

RIMON JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority Barnet

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates 19th and 20th June 2019

Lead Inspector Sandra Teacher

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

Type of school Primary

School category Academy

Age range of children 5-11 years

Gender of children Mixed

Number on roll 191

Appropriate authority Jewish Community Academy Trust

Chair of Governors Brian Doctor QC

Headteacher Ms Sara Keen

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Inspection team

Lead Inspector Sandra Teacher

Team Inspector Rabbi Yehuda Pearlman

The inspectors' visit focused on Jewish Studies (*Limmudei Kodesh*) and the provision for Jewish Education within the school. The inspectors looked at pupils' work. They visited assemblies, and morning and lunchtime prayer (*Tefillah*). They listened to pupils read in Hebrew. They spoke with pupils, staff, parents, and all members of the leadership and management team. They looked at school planning and policies, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring and the online questionnaire responses of parents. 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 in 2014, and the most recent Ofsted inspection was in 2018.

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

Rimon Jewish Primary School (Rimon) is a single-form-entry, Modern-Orthodox Jewish primary school, under the auspices of the Chief Rabbi of the UK, and associated with Golders Green Synagogue. *Kodesh* is led by the Head of *Kodesh* under the guidance of the Headteacher. This is overseen by the principal, the governors and the Assessment and Evaluation Committee of the Jewish Community Academy Trust.

Rimon opened as a Free School in September 2012 with a Reception class, and has grown by one class each year. This is the school's seventh year of operating and the first year with all year groups represented, including its first Year 6 class. Only eight pupils in Year 6 have been at the school since it opened, and a quarter has arrived in the past two years. The school has a high proportion of EAL (English as an Additional Language) learners at 27.3%, the majority of whom speak Modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*).

From September 2012 until July 2015, the school underwent a period of unstable leadership. The third and current headteacher was appointed in 2015, and is the school's longest serving headteacher. The current Head of *Kodesh* was appointed in January 2015, and the entire *Kodesh* team has been appointed since then.

Rimon offers approximately 30% *Kodesh* learning delivered through the equivalent of one *Kodesh* lesson a day, plus:

- Daily or twice-daily prayers (*Tefillah*)
- Weekly afternoon prayers (*Minchah*) in Years 5 and 6
- Grace after meals (*Bensching*)
- *Kodesh* singing
- Assemblies welcoming the Sabbath (*Kabbalat Shabbat*).
- Whole school celebrations for the Jewish Festivals (*Chagim*)

These are enhanced by involvement in national community events including *Shabbat UK*, *Mitzvah Day*, and *Generation Sinai*.

Ivrit is taught as a modern foreign language as part of the secular curriculum. At the school's request, *Ivrit* was not included in this inspection. It was, however, considered in terms of its impact on Hebrew Reading and wider *Kodesh* learning.

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	1
Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education Curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives	2
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (<i>tefillah</i>)	1

Overall Effectiveness:

The quality of Jewish Learning provided in Rimon Jewish Primary School is Good (GRADE 2) because:-

- Rimon is well on the way to meeting its aims to educate its pupils to the highest *Kodesh* standards in a safe and caring environment. The school motto of *Wisdom, Knowledge and Joy* means that staff are dedicated and fully committed to ensuring that all children at Rimon are happy and well-educated young people, equipped with the skills and thirst for learning to continue their *Kodesh* studies within, beyond and outside school.
- Rimon provides a good standard of Jewish education for its pupils. Pupils from all backgrounds and abilities are helped to make good progress. All pupils learn *Ivrit* from the start of Reception. They enjoy learning the language and develop a growing vocabulary, knowledge of *Tefillah* and Hebrew songs over their time at the school.
- Pupils do well because the teaching is good. Pupils settle quickly and work hard because they like their teachers and are eager to please them. Pupils are also well motivated because teachers succeed in making learning interesting, relevant and fun. There is much joyous celebration of Jewish Festivals (*Chagim*) and *Shabbat*. Although the Festivals come around every year, the curriculum has been designed so that over their time at school, pupils add cumulatively to their knowledge and understanding, rather than merely repeating basic facts about *Pesach*, *Purim*, *Chanukah* and other festivals.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The behaviour seen during the inspection was very good, and the strong relationships between pupils from different backgrounds demonstrate the friendly, cohesive community that has been built at this school. Pupils learn to appreciate and respect differing Jewish culture and traditions. Arrangements for Morning Prayers (*Shacharit*), daily assemblies and for pupils to pray at meal times (*Bensching*) meet the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
- Inspectors agree with the school's vision for *Limmudei Kodesh* which revolves around seven values (*Middot*). This is underpinned by its strong Jewish ethos and an innovative educational model.
- Leadership and Management is outstanding because of the benefits of the combined leadership team model which is represented by JCAT (The Jewish Community Academy Trust), working in close collaboration with the Trustees, Governors, the Principal and senior leaders of the school.

Overall it is not yet outstanding because:-

- A small number of pupils find it difficult to access some areas of the Jewish curriculum in its current form.
- A small number of pupils with learning barriers make lower than desired progress in their *Kodesh* textual learning (Hebrew reading and *Chumash*).
- Although pupils receive constructive feedback in lessons in the form of careful and focussed questioning to assist them improve their learning, as well as some equivalent written feedback, they would benefit from more quality feedback for their written work.
- The development of the curriculum has been a well thought through and researched process, scouring the world for the best models of practice. Many aspects within the curriculum are new and are still being trialled, so that at this stage the impact has not yet been fully realised in the outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Where required, to modify the Jewish curriculum to ensure that it is more accessible to the small minority of pupils who currently find it difficult to fully access.
- Consider where there could be even greater challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Strengthen the *Kodesh* inclusion provision by offering a fully integrated, whole school approach for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Further develop the *Kodesh* feedback procedures (for example, marking), to be more in line with the successfully piloted school's secular framework, so that pupils regularly receive feedback that helps them to further improve their *Kodesh* learning.

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

- Most pupils make good progress. They have a good understanding of Jewish beliefs and celebrations, because the curriculum is well thought-out, and they build steadily on what they have learnt before. Pupils have individual targets in *Kodesh* and take pride in achieving them. They are also proud of the good progress they make in *Ivrit*. Beginning with basic activities recognising letters and spelling out their names in Reception, they develop confidence with reading and spoken Hebrew, learning to write block letters in Reception and Year 1, and Hebrew script from Years 2 - 6.
- Teachers use *Ivrit* to enhance *Kodesh* learning, which the school plans to develop further.
- Pupils do well because they have the confidence to have a go without worrying about making a mistake. Having learnt about the life of Moses (*Moshe*), a pupil drew inspiration from the idea that even righteous people can make mistakes.
- Pupils can recite the names of the Portions of the Torah (*Parshiot*) and are competent in telling the stories of the Patriarchs (*Avot*). Teachers are adept at using a range of enjoyable resources, including drama and technology, to bring the learning alive.
- *Kodesh* displays are effectively used for interaction in lessons. For example, pupils effectively use a map in their *Chumash* learning to locate places from the journey of Abraham (*Avraham*).
- Education about Israel pervades school life, and the pupils are knowledgeable about many aspects of the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*). Year 4 pupils research 'Good News from Israel'; their presentations in the *Kabbalat Shabbat* assemblies demonstrate that the learning is meaningful, holistic and relates to real life situations, with connections between *Kodesh* and secular studies (*chol*). For example, when Year 1 were researching a weather topic, pupils measured the daily temperature in the school playground together with monitoring the daily temperature in Jerusalem. Key Stage 2 assemblies cover Israel's role in international rescue operations, pupils learn about Golda Meir when studying democracy, and they know about Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon from their Earth and Space science topic.
- Outcomes are reinforced by regular *Kodesh* homework tasks which involve Hebrew reading and a *Daf Parasha* (weekly *Sedra* portion sheet). Year 5 and Year 6 pupils research and create their own *D'var Torah* on the weekly *Parasha* or a *D'var Halacha* on a point of Jewish Law, which they present to the school.

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

- The teaching in all Key Stages and most areas of the *Kodesh* curriculum is strong. As a result, most pupils are making rapid and sustained progress, although there is still work to be done to provide pupils who have more specific needs with more tailored support.
- Teachers in the *Limmudei Kodesh* Department are passionate about their subjects. They are

determined that pupils achieve well in their Jewish education. Teachers say: "Rimon's *Kodesh* performances have given immense joy and inspiration to both teachers and parents."

- The children showcase their in-depth learning in a meaningful way, proud of their Jewish knowledge and heritage. Rimon is a school unafraid to take on challenges and new ideas. It is a diverse school that courageously strives for community and togetherness.
- The school is part of the Jewish Community Academy Trust (JCAT) and links with four other schools. Staff benefit from regular meetings and sharing of best practice. This initiative has had a positive impact on teaching and learning.
- Since the last *Pikuach* inspection, the school has invested much time in training the staff in order to improve planning and teaching strategies. Planning is more streamlined, checked rigorously by the leadership team and now caters better for the needs of most pupils.
- The school has developed systems for monitoring and tracking the progress of all pupils over time, and teachers now have the advantage of checking for gaps in pupils' learning.
- Since the last *Pikuach* inspection, there has been greater precision of monitoring pupils' work. Regular book scrutiny is undertaken by the Head of *Limmudei Kodesh* and a new marking policy provides teachers with clear guidelines on how to mark and give feedback on pupils' work. The Head of *Limmudei Kodesh* then provides each teacher with feedback on how they have marked the pupils' work and the quality of their feedback to the pupils.
- Inspectors noted some inconsistencies in marking, where not all staff followed the policy at each stage in the pupils' learning journey. Leaders are aware of this, and will be addressing this area in their next professional development meeting.
- Behaviour in lessons is good, and most pupils are motivated to learn. For example, pupils in the Reception class, especially those who are *Ivrit* speakers, use iPads to recognise and write the letters of their names. Older pupils create their own games using technology, which is evidence of their knowledge and understanding while reinforcing their *Kodesh* learning.
- Music plays an important part in *Limmudei Kodesh*, both within *Tefillah* and the singing of Israeli songs. The inspector experienced a joyous explosion of song sung in Hebrew, followed by the main teaching point of '*Ve'ahavata Le'reacha Ka'mocha* - 'Love your Neighbour as Yourself'.
- Teachers challenge pupils to think for themselves. They have high expectations of their pupils, and insist they give their best. For example, when teachers ask a question, they allow pupils to think through the answer and then, in a number of cases seen, will ask others if they agree, and why. This type of questioning allows pupils to evaluate their answers, and adds depth to meaning. The good relationship between the staff and pupils contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school and their good progress.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because work is not tailored as closely as it could be for the range of abilities in each class.
- Marking generally shows pupils what they need to do to improve. However, pupils are not given enough responsibility for checking their own and each other's *Kodesh* work.

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

- There is strong leadership of *Kodesh*, including the Head of *Kodesh*, the Headteacher, the wider Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Principal, the Governors and the Jewish Community Academy Trust (JCAT) who all work together to create a cohesive team for the benefit of the pupils' learning. This leadership team is continually striving for improvement, exploring what innovation is available, reviewing their own practice and piloting where appropriate. They use international research to influence practice, including research and resources from American and Israeli schools.
- The Headteacher and Head of *Kodesh* articulate a clear vision of aspiration for the school.

They work closely and tirelessly to ensure a positive impact on the overall life, ethos and Jewish education of every pupil. To that end, they have implemented many initiatives and developments in the last four years that have secured an evident and positive impact on the *Kodesh* learning and Jewish culture in the school, whilst at the same time identifying areas of improvement.

- School self-evaluation is courageous and honest. Judgements are reflective and involve all stakeholders.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning and the use of appraisal have a significant impact on staff professional development, which, in turn helps to raise school standards. Issues are clearly identified, and action on areas for development is well established, with regular evaluation ensuring ongoing progress.
- *Limmudei Kodesh* teachers receive the same training as their secular colleagues to enable them to increase their educational knowledge. Intervention groups have been set up to support pupils in their Hebrew reading that includes pupil premium pupils. The inspection team spoke to a number of parents and analysed the responses to the online questionnaire, which in the main were very positive. Negative comments about the *Kodesh* homework or communication issues were explored by the inspection team and found to be uncorroborated. However, the team did agree with some of the comments about the quality of the Hebrew reading, and that *Ivrit* is not always used to its fullest extent to enhance and enrich *Kodesh* learning.
- The Governing Body (now linked to the JCAT trustees) provides a steady hand and support in conjunction with a strong rabbinical presence from the local Rabbi. The PTA works tirelessly for their children and endeavours to create a strong sense of community through, for example, weekly *Challah* sales and school *Shabbatonim* for all the families.

The effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives is Good (GRADE 2) because:-

- The curriculum has a strong statement of intent driven by the school's Values and Principles. It is an area of developing strength for the school, because it is still in its initial stages of piloting and implementation. The curriculum is broad and innovative, and largely takes into account the context of most pupils. However, the school recognises that the requirements of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) have yet to be fully catered for.
- The school has developed a unique approach to integration. As a result, *Kodesh* is used as a catalyst to drive art, creative writing, music, drama and British Values throughout the school. Art days explore artists and their styles, using *Chagim* as a stimulus. The corridors are enhanced with an exciting range of pupils' work celebrating Festivals of Light from a range of cultures.
- The *Limmudei Kodesh* and *Chol* in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are fully integrated. For example, when the children were learning about clouds, they carried out cloud observations, made cloud collages using cotton wool and looked at their shapes. They then linked this to the Hebrew word *Anan* (cloud) and learned about the cloud of *Hashem* that accompanied the Jewish people in the wilderness and rested on the portable sanctuary (*Mishkan*). This integration of EYFS key areas of learning in a *Limmudei Kodesh* context is evidenced through observation, displays, and journals of learning experiences that have a prime position in the classroom and play a prominent part in pupils' activities.
- Bible Studies (*Tanach*) holds an important role and enables pupils to grapple with Hebrew text. Pupils find the new Prophet (*Navi*) curriculum very engaging. When learning about Samson (*Shimshon*), they explored the feelings of what it might be like to be a Nazirite (*Nazir*). Discussions about the Portion (*Sidra*) *Lech Lecha* encompass an integrated approach between both *Kodesh* and *Chol*, so that pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own personal journeys after considering the journeys of Abraham.
- Other examples of this meaningful approach are when the pupils explore their Jewish heritage and family roots in history, or more recently, where older pupils learn about the Kindertransport

and are encouraged to think about the plight of refugees. This is also linked to the story of Passover (*Pesach*) where pupils who know the story of the Exodus are able to link it to today's world.

- Informal education through organisations such as SEED and GIFT connects the school to the wider community, and supports the families as well as the pupils through understanding food wastage (*Bal Tashchit*). It provides Jewish learning and experiences so that parents can be fully involved and help their children with their work on this important topic.
- *Kodesh* is highlighted significantly in reports to parents, some of whom commented: "Emphasis on *Kodesh* pervades the school atmosphere, but it influences rather than insists." "It is the heart and soul of the school."
- The school is aware of the urgency to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given appropriately tailored pathways to develop their *Kodesh* skills according to their specific needs.

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 meets the requirements for the daily act of Collective Worship and contains elements of both ritual and reflection. Teachers use a variety of strategies for making *Tefillah* meaningful. It was especially poignant to hear a pupil say: "I use that time to connect to *Hashem* in my own special way."
- After eating, pupils sing the blessing *Al ha'michya* to the accompaniment of a music video. This experience shows a deep spiritual connection to *Hashem* and the Land of Israel.
- *Kodesh* provides pupils with wide-ranging opportunities to develop their personal insights into Jewish values and *Middot*. Pupils articulate their feelings saying: "In *Parasha*, I have learnt stories of good people who never gave up." *Rifka* is the personal hero of a girl in Year 6, because she remained strong to ensure that *Yaacov* became more important than his twin brother *Esav*.
- Pupils connect their emotions and moral viewpoints to their behaviour and Jewish teachings. Another pupil commented: "I feel angry about the things that have happened to us as a nation, but happy and hopeful now that we have our own country – which we never had before."
- The values (*Middot*) of kindness and respect permeate the school. Pupils assured the inspectors that the teachers respect all of them, and give everyone the attention they need.
- Pupils are developing a keen awareness of tolerance (*Sovlanut*) and respect (*Kavod*) for those different from themselves: the less fortunate, or those with disabilities. One of the most exciting aspects of the inspection visit was the morning charity (*Tzadakah*) collection in the playground, when the pupil carrying out this duty commented: 'The best part of collecting *Tzadakah* every morning is seeing the smiles on peoples' faces when they give'.

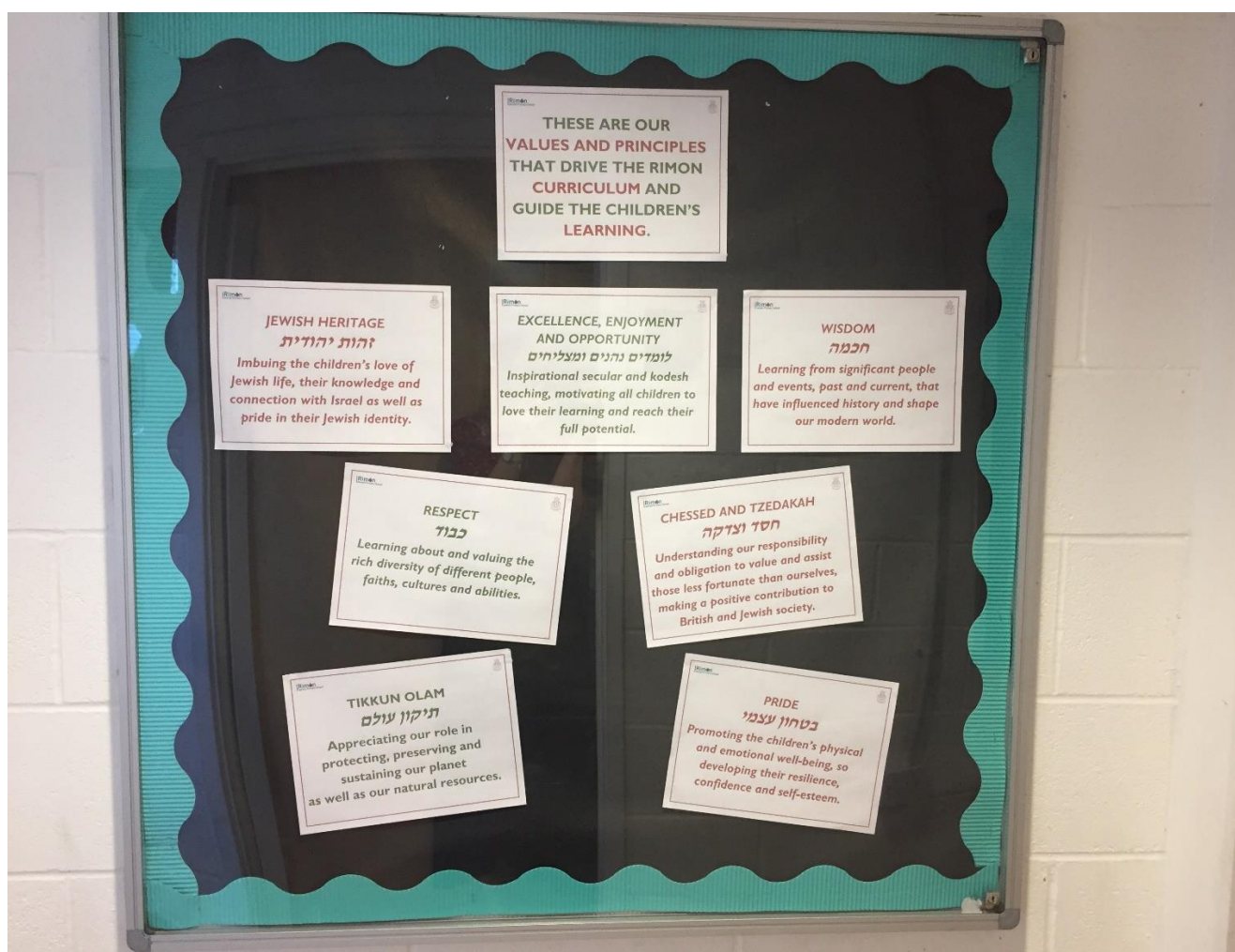
Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at **Rimon Jewish Primary School** to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. The comments below encapsulate their some of their views:

My daughter is excited about Jewish study, about the Bible stories. I see her Hebrew is improving by the more vocabulary she has been using. Her knowledge about the Jewish holidays is great.

It has been noted, not just by me but many others, how advanced her Tephillah is for her age. Really happy with the level of the Jewish studies at the school. Most importantly (to me) my child has a strong Jewish identity and values.

Communication within the school as a whole is poor. It feels disorganised at times. Having said that it is a happy school and my children run in every morning. They are given a strong love for Judaism and Jewish values but one that works compatibly alongside secular values which I think is a very good thing.



The Values and Principles of Rimon Jewish Primary School

GLOSSARY
WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:

GRADE	JUDGEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for the needs of all its pupils.
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.