

JFS

INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority	Brent
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach
Inspection dates	25 th – 26 th February 2020
Lead Inspector	Richard Felsenstein

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of children	11-18
Gender of children	Mixed
Number on roll	2023
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of Governors	Andrew Moss
Headteacher	Rachel Fink
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Inspection team

Lead Inspector
Team Inspector

Richard Felsenstein
Rebbetzin Esther Cohen

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days. The inspectors visited 16 classes from Years 7 to 13 for lessons, or parts of lessons, and attended a school assembly. All lessons were observed jointly with the Headteacher and Head of Faculty for Jewish Education. Inspectors held meetings with the Headteacher, Head of Faculty for Jewish Education, Head of Informal Education, other members of staff and many students. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the Jewish Education and Informal Jewish Education Self Evaluation Forms (SEFs), development plans, students' written work, the Jewish Education curriculum, assessment documents, and reporting and tracking documentation. The Headteacher, together with the Head of Faculty for Jewish Education, played a full and active part in this inspection, including attending team meetings and discussions with inspectors.

The inspectors looked in detail at the following:

- Outcomes for students 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/Education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives
- Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*Tefillah*).

Information about the school

- JFS is a Jewish secondary school which has provided education to the Jewish community in London since 1732. It is the largest Jewish comprehensive school in Europe, with 2,023 students on roll, including 523 in the sixth form. Most students come from outside the Local Authority.
- JFS is a co-educational inclusive, Modern Orthodox Jewish school that strives to produce well-educated, faithful and proud Jews who will be responsible and contributing members of society.
- JFS' motto is *Orah Viykar* (Light and Honour). Through their Jewish and secular experiences, JFS students are educated towards bringing light and honour to themselves and those around them.
- JFS' foundation body is the United Synagogue, and its religious authority is the Office of the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. JFS preserves and develops its religious character in accordance with the principles of modern *Torah* Judaism in line with the Office of the Chief Rabbi. JFS strives to connect its Jewish students to a vibrant orthodox Jewish life and *Torah* values, in line with the United Synagogue's core values. These include Living, Learning and Caring together, with a strong belief in the centrality of Israel in Jewish Life.
- The proportion of students with EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan), or who are classified as SEN K, is significantly below average.
- The proportion of students eligible for Pupil Premium and free school meals is below the national average.
- Modern Hebrew (*Ivrit*) is taught as a Modern Foreign Language.

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 JFS is Outstanding (Grade 1) because:-

- Jewish values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school.
- The school's distinctive Jewish character has a high profile. This was evident as soon as inspectors walked into the school for the first time, as outstanding displays made an immediate positive impact.
- Teaching is outstanding, and together with a rich Jewish curriculum, contributes to outstanding learning and achievement.
- Students and groups of students have outstanding Jewish educational experiences at school, which ensure that they are well equipped for the next stage of their Jewish education. The inspectors interviewed many students, and the positive impact of their Jewish experiences at JFS was clear.
- The school consistently reflects the highest expectations of staff and the highest aspirations for students.
- Best practice is spread effectively in a drive for continuous improvement.
- The quality of leadership and management of Jewish education is outstanding, and JFS's leaders, including governors, have a thorough understanding of the school's educational performance.
- The outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of Jewish education have a major impact on the lives of the students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the new sixth form *Morasha* Jewish Studies programme.
- Continue to develop the new *Tefillah* (prayer) and Hebrew Reading programmes, which were introduced this year into Year 7, until they become embedded throughout the whole school.
- Further develop intervention strategies for supporting Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) students, and roll these out across the Jewish Studies Department.

Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education are Outstanding (Grade 1) because:-

- Taking into account the starting points of JFS students, the proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress is high in relation to their potential.
- Jewish education has a high and respected profile within the school, and learning activities provide for the needs of all learners.
- During the summer term prior to joining JFS, pupils take an online baseline assessment for Jewish Studies which includes skills, Hebrew reading and general Jewish knowledge. There is a different assessment for the *Iyun* (deeper level learning) set, for students with a higher level of reading and translation skills, including *Rashi* (Biblical commentator) script and Jewish knowledge.
- While the first assessment in Jewish Studies after pupils join the school shows progress, significant progress can be seen by the summer term. Current data shows that three quarters of Year 7 students achieve above target, and some are considered for moving up to the *Iyun* set.
- Regular assessments take place, data is recorded, and student progress and whether intervention is required are discussed at departmental meetings. Assessment data is used for targeted interventions, and this constant monitoring, together with outstanding teaching, ensures significant progress for the majority of students, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The department's tracking system was an area for improvement in the last *Pikuach* Report in 2014. It is now fully operational, and significant progress has been made. Inspectors saw that tracking showed students had achieved exceptionally well in Jewish Studies, and their needs are constantly checked and reviewed. As a result, they make outstanding progress through the different key stages.
- The school management system SIMS is being used from this academic year to track student progress for the whole school. RAG rated colour-coded data makes it easy to check progress and decide where interventions are necessary. This data is then used to decide on appropriate student interventions. Following the GCSE mock exam, students who are 1 or 2 levels below their target grade are given an intervention plan tailored to meet their needs, with all information about interventions recorded on the tracking system. In Year 11, for example, there are additional past exam paper questions with focused marking and feedback, one-to-one sessions, achievement intervention sessions run by the Head of Faculty, and communication with the pastoral team, if necessary. All these intervention strategies are used to improve outcomes.
- Outcomes in Jewish Education are consistently outstanding at GCSE. In the Religious Studies (RS) GCSE in 2019, 92% of students scored 9-6 levels, compared to 70% nationally. 58% of students scored levels 9-7, compared with 31% nationally. The average points score for RS was 6.6, putting JFS in the top 20% of schools nationally. In addition, 76% of students working below target at mock, who received interventions, achieved or exceeded their target at GCSE.
- At Key Stage 3 during the 2018-2019 academic year, 96% of students in the current Year 9 achieved attainment scores ranging from 'secure' to 'advanced' (Levels 4-9 on the Jewish Studies Key Stage 3 levels). Year 9 progress from Year 8 shows that 50% exceeded their target, and 29% hit the target, equating to 79% at or above their Year 9 target, which is excellent. In Year 8, 88% of students achieved attainment scores ranging from 'secure' to 'advanced' understanding of Jewish Studies content and skills. In the current Year 7, progress data will be measured at the end of Year 7, going into Year 8. However, in Year 7 attitudes to learning were measured by looking at the available data through class contributions and homework assignments, and 98% of students are judged to have 'good' to 'excellent' attitudes to learning. The data indicates that students are typically able to articulate and apply their Jewish knowledge in an age-appropriate way.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 11 indicate students are making on average 0.75 of a level progress from when they start JFS to the end of GCSE years, adding three quarters of a grade in terms of value added. In the RS GCSE, 19% of all students achieve a level 9, compared to 13% of all students in other subjects, which is an excellent achievement.
- EAL (English as an Additional Language) students at GCSE had a good score of 0.93 for progress

(almost a complete GCSE grade), which is excellent value added. A robust system is in place for tracking under-performing students, but the range of student responses to this will be looked at, and more focused interventions put in place. In the 2019 GCSE exam, the Year 11 students with EHC plans did not perform as well, and the department will have a greater focus on raising the progress of these students.

- A recent survey of sixth form students on the new *Morasha* programme 77% thought that the teacher made the lessons interesting and relevant, and 70% find the lessons engaging and interesting. For example, 96% of students felt that the unit on Relationships helped them understand this particular topic better. These excellent outcomes will continue to be reviewed as the programme develops, and more feedback is given from staff and students.
- Each student's level of Hebrew reading is assessed by a bespoke online reading assessment before they enter Year 7. These scores are used to group students into appropriate settings. Comparative data when assessing students in the new Year 7 Hebrew Reading course showed clear progress from the introduction of the course in September 2019 to December 2019. In September, 51% of students scored correctly when decoding complex words, whereas in December this figure had risen to 69%. In addition, eight of the 20 pupils who started Year 7 in the Hebrew reading support group (as determined by the entry test) have achieved the level 3b (able to blend all letters and vowels, and read 3-4 syllable words) required to leave the support group. Some of these students would also have moved to a higher *Ivrit* (Hebrew) set. Students in the *Iyun* track classes demonstrated a higher level of Hebrew literacy.
- Students demonstrated that they are enthusiastic learners, and actively participate in Jewish Education lessons. For example, a response in a Year 7 *Tefillah* lesson, where students were asked why they say the prayer *Modeh Ani* (I thank you), one responded: "To thank *Hashem* (G-d) for waking us up," demonstrating their understanding through excellent oral feedback.
- In all observed lessons and activities, students were confident, and displayed excellent Jewish knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability.
- Each residential school trip has a survey before and after, involving students, *madrichim* (informal educators) and staff. On *Purim* this year, outcomes for students will be assessed by an online survey. Alumni have been sent a survey about Jewish life at JFS in order to provide feedback about their Jewish education experience, and the impact of JFS on their Jewish lives. Measuring outcomes in informal education is challenging, but necessary, in terms of judging success and helping with future planning. In addition, a focus group meets once a term to report on Jewish life at JFS, and review outcomes.

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

- Much of the teaching in all key stages and most subjects of the Jewish curriculum is outstanding, and never less than consistently good. Almost all students, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities, and the more able, are making rapid and sustained progress.
- In all lessons observed, teachers demonstrated excellent subject knowledge and understanding of the Jewish subjects they teach, shown by the impact on the students' learning. For example, in one Year 8 lesson on the '*Mitzvah* (commandment) of happiness on Festivals', explanations were clear, and tasks expertly presented. One student said to an inspector: "On *Chanukah* (Festival of Lights) we had a challenge and built a *Chanukiah* (eight branched candelabra). It was good fun, and we really learnt how a kosher *Chanukiah* works'. In addition, this lesson was an example of how well a teaching assistant was used to explain the tasks to a student with special educational needs.
- Teachers' general planning is effective, as was seen in an outstanding Year 7 lesson. The first part of the lesson reviewed key school rules (this is done half-termly); the next part was the new *Tefillah* (prayer) programme which is timetabled once a week, and which demonstrated the good progress that pupils are making with their learning, knowledge and understanding of *Tefillot* (prayers). The final section of the lesson examined the concept of happiness, and commenced with the teacher asking students to work out a link between a song and the subject matter under

discussion. Later in the lesson, happiness was linked to what the students learnt about *Purim* (Festival) in the textbook. When they were asked to explain happiness in relation to what they had learnt, an excellent response was: “At the start of *Adar*, Jews are commanded to be happy.”

- One area of improvement included in the last JFS *Pikuach* report was ‘To ensure consistency across areas of marking’. The new marking policy provides clear guidelines in relation to day-to-day marking and detailed formative feedback, and provides the requested consistency.
- Teachers provide students with meaningful and incisive feedback to written work and when involving the students in class discussions. Marking and feedback are strong, and the quality of feedback instructive in helping the students’ progress. In books scrutinised by inspectors, teachers and students carefully followed the whole-school and Jewish Studies marking guidelines.
- A large group of Year 8 students interviewed by inspectors was clearly able to explain that the starting point for assessment is the individual target at the beginning of the year, and progress is measured against that target. Defined targets are set, and inspectors saw many examples of impressive marking following the school system, together with the Jewish Studies ‘Written Feedback Policy’, which was updated in July 2019. A variety of methods of assessment is continuously used, including peer marking and self-assessment. Inspectors saw many excellent examples of this when scrutinising books. All students spoken to across the year groups showed an excellent understanding of the system, and clearly explained how progress is assessed.
- All the books scrutinised had the student progress tracker in the back inside cover, which contained the level of attainment reached in each assessed piece of work. Inspectors saw that the school-wide ‘Green Box’ marking is consistently applied, and is an excellent way of maintaining progress. Under this system, teachers choose one key area of a student’s work that needs improving and draws a green box around it. The student rewrites that section in green. It is an excellent way of maintaining and ensuring progress.
- The Subject Progress Review Form enables the department to assess whether any students have particularly low progress scores, followed by agreed interventions sent to the data team.
- In a Year 11 GCSE RS lesson, a scrutiny of books confirmed the high level of marking seen in earlier lessons. This lesson was comparing the status of women in Judaism and Christianity. All SEND students were noted in the lesson plan, marking was outstanding and followed all the guidelines. The students’ understanding of the subject matter was checked systematically by the teacher, who demonstrated excellent knowledge and gave impressive advice and guidance as the students’ worked on their own and completed a task on Christianity’s view of women. The teacher provided time to complete the task to securely embed the students’ Jewish knowledge, understanding and skills.
- In lessons observed, the inspectors saw differentiation by task, including extension tasks. As a result of the entrance test, the Jewish Studies groups in the different sides of the year are set by ability. One block comprises sets 1 and 2 for *Iyun* (advanced track) students involved in deeper learning, and sets 1-4 of the non-*Iyun* classes. The other block does not have an *Iyun* track, but has six sets to cater for the ability range. If parents would like their child to join the *Iyun* track, there is a separate entrance test in Jewish Studies, because *Iyun* students need to be able to read and translate text, and decode the Biblical commentator *Rashi*.
- Inspectors observed a Year 12 *Purim* Carousel lesson, which examined the four *Mitzvot* (commandments) of *Purim*. This was an effective way of teaching the *Mitzvot*, to fully engage the students. The session was run by the charity GIFT and JFS teachers. One student said: “This really motivated me, and I learnt a lot.” Another commented: “Once I pass my driving test, I would like to be a driver for GIFT.”
- A Year 12 Girls’ *Iyun* group was studying *Purim* in depth, looking at its hidden miracles. When they leave JFS, many of the girls in this group will go to seminary in Israel, and they all clearly love the challenge of Jewish learning. Other Year 12 students commented:
 - “Having this kind of workshop makes people feel included. People see the Jewish Studies timetable and they do not feel stressed out.”

- “I love Jewish Studies; there are no exams to stress about.”
- “This lesson is very interactive, it is much better than sitting in the classroom, all students are involved.”
- ‘Retrieval’ questions play an important part in lessons. These questions about previous topics enable students to recall what they had previously learnt, and to build on that information in the new topic. This was seen during a Year 9 lesson on the *Torah* (Five Books of Moses) portion about the Cities of Refuge. Students showed impressive prior knowledge and contributed well to the discussion. Handouts with *pesukim* (verses) from the *Mishna* (Oral Law) on accidental murder were provided, supporting the department’s developing curriculum use of Jewish texts during Jewish Studies lessons. The handouts included four different scenarios for group discussions.
- In terms of helping lower ability and SEND students to progress, a Year 9 lower set was observed where the teacher supported students with different learning challenges to review what happened to the Jewish people over their forty years in the desert. There was excellent pacing and use of cross-curricular links with modern-day leaders to support and extend students’ reflection of Moses as a leader.
- In another Year 7 *Tefillah* (prayer) lesson, individual students were asked to read aloud parts of Hebrew prayer. Some pupils read well, but others struggled, especially those with SEND. Also present in the class was an educational psychologist who works with the school for blocks of time during the year. She observes lessons, meets teachers and suggests strategies for supporting SEND students. She then returns after four weeks to see how the strategies have been implemented, and whether they are working. This has proved an effective way of ensuring progress.

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 new and dynamic creative vision for Jewish education, in which staff, governors and students consistently strive for excellence. There is cohesiveness about the way in which the school is led and managed, which permeates all aspects of Jewish education throughout the school.
- The Headteacher is an outstanding leader, who together with governors, the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Formal and Informal Jewish education, has a dynamic vision and inspires the whole school community.
- The Headteacher has been in post for eighteen months. During this relatively short period of time, she has implemented and supported many positive changes in Jewish education. Excellent new initiatives include the new Hebrew Reading scheme, ‘Pause for Thought’, and the new three-month *Lev Israel* residential programme for Year 9 students at the Alexander Muss High School. *Lev* means heart, and *Israel* is at the heart of JFS. The first cohort is in *Israel* now (February 2020). This programme replaces the previous *Kibbutz Lavi* *Israel* residential, and promotes the values and ethos of JFS, including the ideals of Zionist Modern Orthodoxy. Another new initiative is the sixth form *Morasha* programme which provides exciting educational opportunities for students in Years 12 and 13.
- The Headteacher has focused on ensuring that all members of the JFS community understand and take ownership of the ethos of the school. Through excellent communication, the school motto *Orah Viykar* (Light and Honour) is known to the whole community. Focus groups of students and a group of parents interviewed by the inspectors immediately knew what the motto is, and what it stands for. One student said: “I had never understood what was on the school blazer before the new Headteacher joined JFS.” The motto and Jewish values are now embedded in the daily life of the school.
- Every term commences with the Headteacher taking an assembly for each year group, in order to speak directly to each student, put across key messages for the term and inspire students to be the best they can be.
- With regard to the teaching management structure, the Headteacher oversees the Deputy Head for Jewish Life and Learning, who line-manages the Head of Faculty for Jewish Education.

Together with the Head of JiEP (Jewish Informal Education Programme), they present outstanding leadership to all staff involved in Jewish education.

- Governors provide outstanding support for the Headteacher and Jewish Studies department, and have played a huge part in ensuring that JFS is a 'Jewish school, as opposed to a school for Jewish children'. Governors are clear that every student needs to take on the school ethos and values during their time at JFS, so that these values are firmly embedded in daily school life.
- The Headteacher, governors, and Head of the Faculty of Jewish Education all talked about the importance of Jewish education being at the heart of the school.
- Leaders, including governors, have a thorough understanding of the school's Jewish educational performance and distinctiveness based on effective and insightful evaluation, which is an excellent reflection of the current position of the school. Through reading the school's self-evaluation documentation, and through detailed meetings with senior leaders and governors, the inspectors were impressed with the positive developments that have taken place.
- Leaders, including governors, focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning, and provide focused professional development for all Jewish Studies teaching staff.
- Regular self-evaluation leads directly to effective strategies for improvement in Jewish education, and maintains a strong focus on meeting the needs of the learners. The Headteacher and governors resurrected and restructured the Jewish Studies committee of the governing body, and merged the formal and informal aspect of JFS' Jewish education provision. The committee meets once or twice a term, and is an opportunity for governors to ask challenging questions about all aspects of Jewish education. School data is scrutinised through the Jewish Studies committee. In addition, governors regularly come into school to observe lessons, meet students, join learning walks, and speak to staff and students, in order to support the Headteacher in raising standards and ensuring outstanding progress. All agree that as a result of developments, JFS students are now more engaged in their Judaism in all years of the school.
- The Head of Jewish Studies focuses on improving teaching and learning, resulting in teaching that is generally outstanding, and never less than good.
- A school-wide 'coaching' system was introduced this year. This takes place fortnightly on Wednesdays, and the school day is reorganised on those days to end at 3pm. Each teacher is allocated a coach from the staff, who meets with them on a fortnightly basis. At these meetings, advice, suggestions and guidance are given, and targets are set and reviewed at the next meeting. Feedback from staff has been positive, and they are pleased to have this focus on their individual professional development. CPD (continuing professional development) in departmental meetings also takes place on a regular basis. During these sessions, the Jewish Education team has received training on how to support students with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and ASD (autism spectrum disorder), and 'inclusion'.
- Effective systems are in place to monitor, track and ensure pupil progress in Jewish education. The Heads of Jewish Education focus on improving teaching and learning, which results in teaching that is generally outstanding, and never less than consistently good. This is achieved through the excellent assessment, tracking and monitoring system, regular departmental meetings, appropriate and well-thought-out professional development, and the impressive advice and guidance provided.
- There is a robust system of performance management led by the Headteacher, which encourages, challenges and supports teacher improvement. Teachers are observed on a regular basis, discussions are held and strengths and areas for development examined. The Headteacher ensures that all Jewish Studies teachers are either qualified teachers, or join the London School of Jewish Studies Schools Direct programme in order to become qualified teachers.

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

- The Jewish curriculum enhances the Jewish ethos of the school.
- The Jewish curriculum, both formal and informal, provides memorable experiences and rich

opportunities for high-quality learning and wider personal development and well-being. Some students who have flexible time tables in order to support current mental health challenges make sure they are in school for Jewish Studies because they enjoy the curriculum. Students with mental health issues are kept safe in Jewish Studies by teachers being mindful of discussions on topics that might cause distress. If a sensitive subject is going to be taught, teachers make every effort to have a conversation with a student in advance, giving them the option of withdrawing for that lesson, or asking a parent to support the student in preparation for the lesson.

- The new Jewish Studies curriculum has breadth, depth and balance, providing students with their full entitlement of Jewish knowledge and experience. It is customised to meet the varying needs of individuals and groups.
- Since the last *Pikuach* inspection, the Headteacher and the Deputy Head responsible for Jewish Life and Learning, and the Head of the Jewish Studies Faculty have planned an outstanding new Key Stage 3 Jewish Studies curriculum. This is now the third year of the Key Stage 3 curriculum in Year 7, but the first in Year 9. The new curriculum complements the school motto *Orah Viykar* (Light and Honour) and motivates the students to bring 'light and honour' to their learning and conduct. The new curriculum enables students to engage with Jewish texts, whereas in the past, only certain groups were offered this opportunity. Jewish Studies at Key Stage 3 has three components: *Tenach* (Bible), *Talmud* (textual discussion on the Oral Law), and Jewish History. Feedback from students across the Key Stages has been positive. The curriculum documents for Years 7, 8 and 9 have excellent content and assessment tasks, and are carefully broken down into a month-by-month timetable. A key feature of this new curriculum is to enable students to become familiar with textual study and help them develop these skills as they move up the school. Inspectors saw some excellent exercise books, divided into the three components and clearly labelled, with high quality marking according to the department's marking policy.
- The new *Morasha* sixth form curriculum was introduced this academic year. It aims to make Judaism relevant, engaging and personalised to each student. There are four main tracks:
 - 'Next', a programme which enables young Jewish students to meet top businessmen, lawyers, judges, policemen and other professionals to gain insights into career paths
 - 'GIFT', a social action programme run by GIFT
 - 'JLIFE', the university preparation track run by the JFS student chaplains, and includes the ABCs of Israel advocacy.
 - *Iyun* (depth) track is the *Beit Hamedrash* (textual studies) track to prepare students for *Yeshivot* and seminaries in Israel.
- The new Year 7 Hebrew Reading Programme introduced this year aims to ensure that students who do not read Hebrew at all, learn how to read it at JFS. For those who can read Hebrew, the department is seeking to consolidate what students already know, and start to recognise patterns in the reading of texts. This programme has a support group for students who need to develop early reading skills. It takes place twice a week, and is a joint Jewish Studies/Modern Hebrew initiative. A student, asked by inspectors whether he was learning how to read Hebrew, replied: "Yes, I have never been able to read Hebrew before."
- Once a week, students take part in *Tefillah* (prayer) sessions in their classroom with their own *Siddur* (prayer book). This provides them with the opportunity to become familiar with daily *Tefillot* (prayers). At the beginning of *Tenach* (Bible) lessons, students read from a 'pack of cards' of increasing challenge which contain key words from the *Siddur*. Each card is numbered, and students progress through the cards at their own rate.
- Cross-curricular provision places Jewish topics in their broader contexts. For example, the Jewish Studies department worked with the English department on reflective writing for *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year). English teachers set and marked the work. In Design and Technology, a *Kippah* (skull cap) was made. In Drama a 'Reduced Jewish History' play was produced by Year 10 students, who performed it for Year 7 students. The Hebrew Reading initiative in Year 7 is run in conjunction with the Modern Languages department. Inspectors visited the Hebrew Reading support group to observe Year 11 and sixth form students working with Year 7 students to help them improve their reading. Another area of cross-curricular work is in Science, where lessons on evolution are planned by both departments.
- All groups of students benefit from a coherent and relevant curriculum which promotes outstanding

outcomes in developing their study skills in the pursuit of Jewish knowledge, belief and understanding. Inspectors observed an excellent Year 11 GCSE RS lesson in which the students showed good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. The AQA GCSE Paper 8, 'Judaism and Islam,' is the specification the school teaches. The curriculum is enriched by resources such as 'Retrieval Roulette', an online document designed by GCSE teachers, which contains hundreds of different exam questions.

- Direct links between formal and informal Jewish education enhance the curriculum provision. For example, Year 10 students learnt about the Festival of *Shavuot* in the curriculum, before making ice cream in lessons, thereby reflecting the dairy nature of the festival.
- Jewish Studies and Jewish Informal Educators now share an office, which has strengthened the links between them. Curriculum planning is often done in conjunction with each other. On *Chagim* (Festivals) such as *Purim*, formal Jewish Studies educators will assist in activities connected to the four *Mitzvot* (commandments) of *Purim*, and informal educators will go into Jewish Studies lessons to talk about the festival. Jewish Studies teachers are involved in the school daily *Minyan* (prayer service), and all Jewish educators are involved with school trips to Israel and Poland, and other residential trips.
- The school website contains a number of videos on different aspects of Jewish life at JFS. Inspectors were particularly impressed with a video on 'The Jewish Experience at JFS'. This video gave a real flavour about the wider Jewish Studies/Informal Education curriculum, and what is exciting about Jewish life at JFS. It showed an excellent range of lunchtime activities available to students, supporting their Jewish education. These include:
 - Dancing on *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Israel's Independence Day)
 - *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* (coming of age) activities
 - *Tzedakah* (charity) and Social Action
 - Holocaust Memorial Day
 - Day of Deeper Learning

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 requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*Tefillah*). In each tutor base, a 'Pause for Thought' is played at the start of the day. Tutors may deliver the 'Thought' in different ways. There is generally a weekly theme, often associated with a forthcoming *Chag* (Festival) or a national or international event. In December 2019, the themes of 'humility,' 'music,' 'memory' and 'dedication' were used. During the week of the inspection, the theme was 'Mother Tongue'. All members of the JFS community may offer to present a 'Thought', with the Headteacher usually delivering the first one at the start of each term.
- A daily *Shacharit* (morning service) takes place in the school's synagogue every morning. The lead inspector attended *Rosh Chodesh* (New Month) *Tefillah* (prayers) in which approximately 70 people, comprised of both students and staff, took part. This was an enjoyable service, partly led by students, and partly by staff. The *ruach* (atmosphere) was excellent, and the lovely singing of *Hallel* (hymns of praise) enhanced the prayers and gave the service a spiritual atmosphere. The lead inspector noted the way older students helped younger students follow the service. A daily *Minchah* (afternoon service) is held in the school's synagogue, and is attended by about 40 students and teachers.
- The first Year 7 *Chagigat Siddur* (prayer book presentation), took place with Year 7 students and their parents. It is the culmination of the new *Tefillah* programme introduced into Year 7 this year, designed to improve both Hebrew and knowledge of *Tefillah*.
- The Jewish Informal Education Programme (JiEP) focuses on a wide range of Jewish experiences to help build Jewish identity and a meaningful relationship with Israel. There is a wide range of informal activities that take place during morning break, lunchtime and after school. Year 8 pupils spoke enthusiastically about the Charity and Social Action Committee, *Yad B'Yad* (Hand in Hand),

their active engagement with *Tzedakah* (charity) and *Chesed* (kindness), and mentioned the links to *Orah Viykar*. There is also a buddy system for Key Stage 4 students to support Year 7 students on the Inclusion Register participate in lunchtime activities run by JiEP.

- JFS supports four main charities during the year which are selected by the students on the committee. This academic year, JFS is supporting charities which help vulnerable people: The Ollie Foundation, JAMI, CFAB and JNF Youth Centre Project. The charities include one British, one Anglo-Jewish, an Israeli and an international charity.
- JiEP offers daily experiences, including lunchtime clubs, festival celebrations, domestic *Shabbatonim* (Sabbath experience), day trips of Jewish interest, and residential trips to Israel and Poland. These trips are described by students as “life-changing” opportunities” and are an opportunity to put school values into practice. The Year 9 *Lev* trip to Israel in the spring term is an enriching opportunity for the students to use the Land of Israel as their classroom for 12 weeks, while they learn about their place in Jewish history, and strengthen their connection to Israel. The Year 9 ‘Taste of Israel’ trip for two weeks in June aims to provide a positive Jewish experience, and increase students’ connection to Israel. It also places great emphasis on social action opportunities. The *Gesher* Gateshead trips for Year 10+ enables students to spend *Shabbat* immersed in a Jewish community different to their own. 97% of students said they felt more connected to Judaism after the Gateshead *Shabbaton*.
- The Year 12 Poland trip is a chance for the students to enrich their understanding of the Jewish community pre and post Holocaust, alongside learning about the destruction that took place during the *Shoah* (Holocaust).
- Progress is being made on increasing the number of students on the Inclusion Register who participate in school trips, and the Jewish Studies department works with the SEND department in this respect. Two students with Type 1 diabetes attended the Year 7 *Shabbaton*, and last year eight students with special educational needs attended the two-week ‘Taste of Israel’ trip. One attended the two-month *Lavi* residential programme.
- When inspectors asked a group of Year 13 students for a special memory that they would take with them when they graduate from JFS, one replied: “The *Lavi Israel* programme in Year 9 was an amazing opportunity, it made me passionate about my Jewish identity.” Another said: “Poland can be taught in class, but to go as a person is life-changing.”
- The Personal, Social, Health, Citizenship Education (PSHCE) programme currently takes place in a timetabled slot once a fortnight for Years 7-11. Inspectors visited 9 different groups and observed a range of sessions, including a member of The Amy Winehouse Foundation talking to the whole of Year 11 about his recovery from addiction. The hall was full, and the students were fully engaged in his personal story. A Year 7 group was involved in a peer education project on ways to improve mental health, given by Year 12 students who had been trained to lead these sessions. A Year 7 student told inspectors: “I think it is important, because for your own health, someone should be by your side.” The mental health programme is new, and Year 12 students volunteer to participate in it. Inspectors observed a CST (Community Service Trust) class about staying safe, a Year 9 sex education programme run by “Streetwise” (an organisation that works nationally with Jewish schools and communal organisations), a Year 8 first aid class, and a group looking at body image.
- A number of external Jewish organisations run different aspects of the programme, and there are strong links with Jewish Studies educators in school. Subject matter, including British Values, is taught within the ethos of the school, and is often delivered by form tutors at the start of the day. For example, during Holocaust Memorial Day, there was a Jewish Studies lesson on British heroes of the Holocaust.
- PSHCE lessons are strongly linked to British Values and the Jewish Studies Department. The PSHCE co-ordinator is currently reviewing the programme with senior leaders, who have agreed

that the timetable slot will be replaced next year by 'drop-down' days for different year groups. It is felt that delivering the programme in this way will be more effective.

- One of the lessons observed was on preparing students for interviews, and links with Jewish Studies through building students' confidence in taking leadership roles within the school as preparation for taking these roles in the outside world and within the Jewish community in particular.
- Displays around the school were of a high standard. The *Yavneh* corridor, where the majority of Jewish Studies lessons are taught, contains excellent displays of charity work and social action. The foyer has a range of artwork on reflections on the Year 12 visit to Poland. In the foyer there is an environmental promise tree from *Tu B'shvat* (New Year for Trees); a result of cross-curricular work between the Jewish Studies and Geography departments, with students from Years 7-10 writing notes on the trees. Television monitors are used to highlight all the activities that are taking place during the day.
- Inspectors observed sixth form 'Lunch and Learn' sessions which were attended by a number of students. Topics ranged from 'Life after Death' to *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) and "Whose life is it anyway?" Students said they enjoyed the sessions, were very interested, and liked pizza!
- There are two new JIEP lounges, which are used by students to 'chill', to talk to the JFS student chaplain and his wife, and to other informal educators. The JFS chaplaincy is a recent addition to the provision the school offers in terms of the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at the school.
- Inspectors interviewed a focus group of parents about their children's Jewish educational experience at JFS. Comments from parents included:
 - "My child was animated and alive when she came home from Israel. What a special gift to give her."
 - "I had two children on Lavi. I am not religious, but there is a real love of Israel."
 - "The school caters for all kinds of backgrounds"
 - "JIEP offers a real culture and tradition."
 - "Everything is much stronger since the new Head arrived, in terms of ethos and *Orah Viykar*. Everyone knows what JFS stands for."

A parent whose daughter moved to JFS in the sixth form said that Jewish life in the sixth form, including the NEXT programme, made the transition much easier.

- Speakers regularly talk to JFS students. During the week of the inspection, JFS hosted Lord Mann of Holbeck Moor, the Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism. Addressing Year 12 and select Year 10 and Year 11 students, he spoke about his role as an independent adviser on the dangers of antisemitism, both in Great Britain and further afield.
- A Year 13 session on 'protest' examined different types of protest, and focused on the question of 'boycott' This is a relevant topic for students on university campuses. The boycotting of Israel and Israeli goods was discussed, with comparisons made to the boycott of Jewish shops in Nazi Germany. The session was well facilitated by a Jewish Studies teacher, and the students entered into a lively debate.
- JFS maintains close contact with alumni on gap years in Israel, at *Yeshiva*, seminary or one of the other gap-year schemes. Staff who attended the recent *Yad Vashem* trip met alumni in Israel. Alumni met the Year 9 pupils on the *Lev* three-month scheme in Israel, and alumni in Israel spoke on a video link to those assembled at JFS last month when Year 14 students returned to JFS for their graduation ceremony.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at JFS to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. The comments below encapsulate their views:

“The Jewish Studies Department is exceptional.”

“We have three children at JFS and are delighted with the standard of Jewish Studies. The courses are innovative and challenging, and they find their teachers inspiring”

“I cannot fault the education at JFS. My children are excelling thanks to the school and its teachers.

“Thank you for all that you do.”

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.