

WOLFSON HILLEL PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority: Enfield

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates: 28th & 29th June 2023

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

Type of school: Primary

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of children: 3 -11

Mixed /Single sex: Mixed

Number on roll: 464

Chair of Governors: Belinda Cohen

Headteacher: Alex Kingston

Address: 154 Chase Road, London N14 4LG

Telephone number: 020 88826487

Email address: schooloffice@wolfsonhillel.enfield.sch.uk

School website: <https://www.wolfsonhillel.enfield.sch.uk>

Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Esther Colman

Team Inspector: Liza Taitz

Introduction

Inspectors make judgements on the following three Key Areas:

- Quality of Jewish Education
- Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development
- Leadership and Management.

The inspection was conducted over two days by two inspectors. The inspectors observed nineteen sessions from Nursery to Year 6 including lessons, parts of lessons, *Tefillah* (Collective worship), *Tefillah* assemblies and *Bircat Hamazon* (Grace after meals). All lessons were observed jointly with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Meetings were held with the Honorary Principal, Chair of Governors, and a Foundation Governor, as well as a focus parent group. Meetings were also held with the SLT, the Part-time Head of Jewish Studies and other key members of staff.

Information about the school

- Wolfson Hillel Primary School is a two-form entry Jewish faith school for children aged 3-11, which opened in 1992, and joined the Jewish Community Academy Trust as a founding school in March 2018. The school identifies as a Modern Orthodox Jewish school in line with its Foundation Body, The United Synagogue.
- The school was established by the local Southgate Jewish community, although due to movement in the geography of the Jewish community, most pupils now live out of borough.
- The Headteacher has been in post since March 2018, and the SLT consists of one Deputy Head Teacher, 2 Assistant Headteachers, 2 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinators (SENDCos) and a Part-time Head of Jewish Studies who works remotely and also commutes from Israel twice a term for a week. The wider Leadership Team includes Phase Leaders, Jewish Studies Leaders, and Subject Leaders.
- The school leads the Schools Direct Primary programme in London and the surrounding areas on behalf of the consortium of Jewish Primary Schools and supports the delivery of teacher training for the SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) and Schools Direct teacher training courses.
- Currently there are 12 pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and 60 children who are identified as needing additional Special Educational Needs (SEN) School Support. This equates to 16% of the school community.

Inspection judgement	Grade
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Quality of Jewish Education	1
Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development	1
Leadership and management	1
Overall effectiveness	1

What is it like to attend this Jewish school?

- Wolfson Hillel Jewish Primary School is an outstanding school where pupils love their Jewish education and are inspired by it. Parents tell us that their children are enthused by their Jewish Studies lessons and often share their knowledge with them. Parents shared comments such as: “JS is and has been one of my children’s favourite lessons. They talk enthusiastically about what they have learnt in JS.... Teachers make the learning relevant, engaging, and fun.”
- At Wolfson Hillel, pupils are immersed and enveloped in an atmosphere of Jewish spirituality, which permeates every aspect of school life. The ethos of the school, which is based on the Hillel values curriculum, is visible and tangible through vibrant and colourful general knowledge displays, and meaningful quotations that were chosen by a group of parents, pupils, and staff. These, together with pupils’ work, create an atmosphere of reflection, awe, and wonder, which is truly unique. Spiritual development is at the heart of this family and community setting.
- Pupils enjoy their Jewish Studies lessons and are enthusiastic about their Jewish experiences in the school. Pupils are given many opportunities to engage in extracurricular and informal activities which enhance their Jewish learning. For example, *Tzedakah* (charity) competitions, *Mitzvah Day*, *Etgar* (Jewish General Knowledge competition for Year 5 pupils across all Jewish schools), the *Shabbaton* (Sabbath away), and a wide variety of celebrations for *Chagim* (Festivals).
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their Jewish Education. Several Year 6 pupils said that Jewish Studies was their favourite lesson. One pupil said: “I love JS. I get to learn the *Torah* (Bible) perspective on things.” Pupils in Year 2 explained how “We do very fun learning in Jewish Studies and sometimes play games. The games help us to learn the Hebrew reading rules.”
- Pupils at Wolfson Hillel benefit from a seamless education where all teachers work together as one team, with the same high expectations and standards. Jewish Studies and secular teachers have timetabled planning time and ensure that Jewish values are at the heart of the curriculum. In the weekly Key Stage 2 Assembly, the ‘Value of the Week’ is a key focus and is highlighted and discussed. For example, in one Key Stage 2 Assembly, the School Council emphasised the importance of being good leaders and shared a quote from *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) as well as from more modern-day sources.

- Parental involvement is a strength of the school. Events are run for each *Chag* (festival) to enable parents and pupils to learn about the festival and create crafts which they can enjoy together at home. These events help to connect home and school and enable parents to support their children in their Jewish education. Some parents have commented in the surveys that they would welcome more creative Jewish Studies homework tasks in order to further enhance this connection between home and school. Parents clearly value the many opportunities they are given to come to school. One parent said: "I have loved all the events I have been invited to. With all the songs, stories and *Torah* (Bible) reading. From *Shofar* (ram's horn) blowing in the playground to my son reading from the *Torah* in his *Chagigat HaChumash* (Celebration of receiving one of the 5 books of Moses). It is so lovely to see my kids who are not very religious, proud of their religion and knowledgeable about their heritage."
- Safeguarding at Wolfson Hillel Primary School is effective. Pupils feel safe when at school, know whom to speak to if they have a concern and are confident that their issue will be addressed. Indeed, over 87% of pupils who responded to the pupil online survey said they knew whom to go to if they had a problem.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Quality of Jewish Education

- The school has a unique approach to their teaching and school day. They have moved to an earlier start and finish and a shorter lunchtime. Each year group has three teachers across two-forms, as well as a two-teacher model for *Ivrit* (modern Hebrew) in Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Hebrew Reading in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 (KS1). This allows for a higher ratio of teachers to pupils both for lessons and for pastoral support and affords the possibility for interventions depending on the needs of the cohort. The high proportion of SEND pupils are ably supported through this model as well as through the support of the SENDCos. Teachers' well-being and work/life balance also benefit from this system, and it promotes a collaborative, consistent approach with hands-on support from the leadership team.
- Since the last inspection in 2018, the proportion of outstanding lessons has increased. The teaching is supported by a rich and detailed Jewish curriculum, which is constantly being reviewed to ensure that it is relevant to all pupils. Teachers create a positive environment that allows pupils to focus on their Jewish learning in an atmosphere of respect and inclusion. For example, in a Year 5 *Chumash* lesson, pupils were able to work out the meaning of the *passuk* (verse) independently through the skilful and supportive questioning used by the teacher. Pupils would further benefit from experienced teachers sharing their creative ideas and methods with newer colleagues.
- Pupils in the EYFS benefit from meaningful and engaging interactions with adults. A key focus in the EYFS is to foster a love of *Hashem* (God) and Judaism. This permeates through the carefully integrated planning which is replete with rich and varied Jewish Studies experiences. For example, inspectors observed pupils learning about *Shabbat* (Sabbath) through creating salt dough candle stick holders and making *Shabbat* boxes. They were also engaged in role play linked with this topic. Pupils' targets are displayed in the classrooms and a number of these were linked to Jewish Studies. For example, one pupil's target was "To be able to sound out all five of the Hebrew final letters."

- In KS1, pupils develop accuracy and confidence in their Hebrew reading. This was evidenced through listening to Year 2 pupils of varying abilities read to inspectors, as well as through observing Hebrew reading lessons. Pupils enjoy consolidating their knowledge of Hebrew reading rules through a variety of games and activities such as finding words with the appropriate rule in their *Siddur* (prayer book), playing bingo, computer games, spinning the wheel etc. Regular guided reading intervention groups take place to close gaps and ensure that all pupils make rapid progress.
- Since the last *Pikuach* inspection, the school has addressed the issue of Hebrew reading fluency by developing and implementing a KS2 fluency program, with the aim of increasing fluency and pace within Hebrew reading. Jewish Studies teachers in KS2 now formally review key Hebrew reading skills each week within their lessons and these are reinforced through weekly homework. The homework also provides an opportunity to develop text-based reading utilising *Tefillah* (prayer) and *Torah* excerpts which are relevant to each individual year group.
- Pupils complete a termly formal Hebrew fluency assessment which records their speed and accuracy. The data confirms that the emphasis the school is placing on developing reading fluency is having an impact, as 52% of the current Year 6 were 'secure' or 'higher' in their fluency at the end of Year 5. At the end of Year 6, 72% have now achieved 'secure' or 'higher'. The current Year 5 pupils are on track to meet the target of 75% secure at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils in KS2 enjoy their *Ivrit* lessons and make rapid progress. They benefit from small group teaching thanks to the two-teacher model for *Ivrit*. Lessons are fast paced and include a variety of games and activities, which help pupils to develop their language skills in a fun and engaging manner. The school has created 'bespoke language organiser's' which pupils keep in their books and refer to during their lessons. This resource helps the pupils in becoming independent learners.
- Standards of *Chumash* are high. Pupils' progress is tracked termly to ensure that key knowledge and skills are secure. Based on the school's assessment data, 77% of Year 6 pupils are working at the required level. Pupils in upper KS2 benefit from a two-teacher model and the most able children can choose to attend a text track for *Chumash* studies. Evidence in pupils' books shows a wide variety of activities and high standards of textual analysis and understanding.
- Parents are full of praise for the Jewish education their children receive. One parent said: "It is very evident that Hillel and the Jewish Studies teachers go out of their way to make the learning relevant, engaging and fun." Another parent said: "Hillel nurtures confident and loving Jewishly engaged kids, with a strong connection to community and greater society."

Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

- Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development (JP&SD) is outstanding at Wolfson Hillel and the inspectors feel that this is a core strength. The unique and bespoke Hillel values curriculum is based on the teachings of Rabbi Hillel, after whom the school is named, and focuses on developing key characteristics such as confidence and self-esteem. It also supports pupils in developing strong and respectful relationships with others. In addition, it helps to prepare them to become well-rounded citizens in the future, as modelled in the KS2 Values Assembly about leadership which was observed by the inspectors. The school song also reflects these values and deepens pupils' understanding of their role in society and their potential to affect meaningful change.

- The school prepares pupils for life in the Jewish and wider community by developing their understanding of fundamental Jewish values. For example, it teaches them to become responsible citizens, volunteer in local communities and collect charity for diverse organisations. It also encourages pupils to show respect and sensitivity to others, regardless of their religious and cultural backgrounds and lifestyles, and to members of other faiths or none. Pupils told inspectors about donating charity to a wide variety of causes - some Jewish and some not. One parent commented that her son leads the *Kiddush* on Friday night and her children had key roles in their *Seder* (religious meal for Passover)-using their school-learned songs and stories.
- The school consistently provides rich Jewish experiences in a coherent and planned way through both the formal and informal curriculum. The informal events and activities are clearly mapped out to ensure progression across the school and to provide breadth and depth of experience. For example, different themes linked to Israeli life and culture are chosen each year on *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Israel Independence Day) to give pupils a wide variety of experiences throughout their journey in school. A parent commented that her son was inspired by his *Chagigat HaSiddur* (celebrating receiving one's first prayer book) in Year1 and was pleased when he got a certificate for exemplifying one of the Hillel values .
- Pupils are proud to be Jewish and have a close connection to Judaism, because of a well-constructed and sequenced curriculum that provides both skills and Jewish knowledge for future learning and communal involvement. The JS curriculum enhances the ethos of the school, as it enables pupils to explore, what Judaism means to them, and how they can apply it to their learning. A number of parents commented about how their children are keen to put their Jewish learning into practice at home.
- Pupils' voices are clearly valued; Year 6 pupils are able to apply to become a member of the *Tzedakah* squad and are empowered to choose which charity to support. Pupils in Year 6 can also apply to become Head girl or Head boy and go through a rigorous selection process which requires them to show their commitment to the school values and to be proud ambassadors.
- Pupils benefit from outstanding music lessons which are totally integrated with Jewish Studies. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were able to link the song "Miracles" to the prayer "Az *Yashir*" (song at the crossing of the Reed Sea) and discuss the difference between daily miracles such as waking up every morning and extraordinary miracles such as the plagues in Egypt. Pupils were fully engaged and active in the lesson and focussed on acknowledging the Divine (*Emunah*) through their discussion.
- The pupils show a real connection to their *Tefillah* and *Torah* learning. One Year 2 pupil said: "I feel calm when I say my *Tefillah*. I feel relaxed when we are *davening* for peace." Pupils acknowledge the Divine and recognise G-d's presence in their lives (*Emunah* - faith). As a pupil In Year 6 told us, "Even in the hardest times G-d is always with you." They are aware of the spiritual in all people (*Tzelem Elokim*). One Year 6 pupil said that the biblical character *Miriam* was her inspiration. She explained: "She inspires me that we can be stronger." Another pupil told the inspectors how she was inspired by the loyalty of Ruth to Naomi which she had learnt about prior to *Shavuot* (festival celebrating the giving of the *Torah* on Mount Sinai). All pupils participate fully and feel included in the prayer life of the school. For example, in a KS1 Assembly, Year 1 pupils, who had just received their new *Siddur* (prayer book), were paired up with Year 2 pupils, enabling the younger pupils to join in with the prayers that were unfamiliar to them. This contributes enormously to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils as it encourages the older pupils to be role models for their peers.
- In Upper KS2 the pupils thoroughly enjoy their unique and challenging ethics lessons. Pupils are presented with a relevant and modern-day moral dilemma. They then need to discuss

how they think it should be dealt with, and then their teacher explains the *Torah* perspective. One pupil commented, "I like ethics lessons. I get to learn the *Torah* perspective on things." These lessons help pupils to articulate their Jewish knowledge and spiritual insights, and the way these impact on their daily lives and the choices they make. One pupil said: "My Jewish learning helps me to have a stronger connection to G-d."

- All members of staff are good role models for pupils' personal behaviour, attitudes, and spiritual development. They maintain mutually respectful relationships with their pupils which enhance the pupils' spiritual development. This was particularly noted by the inspectors during assemblies when members of staff modelled the correct behaviour during collective worship joining in with prayers and visibly supporting the school's Hillel values. Parents commented that even out of the Jewish Studies arena, the school encourages positive values. This was seen at a recent Athletics Tournament where the teacher was reminding the children about how to behave and was modelling the behaviour himself.
- Pupils are constantly reminded of the school's ethos and values through the many powerful and aesthetically pleasing quotations and displays which can be seen in every corridor. For example, quotations on display such as "The way you act towards others is the first step to learning" and "Treat others the way you want them to treat you" help to develop pupils' Jewish character and values. As a parent commented "The Jewish ethos is everywhere. The paintings, *bentching* (*Grace after Meals*), *Shabbat*, festivals and the words on the walls."
- The way that Wolfson Hillel Primary School goes about developing pupils' Jewish character and values is exemplary and unique. It is something which the leadership team should be immensely proud of and is worthy of being disseminated widely as an example to other schools.

Quality of Leadership and management:

- The leadership of the school, including the Honorary Principal, Chair of governors, and governors, articulates and communicates the school's essence, and shows a strong commitment to high standards of work and pupils' Jewish spiritual and personal development.
- The Headteacher and Head of Jewish Studies are passionate about the Jewish ethos of the school. They are reflective, ambitious, and forward thinking. They drive constant improvement, and are totally dedicated to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of their starting point, leaves Wolfson Hillel with a deep love of Judaism, good knowledge, and skills, together with a strong Jewish identity.
- The SLT operates as a cohesive unit sharing strategic decisions for teaching and learning. Weekly meetings enable the team to drive forward the improvement agenda. In 2020 the whole school community developed the *Hillel* Values curriculum, which encompasses the vision for the school and thus provides a shared clarity for the staff.
- Despite their best efforts, the school have not been able to recruit a full time Head of Jewish Studies. However, an effective middle management team is responsible for teaching and learning, curriculum, and informal activities. Members of this team meet regularly with the Part time Head of JS and receive guidance and mentoring which have enabled them to develop their leadership skills.
- The school has the benefit of an Honorary Principal, who guides the ethos and is actively involved in the day to day running of the school, speaking at weekly *Shabbat* assemblies, observing lessons and meeting with the Part time Head of JS and the JS team. He also supports the whole leadership team and is a foundation governor.

- The school leadership ensures that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. The school is looking to become a Trauma Informed Lead-school to support pupils whose mental health problems and behaviour act as a barrier to learning, and JS teachers attend the training together with their secular colleagues. Teachers are able to visit other schools to learn from their good practice and derive huge benefit from belonging to the JCAT (Jewish Community Academy Trust) where sharing expertise is encouraged.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the progress in the school and are actively involved in monitoring pupils' learning by coming into classes and observing lessons. They support the Headteacher and SLT by encouraging them to see best practice in other schools and looking at using the best resources available. They also encourage teachers to further develop their skills. They are forward thinking for example in wanting to further engage with parents so they can support their children's learning.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- We would recommend that more experienced JS teachers support their colleagues with developing aspects of pedagogy and creativity.
- The school needs to continue its efforts in recruiting a permanent Head of JS.
- We would recommend that more creative and imaginative homework activities are devised in some year groups for Hebrew Reading and the weekly *Parashah* (portion of the week) to further deepen family engagement.

Statutory requirement for a Daily act of Collective Worship (Tefillah)	Met
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Summary of Questionnaires

Pikuach invited parents and carers of pupils at Wolfson Hillel Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 250 parents responded to the survey.

Pikuach invited pupils at Wolfson Hillel Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 115 pupils responded to the survey.

Pikuach invited members of staff at Wolfson Hillel Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 47 members of staff responded to the survey.

GLOSSARY

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:

GRADE	JUDGEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its' pupils needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its' pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its' pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its' pupils.