

INDEPENDENT JEWISH DAY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority Barnet
Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach
Inspection dates 23 - 24 January 2019
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 Academy
Age range of children 3-11
Gender of children Mixed
Number on roll 229
Appropriate authority The governing body
Chair of Governors Ayalah Hirst
Headteacher Jodi Schajer
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Inspection team

Lead Inspector Dr Leon Bernstein

Team Inspector Rebbetzin Esther Cohen

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors. They visited 11 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 improvement 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. The school's last *Pikuach* inspection took place on 31st March – 1st April 2014.

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

- The Independent Jewish Day School Academy is a one-form entry Jewish Voluntary Aided Primary school with a nursery. The school predominantly serves the Hendon Jewish community in the London Borough of Barnet.
- Approximately 40% of the school week is devoted to Jewish Studies.
- Jewish Studies lessons are taught in *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew), which is a distinctive characteristic of the school's Jewish Studies programme.
- The school is fully committed to a Zionist, modern-orthodox education.
- The school is heavily oversubscribed and is a popular choice for the North-West London Jewish community.
- The Headteacher was appointed last term. The current Assistant Headteacher is also the Acting Head of Jewish Studies. The school is due to appoint a new Head of Jewish Studies in the near future.
- The school's mission statement is to provide all pupils '...with an outstanding education in an environment which nurtures the potential of each child, encourages a love of *Torah* and *mitzvot* (commandments), promotes British values, develops a sense of responsibility towards others and creates a strong connection with the people and land of Israel.'

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish Education	2
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Jewish Education	2
Effectiveness of Leadership, Management, and Governance of Jewish Education	2
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 the Independent Jewish Day School is Good (GRADE 2) because:-

- Pupils benefit from teaching that is at least good, and some that is outstanding. This promotes positive attitudes to Jewish learning and ensures that pupils' achievement in their Jewish education is at least good.
- Deliberate and effective action is taken to create a cohesive learning community through the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils achieve well in Jewish Studies. The school's policy of teaching Jewish Studies lessons in *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) is renowned, and the school celebrates its success in this area with great pride.
- The Jewish Studies curriculum has breadth, depth and balance, providing pupils with Jewish knowledge and experience.

It is not yet Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- The school needs time to embed strategies which are currently under discussion with the leadership team since the new appointment of the Headteacher.
- The school is about to appoint a new Head of Jewish Studies who will take overall charge of the complete Jewish Studies provision.
- Not all members of staff currently follow the school's clear marking policy. This leads to an inconsistent approach when monitoring work in books, making it difficult, in some pupils' work, to track progress over time.
- More pupils across all Year groups need to show rapid improvement over time in Jewish Studies.

The school has the following strengths:

- Strong leadership which is resolved to drive for excellence, particularly during this period of great change.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of a deep and sincere respect shared by all. Pupils show great sensitivity and respect for themselves and for others, and display great enthusiasm for their learning.
- All pupils benefit from the school's carefully planned curriculum, which enhances the Jewish ethos of the school.
- Pupils' ability to learn and speak *Ivrit*.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Appoint a new Head of Jewish Studies who will oversee the entire Jewish Studies provision offered by the school.
- Continue to monitor and support staff so that more teaching is good or outstanding across all Year groups.
- Ensure that all teachers follow the school's marking policy to ensure a consistent approach in the scrutiny of pupils' work and their progress over time.
- Help pupils understand where they are in their learning, and how to improve.

Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education is Good (GRADE 2) because:-

- Pupils display a secure knowledge of many key aspects of Judaism.
- Pupils understand the value of Jewish Studies, and they mostly learn well. They develop a range of skills including some of the following: enquiry, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.
- Many pupils speak confidently about subjects they have studied, and are able to demonstrate a command of topics they have covered.
- From *Hachana* (Reception) to *Kita Aleph* (Year 1) children are already able to read and write in Hebrew as the school teaches them Hebrew phonics (matching sounds to letters and words) at an early age.
- Achievement in *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) is exceptional. All Jewish Studies lessons are taken in *Ivrit*.
- Inspectors were very impressed with the pupils who read to them. Readers were confident, could read unprepared texts from the *Siddur* (prayer book) and *Chumash* (Bible) and were able to translate parts of texts into English. Where pupils hesitated to read a word, they used their knowledge of Hebrew phonics to decode a word before reading it with accuracy. Pupils were proud to tell inspectors that their reading and translating skills had been learnt at school.
- The school prides itself on sending the majority of its pupils to Jewish secondary schools. Pupils leaving the school have a long-standing reputation for being in top sets when they move into secondary school. Their level of listening, speaking, reading and writing *Ivrit* is exceptional. Indeed, this is one of the trademarks of the school that makes it such a popular choice for parents.
- Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make good and sustained progress across the Jewish Studies curriculum, and learn well.
- Until the appointment of the new Headteacher, the school used a commercial tracking system to monitor achievement and progress. The school now uses its own tracking system. Data shown to the inspectors indicate that pupils make good progress over time; in some

cases this is outstanding. For example, baseline data shows that on entry to the school, 23% of pupils made 'exceeding progress', and 100% of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities made expected progress.

- Tracking data showed that progress of pupils was currently good across the school in the Jewish Studies topic areas of reading, writing comprehension and general knowledge.
- The quality of work produced in books is variable. In some books work is dated, clearly labelled and displays good progress over time. In others, this is not the case. The senior leadership team is aware of this, and will be addressing the issue in the near future.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education is Good (GRADE 2) because:-

- Teachers in the Jewish Studies department are passionate about their subjects. They are determined that pupils achieve well in their Jewish education.
- Technology is used to enhance the teaching and learning in Jewish Studies lessons. For example, good use is made of the Interactive Whiteboard, using PowerPoint slides and videos, all of which enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, in one Year 6 lesson a well-prepared Information and Communication Technology (ICT) presentation which used "Puppet Pal" as well as video clips, animated the lesson. It enhanced understanding and motivated pupils to ask questions of deeper meaning and understanding about what was being taught. The animated visual aid also helped less able pupils to stay focused and engaged.
- Teaching in Jewish Studies is good, with examples of some outstanding lessons. This results in most pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, making good progress and achieving well over time.
- Where teaching is most impressive it is the result of carefully structured and engaging lessons. For example, during a period of *tefillah* (collective worship) in Year 6, pupils sang through their *brachot* (blessings) with much enthusiasm, accompanied by actions which helped them understand the meaning of their prayers.
- Lessons are planned to accommodate classes and groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and play a full and active part in lessons, in order to support and maximise the potential of all pupils.
- Formal assessments are carried out three times a year from Year 1. These are based on skills taken from the curriculum which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. The Jewish Studies department uses Level Descriptors which mirror the National Curriculum, in order to ascertain a child's level of ability and ensure that appropriate provision is in place.
- Since its last *Pikuach* inspection, the school has invested much time and effort in raising the standards of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers are monitored, and their performance is tracked over the year by a rigorous performance management system which sets targets for them. Their performance is reviewed during the year, after which new targets are set.
- Teachers and other staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have high expectations of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Planning is done in a way that incorporates and reflects the Seven Areas of Learning in the EYFS curriculum, integrating Jewish and secular studies. As a result, children benefit from a seamless education which motivates and challenges them in their learning. For example, in a lesson observed in *Hachana* (Reception), all children were fully engaged in the cross-curricular activities. When interviewed, they showed outstanding learning progress.
- The school currently is providing much verbal feedback to pupils about their work. However, when inspectors spoke with pupils, a number of them were unable to tell inspectors where they were up to in their learning, and what next steps were needed to improve.

- The school has a clear and detailed marking policy, which is shared by the Jewish Studies department. However, not all members of the teaching staff follow this policy, and inspectors noted that the frequency of marking and adherence to the policy was varied. For example, pupils are supposed to write down their learning objectives so that staff can then indicate whether or not they have met these objectives. Inspectors could not see enough evidence of this during their scrutiny of pupils' work. The senior leadership will be addressing this issue in the coming months.

The effectiveness of Leadership, Management and Governance of Jewish Education is Good (GRADE 2) because:-

- The structure of leadership and management is in a process of transition. The Headteacher has been in office for a term and is joined by an Assistant Headteacher who currently is also the Acting Head of Jewish Studies. The school is therefore going through a number of changes and challenges while the leadership team seeks a permanent new Head of Jewish Studies. The new Head of Jewish Studies will also act as SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) for Jewish Studies and will work with, and support, the current SENCO.
- The leadership team needs time to embed new structures and strategies once the new Head of Jewish Studies has been appointed. Inspectors are confident that the leadership team, ably led by the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher/Acting Head of Jewish Studies, will achieve their goals in time.
- The school's SENCO oversees the procedures throughout the school for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, ensuring that Jewish Studies practice are in line with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.
- The leadership team, including governors, works hard to establish the essential systems and structures that ensure quality Jewish education, and provides staff with support, encouragement and challenge.
- The school is meticulous about selecting new staff who share the vision of the school and who are confident in their subject knowledge. As a result, teachers have strong Jewish subject knowledge and confidence, which inspires pupils and contributes to their progress in Jewish Studies.
- Governors work closely with the Headteacher, who meets weekly with the Chair of Governors to discuss strategies relating to all aspects of the school's Jewish Studies provision.
- The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher/Acting Head of Jewish Studies work closely together as a cohesive team to ensure a positive impact is made on the overall life, ethos and Jewish education of every pupil. They have a shared vision and communicate this to staff.
- The Headteacher oversees a well-planned cycle of performance management. Details of meetings are discussed, as are target setting and professional development. All members of staff are observed throughout the year, and are challenged on present performance. They are then encouraged to improve on this through jointly agreed targets with the Headteacher.
- Governors are committed to teachers' continued professional development, and are prepared to provide resources to help all staff develop their careers.
- Leaders have a deep understanding of the school community, and the Headteacher in particular seeks to look after the wellbeing of staff and pupils. An example of this for pupils is the 'Blue Room' - a room specifically allocated to those who need a quiet place for reflection; they use it under the direction of the staff.

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

- The Jewish Studies curriculum is outstanding. It is broad, balanced and provides pupils with their full entitlement of Jewish knowledge and experience. It is customised to meet the varying needs of individuals and groups.
- The Jewish Studies curriculum enhances the Jewish ethos of the school.
- Since the school's last *Pikuach* inspection, the EYFS curriculum has undergone scrutiny and is now delivered through the Seven Areas of Early Years Learning, with provision for cross-curricular education. Evidence was seen of the way planning and delivery of lessons for *Tu B'Shvat* (New Year for Trees) was matched to the Seven Learning Areas, and also how the outdoor area was used effectively to support and enhance the EYFS curriculum.
- The school follows the JCP *Chumash* (Bible) curriculum, with some adaptation to include their teaching preference for teaching Jewish Studies in *Ivrit*.
- The school has a 'spiralling curriculum' which builds on pupils' learning as each year progresses, and which enables pupils to achieve a high level of knowledge and understanding in all areas of Jewish learning as defined by the school.
- The Jewish Studies curriculum has breadth, depth and balance, providing pupils with Jewish knowledge and experience. Pupils benefit from a stimulating curriculum that sets high standards and is relevant, promoting outstanding development of study skills in the pursuit of Jewish knowledge, belief and identity. The curriculum clearly has an impact on the lives of the pupils. One pupil in *Kitta Dalet* (Year 4) said: "A lot of times we learn in the *parsha* (the weekly Torah portion read on the Sabbath) about great people. I want to use those lessons in my life."
- Cross-curricular provision enables children to make links between what is being learned and how to apply it to everyday life. This was seen in a lesson observed in *Kitta Vav* (Year 6), when a pupil commented: "Learning about the translation of the *Shemah* (verses from Deuteronomy) helps me understand my *tefillah* (prayer)."
- The curriculum provides memorable experiences for pupils, such as creating their own *Haggadot* (Passover texts) for *Pesach* (Passover). These are different for each Year group and show progression in learning. The older classes write their own *Divrei Torah* (words of Torah) which are printed in a *Haggadah* that is used by pupils to lead a mock *Seder* (Passover ceremony) in the local home for the elderly.

The 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.
- The staff and children show great respect for each other and for the ethos of the school. The quality of *tefillah* (prayer) is outstanding. It is strong throughout the school, preparing children well for involvement in community prayer.
- All the pupils seen by the inspectors seemed happy to be in the school. They are polite and care about the feelings of others. They show respect to each other and to staff at all times. They were also very courteous to the inspectors.
- The school has a strong moral ethos, and endeavours to incorporate this into all aspects of the school day. It proudly promotes *Derech Eretz* (acting respectfully towards others) and its overriding school rule *VeAhavata L'Rayacha Kamocha* ("Love your neighbour as you love yourself) exemplifies this. Pupils are encouraged to donate *Tzedakah* (charity) on a regular basis. Each month, the *Tzedakah* (charity) Committee chooses where they wish to donate money. This is distributed both within the UK and abroad, for example, to a kindergarten in Israel.

- The school provides excellent extra-curricular activities which impact on pupils' spiritual and cultural development. High attendance at these voluntary activities bears testament to their success. Various clubs are run throughout the week to allow pupils an opportunity to extend their skills or demonstrate their strengths. These include *Mishnah* Club (the Oral Law) on Sunday mornings, spoken *Ivrit*, *Bat Mitzvah* sessions and an *Ivrit* choir throughout the week.
- Pupils are taught how to develop the skills and personal qualities necessary to understand their Jewish culture and the cultures of others. They are encouraged to develop an understanding of British society, and how they fit in as Jewish people. For example, pupils are taken to visit Parliament and the House of Lords to learn the responsibility and role that Jewish people have and can play in a non-Jewish country.
- Pupils are taught about their responsibility for *Tikkun Olam* (perfecting the world). As part of their drive to reach out to others, they collected coats, blankets and other winter items to be sent to Somali refugees for *Mitzvah* Day.
- Pupils are encouraged to forge a strong and personal connection with *Hashem* (G-d) in meaningful ways. For example, before *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year), they were asked to write their private *tefillot* (prayers) to keep in their *Siddur* (prayer book) so they could reflect on them throughout the year.
- Pupils are taught appreciation for what they have, and responsibility for helping those around them. For example, *Hachana* (Reception) learned about the concept of not wasting food, while other pupils embraced the responsibility of looking out for, and helping, pupils with special needs at school.
- There is a sense of enjoyment and fascination expressed by the pupils, and this is endorsed by parents' views about their joy of learning and their responsibility and relationship with Judaism. A parent commented: "One of the nicest things is that what we do at home they have learned and experienced at school, and vice-versa. Jewish Studies is their life. One reinforces the other."
- Pupils have positive views of their school. When asked what they would do to make the school even better, one child said: "This is already an amazing school and we wouldn't want to change anything!"

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited the registered parents and carers of pupils at the Independent Jewish Day 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', 74% of parents strongly agreed or agreed, and in response to the statement: 'My child is progressing in Hebrew skills e.g. speaking, reading and writing', 80% of parents strongly agreed or agreed.

The comments below encapsulate their views:

My daughter only joined the school in Year 4 but has made enormous progress in her Kodesh studies and Ivrit, which is due to the amazing and dedicated staff who have spent extra time with her, teaching and encouraging her. She can read Hebrew flawlessly, can formulate sentences in Ivrit and has a good knowledge of the Parsha each week. My child is very happy and progressing well.

There is a strong ethos at the school which is delivered in a warm and caring way. My child only joined the school in Year 1, but the education he has received is exceptional. As parents, we love the IJDS and appreciate the events they put on for parents to develop a community feel. It's a fantastic school!

We love it here. My children love it here. We are so happy. The whole school is so devoted and work very hard.

There are inconsistencies in the teaching of Kodesh, for example teaching in English or Ivrit. There has been a significant reduction in the level of extra-curricular Kodesh activities.

The school no longer tells us what children are expected to learn/achieve. My child doesn't understand what is expected because there are no longer Kodesh targets.'

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 pupil's 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.