

BURY AND WHITEFIELD JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

PIKUACH INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority Bury
Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach
Inspection dates 5th and 6th July 2022

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

Type of school Primary School
School category Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils 3 - 11
Mixed /Single sex Mixed
Number on roll 99
Chair of Governors Harvey Jacobson
Headteacher Claire Simon
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Inspection team

Lead Inspector : Esther Colman

Team Inspector: Rabbi Yaakov Heimann

Introduction

The inspection was carried out over two days by two inspectors. The inspectors observed nine lessons from Nursery to Year 6. The inspectors also observed the weekly Jewish Studies (JS) staff meeting, *Tefillah* (collective worship), *Tefillah* assembly, Parents and pupils' *Siddur* (prayer book) decorating workshop and *Birkas Hamazon* (grace after meals). All lessons were observed jointly with senior school leaders. Meetings were held with the school's JS governor, the senior leadership team, the Head of JS, many of the pupils and their parents.

Inspectors make judgements on the following three Key Areas

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

These key judgements will then contribute to the overall judgement on the school's efficiency and effectiveness in its provision of Jewish education, enabling inspectors to reach their final judgement.

Information about the school

- Bury & Whitefield Jewish Primary School is an orthodox Jewish school that serves the local and wider Jewish community. Pupils come from a range of family backgrounds in terms of religious knowledge, ethos and practice. In recent years there has been an increasing number of pupils from more religious homes.
- The school is a one-form entry primary school, whose numbers are rising as is evident by the number of children in the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils have one Jewish Studies lesson a day and in Key Stage 2 they have one *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) lesson per week, which is taught as a modern foreign language by a specialist teacher working with the secular department. The school was judged to be good at its last Ofsted inspection in March 2022.
- The percentage of pupils receiving Pupil Premium is 11% (11 pupils). There are 19 pupils on the SEN register (19.2%). 6 pupils have an Education Health Care Plan. The school has 7 pupils (7%) with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Inspection judgements

Grade

Overall effectiveness	2
The Quality of Jewish Education	2
Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development	1
Leadership and Management	1

What is it like to attend this school?

- The quality of Jewish Education is overall good with some outstanding features. The school's Jewish curriculum intent is strong and provides memorable experiences for all pupils including SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) pupils who are fully supported in their JS lessons through the collaboration between the SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator) and JS team.
- The pupils love their JS lessons, and this love continues to inspire them beyond the school gates. Parents tell us: "Our children sing the Jewish songs and teach us how to do Jewish things".
- Pupils at Bury & Whitefield Jewish Primary School benefit from a warm, caring, and nurturing environment where they receive a holistic Jewish Education. This is provided by a team of dedicated Jewish Studies teachers under the leadership of an outstanding Head of Jewish Studies. As a parent said: "This is a small school with excellent teachers, they clearly care, and this comes out in all aspects of their teaching."
- Pupils enjoy their Jewish Studies lessons and are enthusiastic about their Jewish experiences in the school such as *Birkas Hamazon* and the Year 2 *Siddur* (prayer book) presentation. This rich experience spills over into their home life as expressed by some of the parents: "My child reminds me of the things I should have remembered learning about when I was in school."
- All pupils, including those with SEND make good progress in their Jewish Studies due to the effective collaboration of the leadership team in the school together with the unwavering support of the governors.
- Parents are supportive of their children's learning and Jewish experience as was evident through discussions with parents– for example: "Both of my children have excelled and are very proud of their Jewish Education".
- The school runs a pre-school breakfast club in the library. Inspectors observed a warm and nurturing atmosphere with various ongoing activities such as Storytime, music etc. All pupils were fully engaged and cared for, including a pupil in a wheelchair.
- The school provided Jewish Studies on Zoom during the Covid pandemic focussing on the Jewish festivals, weekly *Torah* portion and Jewish Way of Life. In December 2021, assessments showed gaps in standards of Hebrew Reading and the school has taken steps since then to address the issue and raise standards through interventions.

- Pupils engage in daily *Tefilloh* and *Birkas Hamozon* with enthusiasm and behaviour is excellent. Pupils join in *Tefilloh* with gusto as it is meaningful to them.
- All pupils, including those with SEND, or who speak other languages at home, benefit from a values-driven curriculum, where the focus is on *Middos* (character traits) which aligns with the school's ethos of respect, care and responsibility for self and others.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards Jewish Studies learning because the curriculum enables them to actively engage in Jewish texts and to experience and participate in Jewish practice. They are exposed to 21st century technology in the Jewish Studies lessons which makes their Jewish learning exciting and engaging. The school have fully addressed this area for development which was highlighted in the previous *Kodesh (Jewish Studies)* inspection report.
- Safeguarding at Bury & Whitefield Jewish Primary School is effective. Pupils feel safe when at school, know who to speak to if they have a concern and are confident that their issue will be addressed. As a Y4 pupil said: "If we have a problem in the playground, we tell a teacher, and they sort it for us." This was also evident from the Y5/6 pupil survey.
- Pupils in the EYFS benefit from a beautiful, purpose-built unit and outdoor area. A range of indoor and outdoor activities are set up and pupils rotate between them and learn through play. There are age-appropriate wall displays, for example 'Popping popcorn' to encourage good *middos*.

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

The Quality of Jewish Education

- Pupils are proud to be Jewish and have a close connection to Judaism because of a well-constructed and sequenced curriculum that provides Jewish knowledge and skills for future learning and communal involvement. The Jewish curriculum enhances the Jewish ethos of the school, particularly in the teaching of *Sedra* (weekly Bible portion) where pupils participate in discussion and activities about the ethical and moral values that they can learn from *Torah* (bible) events and personalities.
- Pupils have the opportunity to explore and experience Judaism and learn about aspects of the Jewish Way of Life such as *Shabbos (Sabbath)*, *Kashrus (Kosher dietary laws)*, *Brachos* (blessings) etc. Practical workshops and real-life experiences form an essential part of this strand of the curriculum, including a residential *Shabbaton* (weekend away) for upper KS2.
- Pupils celebrate and learn about the history, laws and customs of the *Yomim Tovim* (Jewish Festivals) as they occur throughout the year. In EYFS, the Jewish Year curriculum is integrated within the 7 areas of learning through Music, Art, Technology etc. as well as through specific Jewish studies lessons.
- Pupils make good progress in their Jewish education because teachers have a secure subject knowledge and use a range of resources that inspire and motivate their pupils. Inspectors saw effective use of ICT in all lessons, including a project on Israel in the ICT suite and use of ipads in a General Knowledge lesson in Y5. A Year 6 child told inspectors how much he loves being in the ICT suite and working on his Israel project. More frequent use of ICT was highlighted in the school's previous *Kodesh* report, and this has certainly been addressed.
- Teaching in Jewish education is consistently good across the school. Teachers ensure that most pupils, including those with SEND and additional needs, are making good progress and

achieving well over time. This was evident in pupils' written work and wall displays in the classrooms and corridors.

- Lesson observations and book scrutiny are used effectively to monitor progress and these feed into Inset (In-Service training) and CPD (Continuous Professional Development) support. The head of JS runs weekly staff meetings with a clear agenda and goals. The teachers are constantly developing their skills to further enhance their teaching. Parents are full of praise for the teaching their children receive- "All members of staff are very supportive and approachable to my daughter", a parent said
- The school's assessment of pupils' Jewish knowledge, understanding and skills is used effectively to identify gaps and to address those through interventions. An example of this is Hebrew Reading, which was not a focus during home schooling. Assessments were carried out in December 2021 after which various interventions were put into place. When the pupils were assessed again in April 2022, pupils had progressed significantly in their Hebrew reading.
- Pupils learn in a positive environment, allowing them to focus on their Jewish learning in an atmosphere of respect and inclusion irrespective of their background, gender, religiosity, and culture.
- Pupils develop fluency, accuracy and confidence in their Hebrew reading according to their own levels of ability. They enjoy using the school's Hebrew reading scheme, as some of the pupils said: "aleph champ is my favourite!" In a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils were able to gain skills through a variety of well-planned and differentiated reading activities led effectively by the teacher and other adults in the class.
- Extra-curricular and informal Jewish learning opportunities are varied and are much enjoyed. During the inspection, Y2 pupils were preparing for their *Siddur* ceremony together with their parents who came in to decorate their new *Siddur* with them and write a personal note in it, in advance of the ceremony. Parents really appreciated being involved in their child's important milestone and their presence highlighted the importance of prayer to their children. This is one of the ways in which the school builds relationships with parents and involves the whole family in their child's Jewish education. The school also encourages active participation of grandparents, for example on *Chanukah* (the festival of lights) when whole families, including grandparents, were invited to watch the lighting of the *Menorah* (candelabra) in school.
- Pupils develop detailed Jewish knowledge and skills across the Jewish curriculum, and as a result, achieve well in relation to their previous learning and experiences. Taking account of their starting points, most pupils are generally confident and display good Jewish knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to their age, ability and background.
- Pupils have been given the opportunity to attend extra *Kodesh* provision once a week after school with a separate lesson for each key stage. This has been carefully planned to add challenge to those pupils who wish to deepen their Jewish knowledge. Currently, eleven pupils take advantage of this provision and from September these sessions will increase to twice a week, thereby enabling pupils to achieve higher standards in their learning. Parents are delighted – "We are happy with the extra *Kodesh* curriculum, and it would be lovely to have more!"

Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

- All pupils participate fully, and feel included, in the prayer life of the school. This contributes enormously to the spiritual and moral development of the children. Prayer is woven seamlessly into the fabric of daily life, through *Brachos*, (blessings) *Birkas Hamazon*, *tefillah* assembly. Pupils are given numerous opportunities to deliver their own prayers, for example, reciting *Tehillim* (Psalms) for someone who is unwell. They show reverence, attentiveness, and a

willingness to play a part in assemblies and whole school celebrations. At morning *Tefillah*, they pray with *Kavonoh* (sincere feeling, devotion of the heart), pronounce the Hebrew words correctly and have an understanding of what the prayers are about. There is a rota of local Rabbis who come in on Mondays and join in with davening in assembly. This creates an important link between the school and the Synagogues and demonstrates the importance of prayer to the pupils.

- Inspectors saw Year 2 pupils excitedly rehearsing for their *Siddur* ceremony, (celebrating receiving one's first prayer book). Pupils were confidently able to explain which prayers were found in the *Siddur*, what they meant and when they were said. The older pupils are excellent role models as seen when they support their younger peers in *Tefillah*. Parents value their children's ability to pray, as one mentioned: "our child enjoys morning *davening* (prayer) at school, and this is rubbing off at home".
- The pupils' Jewish personal and spiritual development is a major focus at Bury & Whitefield Jewish primary school. The school infuses the pupils with a deep understanding of *Hashem* (God), a pride in their Jewish identity and a love of Judaism. Pupils explore their relationship with *Hashem* and express an understanding of why we pray to Him. For example, a pupil said, "we can ask *Hashem* for things in our prayers", and Year 6 pupils expressed their intention to continue to pray even when they leave primary school. One pupil said that he prays with his father using an old family *Siddur* and this makes it a special experience.
- When discussing with a group of Year 6 pupils which character they would like to meet and why, one of them said that he "would like to meet *Noach* (Noah) and ask him how did they rebuild everything after the flood." The other pupils were able to make links between this rebuilding and building back after the pandemic for us today. These comments demonstrate how the Jewish learning and experiences impact on pupils' daily lives.
- Pupils become aware of their *Neshomo* (soul) and learn how to get close to *Hashem* through self-reflection and doing good deeds within the community such as organising cake sales to raise money for *Tzedokoh* (charity). The concept of *Neshomo* is reinforced using the Treasure Hunt curriculum in Y5/6. This is a programme that teaches pupils to take ownership of their spiritual growth and emotional well-being. To quote a Y5/6 child: "I really like Treasure Hunt because it makes me feel more happy about myself and know how lucky we are to have *Hashem* on our side". Through the Treasure hunt curriculum, pupils realise that their actions can affect how others feel and show a readiness to control their own feelings. A parent commented: "This is a warm and caring school unlike no other. Their heart is all for our children's *Neshomo* and they want to please. Nothing is too much of an ask and we have been very privileged to have our daughter there".
- Pupils are encouraged to engage in *chessed* (kindness) and treat others with consideration. They are awarded *Middos* (*good character traits*) awards to show that these character traits are valued in school. Inspectors were in an assembly where a pupil was called to receive his certificate. The teacher highlighted that the reason for his award was because he showed kindness to a new pupil. The whole school showed appreciation for his behaviour by clapping.
- Pupils engage in acts of *chessed* by bringing in money that can be distributed to *Tzedokoh*. The House Captains meet each term to jointly decide which charity it should be allocated to. They choose a range of Jewish and other charities.
- Pupils are able to talk about things that have moved them for example the wonder of *Hashem's* world and its creations during the Ghyll Head trip away when pointing out the wonders of views that only *Hashem* could create. After the loss of a parent of one of the pupils, discussions took place on accepting that we cannot and will not always understand the decisions that *Hashem* makes. The impact of a KS2 talk by a Holocaust survivor on *Yom Hashoah* (Israel's holocaust Memorial Day) left a lasting impression on those pupils.

Leadership and Management

- The head of Jewish Studies is on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), who all work together in a collaborative and supportive manner. The leadership team includes the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher / SEND Coordinator and Head of Jewish Studies. They jointly implement the vision of the Head of Jewish Studies and promote the ethos of the school.
- The SLT model to the teaching staff how the JS and secular departments can work in tandem in a mutual beneficial manner, and this is duplicated in all areas of the school, including the classroom. The secular studies teachers are often at hand to support Jewish Studies lessons.
- The Head teacher fully supports the Head of *Kodesh* and together with the Deputy Headteacher/ SEND Coordinator and other senior leaders articulate and communicate a strong commitment to high standards of work and to pupils' Jewish spiritual development. The Jewish Studies teachers are treated as equals to their secular colleagues and have access to the same training opportunities. An example of this is that the SEND list is updated every half term and the Deputy Head meets with the Head of Jewish Studies and her team to give them SEND training and to work out how to address the pupils' needs in Jewish Studies lessons.
- The head of *Kodesh* is involved in all aspects of Jewish Studies and pupils' spiritual development. She continuously evaluates the school's procedures and makes changes for the best. A case in point is grace after meals. She identified two issues and produced an action plan to ensure pupils *Bentched* (recited grace after meals) accurately which was implemented. *Bentching* (grace after meals) has been retaught one paragraph at a time and the text is now on screen at the front in the hall so that everyone can follow. An incentive system was introduced called "*Benches for Bentchers*" (prayer book used to recite grace after meals) to motivate the children and this has proved highly successful. The results were evident when inspectors observed an enthusiastic, accurate and meaningful *Bentching* after lunch.
- The Head of JS leads and enthuses her team in an exceptional manner as evidenced through observing a Jewish Studies staff meeting. In turn, the Jewish studies staff respect her and follow her example. Teachers are made to feel valued and are encouraged to share their own creative ideas which are implemented. The staff are highly committed to the school and work together to provide the best Jewish education for their pupils.
- The head of Jewish Studies models excellent practice in academic and spiritual matters, and works successfully to monitor, improve and support teaching, encouraging the enthusiasm of staff and challenging their efforts and skills.
- The vice chair of Governors who is also the Jewish Studies governor is actively involved in the Jewish Studies department and acts as a critical friend to the head of Jewish Studies. He makes himself readily available to both guide and challenge the head of *Kodesh*. The leadership of the school, including governors, have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas of development in all aspects of the school's Jewish education.
- Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Jewish Studies effectively, because the systems employed are robust and make a real impact on the raising of standards of teaching and learning. The vice chair of governors, who is responsible for Jewish Studies, has an excellent grasp of the curriculum and the Jewish Studies development plan and supports the Head of Jewish Studies in all her endeavours.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Continue to improve reading standards, particularly in KS2. The Head of JS has shared with us some of her strategies to embed high levels of Hebrew reading across the whole school. We have full confidence in the capacity of the leadership of the school to address these issues next year – and build back better after COVID.
- Provide professional development for the Jewish Studies teachers in child-centred pedagogy to consolidate active learning in the classroom.

- Regularly review the curriculum and resources to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to all pupils and that all resources including workbooks promote independent learning and higher order thinking skills.

Statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (<i>tefillah</i>)	Met
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Summary of Questionnaires

Pikuach invited parents and carers of pupils at Bury & Whitefield Jewish Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 34 parents responded to the survey. The responses were overwhelmingly positive in all areas.

The comments below encapsulate their views

- She has been given extra material to advance her in her *Kodesh* work and all the *Kodesh* staff have been very accommodating with anything I asked for regarding her *Kodesh* skills. They even set up a weekly extra *Kodesh* session for those who wanted more which is absolutely brilliant in what they cover and very well organised.
- She loves the interaction with the whiteboard and the material is broken down to a level that she can understand and feel good about herself.
- Very happy with this school, my son is about to leave the school, but my daughter also attended and was incredibly happy also. A wonderful school.
- This is a warm and caring school like no other

Pikuach invited Y5/6 pupils at Bury And Whitefield Jewish Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 21 pupils responded to the survey.

The comments below encapsulate their views:

- This school got good from OFSTED for a reason, you know
- I have enjoyed the computer activities the most
- The school is very nice, and the people are lovely
- The school is a place that supports children, like me, in many ways

Pikuach invited members of staff at Bury And Whitefield Jewish Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 7 members of staff responded to the survey.

The comments below encapsulate their views:

- I am proud to be a member of staff at this school

- Children are safe at this school
- The school makes appropriate provision for my professional development in Jewish Education
- The school successfully meets the differing needs of individual pupils in their Jewish Studies

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.