

MATHILDA MARKS KENNEDY SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority London Borough of Barnet

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates Monday 12 – Tuesday 13 November 2018

Lead Inspector Dr Leon Bernstein

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 children 3-11

Gender of children Mixed

Number on roll 229

Appropriate authority The governing body

Chair of Governors Ali Gurfinkel

Headteacher Jillian Dunstan

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Inspection team

Lead Inspector Dr Leon Bernstein

Team Inspector Rabbi Andrew Davis

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors. They visited 9 lessons or parts of lessons, where the focus was on observing Jewish Studies. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' written work, the Jewish Studies Curriculum, the school's self-evaluation document for Jewish Studies and the school's development plan. The senior leadership team played an active part in this inspection, including attending meetings with inspectors, and observing lessons. School leaders agreed with all of the inspectors' judgements during joint lesson observations. The school's last *Pikuach* inspection took place on 7-8 October 2013.

Introduction

The inspectors looked in detail at the following:

- Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education.
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education.
- Effectiveness of Leadership, Management, and Governance of Jewish education.
- Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives.
- Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*tefillah*).

Information about the school

- Mathilda Marks-Kennedy Jewish Primary School was established in 1959.
- The school's original venue was Barclay House on Finchley Road, Golders Green, and was known to many parents and pupils as 'Barclay House.'
- The school re-located to its current site in Mill Hill in 1989, and became a voluntary aided state school in 1999.
- It is a one-form entry school which caters for 229 children from Nursery to Year 6.
- The school has been consistently listed as one of the top performing schools in Barnet.

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	1
Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish Education	1
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Jewish Education	1
Effectiveness of Leadership, Management, and Governance of Jewish Education	1
Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education Curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives	1
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (tefillah)	1

Overall Effectiveness:

The quality of Jewish Learning provided in Mathilda Marks Kennedy school is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- Teachers know the pupils' needs and support these. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, have excellent, educational experiences at school. These ensure that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education. This is particularly evident in the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.
- The school's Jewish Studies curriculum, both formal and informal, provides memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning and wider personal development and well-being.
- Leadership and Management continually strive for excellence in all areas. The governing body challenges and supports staff in all areas of Jewish Studies.

The school has the following strengths:

- Teaching is outstanding and, together with a rich Jewish curriculum, contributes to outstanding learning and achievement.
- Excellent behaviour and learning behaviours are seen both in and out of the classroom.
- The school's ethos permeates every facet of school life. Jewish values have a very high profile and are evident in Jewish Studies lessons as well as in secular lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the new tracking system introduced last year is fully embedded so that all key members of staff have a full grasp on how learning is tracked, and how to create reports based on the system. This should include full knowledge of extracting key data which will show, for example, the progress of groups of pupils over time.

Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), make rapid and sustained progress across the Jewish curriculum, and learn exceptionally well.
- In the EYFS, baseline assessments are given to all children on entry to the school. Inspectors were impressed with the assessments seen, which comprised pictures based on aspects of Jewish life. Children are asked set questions about the pictures and their answers are recorded on a tracking sheet. Children are then re-tested towards the end of the year and their progress is recorded on a tracker.
- Data showed evidence that last year 100% of children entering the school, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, made progress throughout the year. 82% of children made very good or excellent progress. Intervention groups are set up for those children making progress below expectations and their development is monitored throughout the year. The Head of EYFS showed evidence that these children still make progress, albeit at a slower rate in comparison to other children.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Years 2 and 6. In both groups, inspectors were impressed with the general level of reading. Some pupils read with hesitation, but the majority read accurately. In some cases, pupils were able to translate into English, and all confidently navigated both the *Chumash* (Bible) and the *Siddur* (prayer book). Pupils were asked to read known texts (for example, the *Shema* and *Amidah*), as well as unprepared passages. Inspectors found reading across the school to be of a good standard. Leaders had accurately placed pupils into their correct ability groups and this resulted in all pupils learning at a level appropriate to their current ability.
- Pupils understand the value of Jewish Studies, and they learn well. They develop a range of skills, including some of the following: enquiry, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.
- Taking account of their starting points, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in Jewish Studies is high in relation to their potential. For example, tracking data shows that last year 97% of pupils who entered Year 1 achieved at or above academic levels related to their age in Hebrew reading by the end of the year.
- Data for Key Stage 2 pupils shows similar results. For example, tracking data show that last year 92% of pupils who entered Year 5 achieved at or above academic levels related to their age in Hebrew reading, including those pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Progress in *Chumash* (Bible) last year was equally impressive: last year 96% of pupils in Year 5 achieved at or above academic levels related to their age as a result of rapid and sustained progress.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- Teaching is outstanding overall and never less than consistently good across all key stages and in a variety of learning experiences. Pupils are keen to learn and listen avidly to their teachers and other adults in the classrooms.
- Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and understanding of the Jewish subjects they teach, and this is reflected in their pupils' learning.
- Teachers have high expectations, and plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils' Jewish knowledge.
- Since the last *Pikuach* report, the school has written and implemented a clear marking policy with success criteria in order to raise standards as a result of constructive and informative comments. Next step tasks are personalised for pupils of all abilities, and this helps them to consolidate their current work and then move ahead to more complex tasks. From the scrutiny of pupils' folders, inspectors could see that this has had a positive effect on the standard and quality of work throughout the school.

- Folders are closely monitored to ensure that pupils remain on track. Folders are checked by teachers every half term and the school's tracking system is used to monitor attainment and progress.
- Teachers in the Jewish Studies Department are passionate about their subjects. They are determined that pupils achieve well in their Jewish education.
- Teachers constantly use positive language when talking to the pupils, and this not only stimulates them but motivates them to try their best when answering questions.
- Inspectors observed appropriate levels of work for SEND (Special educational needs and disabilities) pupils in all lessons. Learning was enhanced by Teaching Assistants who provided support to those pupils.
- Morning *tefillah* (prayers) was observed in the Nursery, and the planning was clearly linked to the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) Framework. A puppet was used as a prop to help engage children in *tefillah*, and again this was used as a learning opportunity to discuss the importance of *bikur cholim* - visiting the sick – as well as praying for the sick. The teacher managed to contain the children's attention for an extended period of time on the carpet whilst reciting *tefillot* (prayers). After this, she asked them to stand and they used movement and dance whilst singing a final song describing *Hashem* (G-d) being everywhere, resulting in all children happily participating and engaged throughout this session.
- From an early age, children are encouraged to discuss and share their views on lessons, deepening their knowledge and understanding of concepts appropriate to their age. For example, in one Reception class the teacher was discussing 'Our *Shabbat* (Sabbath) Table'. Children were asked not only to distinguish between items that were 'appropriate' for a *Shabbat* table, but were also challenged to reflect on why certain items were appropriate and why some were not. This sparked an impressive level of higher-level thinking. Children responded enthusiastically and were encouraged to share their answers with partners as well as with the teacher
- Teachers constantly monitor and steer behaviour in order to maximise learning time.
- There is effective use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) in the classroom and this accelerates teaching and learning. For example, in one lesson, learning objectives were clearly displayed on the board and the pupils were able to read them, then quickly link them to the topics under discussion.
- Teaching Assistants are very well deployed across all Key Stages, and provide very effective additional support where required.
- Parents acknowledge the positive impact of the Jewish Studies staff. One parent commented: "My children really enjoy Jewish Studies. The knowledge they bring back home is phenomenal. The children learn really well at school and they are now educating the parents!"

The effectiveness of Leadership, Management and Governance of Jewish Education is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- The quality of leadership and management of Jewish education is outstanding. There is a dynamic and creative vision for Jewish education in which staff, governors and pupils strive consistently for excellence.
- Since the last *Pikuach* inspection, governors have undertaken training on preparation for inspection, led by the Head of Jewish Studies. This has had a very positive impact on governors. One governor commented: 'The Head of Jewish Studies gave a very comprehensive talk to governors about *Pikuach*. The impact of this is that I am much more aware of *Pikuach* around the school and can see how it is also embedded within the secular curriculum and the cross-curricular links.'
- Governors hold senior leaders to account; this is evidenced in comprehensive minutes from regular governors' meetings.

- Governors are fully supportive at all levels and have a clear grasp of all aspects of the Jewish Studies Department.
- Senior leaders, as well as governors, have a clear and shared vision of the school.
- Senior leaders, including those responsible for governance, communicate expectations and ambition in maintaining and improving the quality of the Jewish education that the school provides.
- All leaders, managers and governors are ambitious for the pupils and lead by example. They base their actions on a deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance, and of the skills and attributes of staff and pupils.
- The school has a highly experienced SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team. She has a clear understanding of her role within the school, and supports both Jewish Studies and secular lessons.
- The SENCO provides regular training to all staff to ensure best practice throughout the school for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- The SENCO reports on the progress of SEND pupils to her link governor, who regularly challenges her on the progress of pupils in Jewish Studies.
- The leadership and management team reach out to external agencies to improve all aspects of the Jewish Studies provision at the school. This includes networking with PaJeS (Partnerships for Jewish Schools) and attending conferences for Jewish Studies teachers. The Head of Jewish Studies has been invited to deliver a presentation at the national Jewish Studies conference in January 2019.
- The Head of Jewish Studies has recently been appointed. She has won the respect and admiration of pupils, staff and parents. Governors have also acknowledged the positive impact she has made on the school in general, and on the Jewish Studies Department in particular. She has worked tirelessly to build up a solid team and to embed new policies which ensure consistency in delivering the Jewish Studies provision throughout the school.
- The Headteacher oversees a well-planned cycle of performance management. Jewish Studies staff members are interviewed twice a year. During these interviews, targets are set and then monitored throughout the year. Teachers are expected to meet the standards set out in the Department for Education's Teachers' Standards document, ensuring parity across both the Jewish Studies and secular departments.
- There is overwhelming staff support of the senior leadership team. The pride they feel was clearly evident by the comments noted on the confidential staff questionnaires. One member of staff wrote: "I feel very supported at all times and am very privileged and proud to be here." Another wrote: "Children have a love of Judaism and Israel at this school. The annual survey taken by parents, staff and children indicates the success of the Jewish Studies Department, led ably by Miss C. Children in Year 6 leave with a sound knowledge of Jewish Studies and secondary schools feed back to us most positively about our pupils."
- The assessment and tracking of pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection. Senior leaders agree, however, that further measures need to be taken to refine current recording and reporting procedures so that pupils' achievements and progress can be more easily shared with pupils and parents.

The effectiveness of the Jewish Studies curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- The school has developed a 'spiralling curriculum' for *chagim* (festivals) from Nursery up to Year 6. Each year, pupils review work that they have already learnt and then extend this in order to ensure progression of learning. Pupils commented on how much they enjoy learning about and celebrating *chagim* in school. One pupil explained that the school uses informal strategies to enrich learning about *chagim* which are popular with all learners. Pupils spoke extremely fondly of the recent model *Succah* (a temporary hut used during the festival of

Sukkot – Tabernacles) building competition where they were able to construct a *Succah* out of anything they wanted, resulting in one pupil making a *Succah* out of popcorn.

- The school promotes cross-curricular work as part of its Jewish Studies curriculum. For example, in this year's Art curriculum, pupils in Key Stage 2 have been learning about famous artists. They learnt how the French artist Cézanne painted fruit, and then used his style to create their own artwork for *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year).
- The school has developed a Jewish Studies curriculum which includes key areas focussing on Hebrew reading, *Chumash* (Bible), general Jewish knowledge and *chagim* (festivals). Pupils embrace this with great enthusiasm, and parents commented on how much they are learning about Jewish life from their children as a result of the Jewish Studies curriculum.
- The school is following the Jewish Curriculum Project (JCP) curriculum for *Chumash* and leaders have invested much time and resources in ensuring that the teachers have received professional development to deliver the curriculum appropriately. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on pupils learning key words and phrases in Hebrew, and helping pupils to translate *Chumash*. The school has developed vocabulary songs to help pupils retain key *Chumash* vocabulary and they acknowledge that they find these tools helpful. The school uses the JCP levels of attainment in order to monitor and assess progress in *Chumash*. When talking to parents in the playground, a number of them commented that the new focus placed on *Chumash* is giving the pupils life-long skills and engaging them in ways that have not previously been evident in the school.
- Hebrew reading is a core part of the school's curriculum. The school has chosen to use a variety of teaching and learning resources for teaching Hebrew reading. All pupils begin by learning to read Hebrew using the 'Lamdeini Stages 1 & 2' course and then graduate to using the 'Shalom Ivrit' series. The school is conscious of the need to develop pupils who are fluent Hebrew readers. Hebrew reading is taught in conjunction with the *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) Department and members of staff listen to all pupils read each week.
- The school has developed a 'whole school approach' to learning that they have called the 'MMK Bees.' These are learning skills that encourage pupils to be more resilient and become the best learners that they can be. Pupils feel that the introduction of this approach across the school has made a big difference to the progress they make. One Key Stage 2 pupil explained: "Classes didn't use to work together as a team. But now that we have talked together about MMK Bees in our assemblies, we are working together as a class and that has changed something." Another pupil commented: "One of the MMK Bees (rules) is to be cooperative. When we didn't have this, we thought doing things ourselves would be better, but now we have them we put our brains together and work better as a class."

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*tefillah*) is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- The school fulfils the statutory requirement for collective worship.
- Pupils show respect towards each other and to adults. They are polite and care about the feelings of others.
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) is at the heart of the school and all that they do. The staff and pupils take great pride in many of the communal aspects of the school that are reflected in its ethos.
- The school has a strong School Council which is made up of a range of pupils of varying abilities across Key Stage 2. The School Council meets fortnightly to discuss matters that concern pupils. As a result of discussions, they are aware of the importance of democracy and other Fundamental British Values (FBV). Minutes are taken and then fed back to Key Stage 2 classes by the Council representatives for the views of their peers. These are then reported back to the Council. The inspectors found the School Council members to be

articulate and passionate ambassadors for their school. Pupils interviewed were complimentary about all teachers in the school. One pupil said: “The best thing about our school is the teachers, because they are really caring and if you make a bad mistake, they will tell you to try again and never give up.”

- The school places a great focus on *Tzedakah* (charity). There are *Tzedakah* monitors in Year 6 who collect money for charity every Friday. The *Tzedakah* monitors choose which *charity* to support for each week, based on their research. Just inside the entrance to the school is a display of certificates showing the vast number of Jewish and non-Jewish charities that the monitors have chosen to support. These include Macmillan Cancer Support, Jewish Child’s Day and Action Against Hunger. Pupils were clear that as young people growing up in Great Britain they are part of both the Jewish and wider community and felt it was important to support a wide range of charitable causes. One pupil explained: “Providing we help someone it is a *mitzvah* (commandment), and it does not make a difference if they are Jewish or not.”
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They know that if they are upset, they can talk to their friends, any members of staff or people whom they trust.
- The school places a great emphasis on teaching about different people in society, and have held a Diversity Week. During that week, pupils learnt about people with differing needs, for example those who are sight-impaired. This made a profound impact on the pupils by making them aware of what life is like with a disability. Commenting on a guest speaker with Down’s Syndrome, one pupil explained: “We have to treat everyone equally, as people with problems still have feelings like us and we have to be nice to them too. As Rabbi Akiva said: ‘*VeAhavta Leraicha Kamocho*’ – “Love your neighbour as you love yourself.”
- The school promotes involvement with the Jewish community. For example, there are visits to Sydmar Lodge (a care home) and Mill Hill Synagogue.
- The Headteacher runs the Key Stage 2 school choir. The inspectors observed the pupils learning *Chanukah* (the festival of lights) songs that they will perform at one of the local retirement homes. Pupils were enthusiastic in their rehearsals and engaged in the singing. The Headteacher selected a number of *Chanukah* songs in both Hebrew and English. Pupils understood the meaning of the Hebrew songs, and the English songs reflected their knowledge of the *Chanukah* story and practices. There was much enjoyment from the pupils during this rehearsal, and pupils were excited about the forthcoming opportunity to visit a local retirement home and perform for the residents.
- There are regular workshops for children to experience various aspects of Jewish life. For example, *matzah* (unleavened bread) baking and how to make a *shofar* (ram’s horn blown on *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish New Year).
- During *tefillah* (prayers) in both Key Stages 1 and 2, inspectors were impressed with the way teachers explained that *Shacharit* (morning prayers) marked the start of their day and how the *berachot* (blessings) recited on learning *Torah* would not only be for that period of *tefillah* but for all of their *Torah* learning that day.
- SEED, a national Jewish outreach programme, plays a significant role within the school, and continues to promote family events and sessions which enhance the Jewish learning in the school.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Mathilda Marks Kennedy School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In response to the statement: 'My child makes good progress in Jewish Studies in this school', 95% of parents strongly agreed or agreed, and in response to the statement: 'The life of the school gives my child a good understanding of Jewish values', 96% of parents strongly agreed or agreed.

The comments below encapsulate their views:

'The Jewish Studies programme at the school is engaging and thorough. Miss C. in particular is adored by the children and is so inspirational. She brings Jewish Studies to life. I have three children at the school and they all enjoy their Jewish Studies lessons immensely and take pride in relaying the weekly parasha (weekly Torah portion) at home!'

'Outstanding and innovative leadership. Challenging and inspiring teaching. Excellent focus on achieving potential and encouraging spiritual development. Jewish values are lived and breathed by the pupils on a daily basis.'

'The Jewish Studies team works hard to give my child a positive experience to Jewish life, festivals history and prayer. I cannot thank them enough.'

GLOSSARY

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.
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.