

Wolfson Hillel Primary School

Inspection report

LEA Enfield

Inspection dates 2 – 3 April 08 Reporting inspector Rabbi Dr Yodaiken

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

Type of School Primary School address 154 Chase Road School category Voluntary Aided Southgate Age range of pupils 3 - 11 London N14 4LG Gender of pupils Mixed Telephone number 020 8882 6487 Number on roll 474 Fax number 020 8882 7965 Appropriate authority The Governing Body Chair of governors Mr Howard Cohen Date of previous inspection December 2004 Headteacher Mrs Sharon Margolis

Introduction

Description of the school

Wolfson Hillel Primary School is a modern orthodox Jewish school situated in the heart of Southgate. Its stated aims are "to provide a high quality Jewish education for our pupils, with encouragement for all pupils to achieve high standards in all aspects of the LK (*Limudei Kodesh*) curriculum alongside the National Curriculum". The school is highly oversubscribed with 474 pupils currently on role. A large majority of pupils are from families that are members of or attend a United Synagogue. The school has a wide catchment area, taking pupils from Southgate, Barnet, Woodside Park and Palmers Green. The school opened in 1992. On the S.E.N register, there are 24 pupils on school action, 9 on school action plus and 12 statemented children. There is a small number of pupils for whom their first language is not English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding
Grade 2 Good
Grade 3 Satisfactory
Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of its provision for Jewish education

The *Limudei Kodesh* (LK) department of the Wolfson Hillel Primary School is good overall with some outstanding features. The school admirably achieves its own aim "to promote a strong primary education combining Jewish values, alongside the National Curriculum, and to respond to the whole child spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially as well as intellectually". The Headteacher, Acting Head of LK and staff are very well supported by the Honorary Principal, governing body and LK educational consultant. This has ensured that the school continues to make progress, despite not having a Head of LK.

Each child in the school counts and the needs of individual pupils are met, resulting in contented and happy pupils working within a safe and secure environment. The behaviour of pupils is good and pupils display respect to adults and to their peers. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school in most LK subjects. The well-being of pupils is of primary consideration and the school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social, moral and spiritual awareness and values.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and comprises six strands, Hebrew Reading and Writing, *Tefillah*, *Parshah*, *Chagim* and Jewish Way of Life, all of which are taught throughout the school, and *Chumash* which is taught only in Key Stage 2. The written curriculum is outstanding and particularly innovative for *Chumash* and *Parshah*. However, these sophisticated curriculum models now need to be implemented in full, which at present is only happening in part. There is evidence of cross curricular work taking place between the LK and NC departments which permeates all aspects of the school.

Standards in *Parshah* and *Chagim* are impressive, with good standards reached overall in *Chumash*. Satisfactory standards are reached in Hebrew Reading and new systems for reading support and resources are now being considered by the school to ensure that all children can read with fluency and accuracy as they move up the school.

Teaching and learning is good overall, but there is a variation of the quality of teaching at different stages within the school, the teaching and learning being most impressive within the Early Years. Teachers relate to pupils in a positive way and have very secure Jewish subject knowledge. They are excellent role models. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Where teaching is good then lessons are well matched to differing needs and the pace and challenge is good. However, in some lessons pupils are insufficiently challenged.

The training given to new members of staff by the LK educational consultant and the Acting Head of LK is both rigorous and supportive. There are several members of staff who have been recently recruited and therefore this impressive induction process will take some time to impact fully.

The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very supportive and appreciative of all aspects of the school's LK department.

The school's Self Evaluation Form indicates that the school knows itself well and has the capacity to continue to improve its provision for Jewish Education

Grade: 2

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and children thrive in a supportive and exciting environment. In both the nursery and reception classes activities are stimulating and challenging. The curriculum is integrated and the six areas of learning are seamlessly merged with the LK curriculum, with LK being at the heart of all aspects being taught. The spiritual provision is very uplifting, as demonstrated by a rehearsal for Pesach, where pupils were shown how *Hashem* is part of their life through drama and song. The outdoor play facility is impressive and staff ensure that it is used as an "outdoor classroom" incorporating the six areas of learning. Staff in the Foundation Stage display great expertise and pupils make outstanding progress.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that a good Hebrew Reading standard is achieved by all pupils by arranging appropriate support for pupils and utilising effective Hebrew Reading resources.
- successfully recruit a Head of Limudei Kodesh who is suitably qualified to lead the department and who will be actively involved in all aspects of the LK School Improvement Plan.
- further develop teachers' skills to link assessment to learning and to ensure that the curriculum is being applied throughout Key Stage 2 effectively.

Achievement and standards

Standards in LK overall are good. This is confirmed by observation of lessons throughout the school, a scrutiny of pupils' written work and the testing of a representative sample of pupils throughout the school.

The standard of the pupils' recall of the events mentioned in the weekly *Parshah* and their knowledge of *Chagim* is very good. Standards in the translation of *Chumash* are good in nearly all classes with pupils displaying a good knowledge of key words and a very good contextual understanding. Standards in Hebrew Reading in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are satisfactory and the school is actively engaged in trying to raise standards by organising more reading teaching support and by evaluating other reading schemes and resources.

The level of Jewish General Knowledge of most of the pupils on admission is sound, with almost all pupils making good progress in LK as they move through the school. Particularly impressive is the progress made in Early Years and in Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress with effective use being made of specific one to one support teaching.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Personal development and well-being is outstanding. A strong sense of Jewish identity and love for Judaism is instilled in the pupils so that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are able to reflect on issues such as tefillah (prayer) and the importance of Israel, as seen in the many high quality displays around the school. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and are supportive of each other. Pupils speak with excitement of the *tzedakah* (charity) activities they undertake and they enjoy raising money for charities such as JNF, Camp Simcha and Jewish Child's Day, as well as for non-Jewish charities. There is an outstanding sense of achdut (unity) in the school that extends into the local community where, for example, pupils participate in concerts in the local synagogue. They also take part in joint events with pupils from non-Jewish primary schools to promote their understanding of other cultures and religions. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their LK studies. They appreciate the range of *Kodesh* enrichment activities, for example those that take place around the chaggim (festivals). They also enjoy the interactive assemblies such as those for Years 5 and 6 where pupils participate and 'get involved', and the special presentations to parents where all the children have an active role. The importance of a healthy lifestyle is reinforced through the LK programme and pupils know how to make healthy choices at lunchtime. They engage enthusiastically with birkat hamazon (Grace after Meals) and during tefillah (prayer) pray and sing with devotion and enjoyment. Pupils at Wolfson Hillel learn to express themselves as confident and articulate young Jewish people.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is variable but overall good. All staff are highly motivated and act as excellent role models for their pupils. They motivate their pupils and plan lessons well. However, not all teachers set challenging targets. This is because involving pupils in understanding their own learning targets is limited and teachers do not always plan work that matches the age or ability range. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is outstanding and very good at Key Stage 1. However, in Key Stage 2 teaching is variable with some outstanding teaching and some satisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, teachers challenge pupils with differentiated questions and a range of other appropriate methods, so as to elicit the most from each pupil. However, where teaching is satisfactory the pace of the lessons is slower and there is a lack of challenge, particularly for pupils of higher attainment. All LK staff have excellent subject knowledge and are involved actively in all professional development activities in the school. The focus on professional development has had positive ramifications for all staff. Assessment of pupils' progress linked to learning is limited and plans are in place for professional development in this area.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum is good with outstanding features and demonstrates both breadth and balance. It includes Hebrew Reading and Writing, *Tefillah*, *Parshah*, *Chagim*, Jewish Way of Life and Chumash, expressing the orthodox Jewish values of the school and is well structured to meet the needs of and engage all learners. There is excellent provision for pupils to learn about the Jewish calendar and the Jewish Way of Life and the successful outcomes of these aspects are evident in the pupils' personal, spiritual and social development and in their deep love of Israel and its people. The Key Stage 2 department is participating in the pilot of an impressive and exciting Chumash curriculum and this is already having a very positive impact on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The school has correctly identified the need for rigorous development of pupils' Hebrew reading skills to support all aspects of their LK learning. The Leadership Team is also aware that, in some areas, the delivery of the designed curriculum is inconsistent so that pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and there is not always clear progression evident in their learning.

There is an effective PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) programme that is grounded in LK and delivered by both LK and secular teachers. Throughout the curriculum, LK is integrated within the National Curriculum so that *Kodesh* themes permeate the pupils' learning. For example, in Year 6 English they write about the concept of freedom relating to Pesach and in a Design and Technology project on slippers, pupils learn when Jewish people are not allowed to wear leather shoes.

The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and after school clubs that are well supported by pupils. These include school *shabbatonim* for Year 4 and Year 6, in which all children participate and a family shabbaton which is well attended.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils are valued and their successes are shared and celebrated so that they feel proud of their achievements. pastoral care and support is excellent and underpins the school's commitment to its Golden Rules of behaviour. Pupils are confident that there is an adult to turn to should they have concerns. As one Year 2 pupil said, "the teachers are always there for you". The school draws on a wide range of external professionals to support pupils. For example, there are good and effective links with the local authority, Binoh, Norwood and local Rabbonim. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about LK in the school. One parent wrote, "teachers do an exemplary job of making Judaism part of every child's life at the school in a fun and positive way" and the inspectors agree with this view. In Limudei Kodesh, vulnerable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by a team of Learning Support Assistants so that they make good progress and are fully included in the Jewish life of the school. The school has effective links with Jewish secondary schools and pupils in Year 6 are given valuable advice and guidance, so that they are well-prepared for the transition to secondary school.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and Management of the LK department is good. However it is essential that the school recruits a suitably qualified person to fill the post of Head of LK as soon as possible. It is admirable in the interim that the Deputy Head has expanded her role to include that of Acting Head of LK. She is supported effectively by the excellent leadership of the Headteacher who is deeply loved by pupils. All the leadership team have a shared vision for the school and are committed to school

improvement. However, the School Improvement Plan although clear is somewhat outdated, despite being in the process of being redrafted. There are effective professional development strategies for LK teachers, organised by the Acting Head of LK and the LK educational consultant. Staff feel very well supported professionally and induction procedures for new staff are impressive. These involve generic training in the skills of teaching as well as specific lesson observation. However, there are several new members of staff who still need time for these skills to become embedded. Although monitoring of teaching practice through performance management strategies is strong, there needs to be more effective monitoring of curriculum coverage and tracking of pupil achievement in LK.

The honorary principal, Rabbi Fine, gives impressive support to the school. He regularly visits the school in an advisory capacity and was instrumental in the setting up of the school. He speaks at key events such as at an evening to welcome new parents and his advice is sought by parents, staff and pupils. The community enrichment events arranged by him and housed in the school are well attended and make a considerable impact. The governing body carries out its duties very effectively and offer good support within the framework of being a "critical friend" to the school management and staff. The school benefits greatly from a dynamic Head of the LK committee who is also the Chair of Governors. The school has made considerable progress since the last inspection and offers good value for money.

Grade: 2