leyning* (*Torah* cantilation) club and Israeli dancing being just two of the many opportunities sampled during the inspection.

Grade: 3

Care, Guidance and Support

The school has a very caring and supportive ethos and atmosphere. Pupils feel safe and are highly valued. The school has clear policies on Health and Safety and Child Protection. Arrangements are in place to ensure that food served at the school conforms to the laws of *kashrut*. The promotion of self-esteem is evidenced by posters on the walls and by clear verbal messages in every classroom visited.

Differentiation in lessons allows for support of pupils who are faster or slower learners and there were support staff in many lessons observed. These staff, however, were not always integrated into, or contributing to, the lessons. When ICT was well used, it supported learning, for example to help with the translation of a passage from *chumash*. Too often, it was not used to support learning in a helpful way, for example in one instance when the pupils needed to have the text on their desks, not on a screen. The library resources are satisfactory, and again, the stated intention to

substantially enhance the collection this year should improve provision substantially.

All teachers were eager for, and receptive to, feedback following lesson observation. There is enormous goodwill to improve personal performance in the classroom as well as overall improvement of Jewish education in the school.

Grade: 2

Leadership and Management

Due to the lack of a Head of Jewish Studies and to staffing difficulties in the past, particularly at Key Stage 2, leadership and management of Jewish Studies has been unsatisfactory. However, the strong leadership of the school has put into place a support system during the last few months, which has had a remarkable effect in such a short space of time. The decision to employ a part-time consultant with extensive experience in Jewish Education has been a significant one. New curricula, in both *Ivrit* and in Jewish Studies will ensure that quality of provision and achievement and standards improve greatly. It is too soon to see evidence of this, but what can be seen is the obvious high morale and enthusiasm of the staff, all of whom share a sense of purpose and interest in development of the Jewish Education in the school.

The school intends to advertise again very soon for a Head of Jewish Studies and it is extremely important, for the development of the school, that this post is filled as soon as possible. It may be that part, if not all this responsibility could be filled by using the strengths of staff already employed by the school. Whilst this has obviously been an unsatisfactory situation, it is a credit to the teachers that they have been so supportive of the plans for this year that they were even willing to come into school for four days during the summer holidays. Credit is also due to the head teacher and governors, that they have been able to develop a clarity of vision for the future of Jewish Education at the school.

Grade: 3