

# LUBAVITCH BOYS' PRIMARY SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

---

Local Authority: Hackney

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates: 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

**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 children: 4-11

Mixed /Single sex: Boys

Number on roll: 108

Chair of Trustees: Hadassa Korer

Executive Head of MAT: Judith Nemeth

Head of School: Rabbi Yehuda Leib Kohn

Address: 135 Clapton Common, London E5 9AE

Telephone number: 0208 800 1044

Email address: [r.poolat@lubavitchmat.uk](mailto:r.poolat@lubavitchmat.uk)

School website: <https://lubavitchjuniorboys.co.uk>

## Inspection team

**Lead Inspector:** Rabbi Yaakov Heimann

**Team Inspector:** Richard Felsenstein

## Introduction

Inspectors made judgements on the following three Key Areas:

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

The inspection was conducted over two days by two inspectors, who observed *Kodesh* (Jewish Studies) lessons, *Davening* (collective worship), had detailed discussions with all interested parties including pupils and *Rebbes* (Jewish Studies teachers), and reviewed the *Pikuach* questionnaires.

Joint observations were carried out with the Head of school and Executive Head of Lubavitch Multi-Academy Trust (LMAT) to ascertain their knowledge and expertise in the monitoring process. Inspectors also met with the school *Rov* (Rabbi), executive director, the chair of the trust, SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities Coordinator) and curriculum coordinator. They also scrutinised relevant documentation, including policy documents, curriculum documents, pupils' work and displays of pupils' work.

## Information about the school

- Lubavitch Boys' Primary School is an Orthodox Jewish school that serves both the local and mostly wider Jewish community. The majority of pupils travel from Northwest London and others travel from outlying areas where the family are on *Shlichus* (mission to spread Torah and kindness).
- The school is a one-form entry primary school, which includes a Reception class, but not a Nursery. The numbers on roll are the same as at the previous inspection (July 2014). In general, the higher classes have more pupils than the younger ones. *Kodesh* lessons take place in the morning and approximately 50% of the day is devoted to *Kodesh* lessons.
- Lubavitch Boys' Primary School is part of the LMAT and *Kodesh* is under the direction of the Lubavitch Education Trust (LET).
- Since the last *Pikuach* inspection (2014) there have been numerous changes in leadership of both *Kodesh* and *Chol* (secular studies) Heads. In September 2022, a new role of 'Head of Lubavitch Boys' Primary School' was created. The newly appointed Head of School is responsible for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* and he works under the Executive Head of the LMAT.
- The vast majority of *Rebbes* have taught in the school for many years, which has provided stability for the school amid much turbulence, as a result of numerous changes in leadership.
- SEND: The percentage of pupils receiving Pupil Premium is 6.7% (five pupils). There are 18 pupils on the register (17.1%). Three pupils have an Education Health Care Plan. The school has two pupils (1.9%) with English as an Additional Language (EAL).

Inspection judgement	Grade
Quality of Jewish Education	2
Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development	1
Leadership and management	2
Overall effectiveness	2

## What is it like to attend this Jewish school?

- Pupils at Lubavitch Boys' Primary School benefit from a warm and caring environment, where they receive a well-rounded Jewish education based on the teachings of the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*. This is provided by a team of extremely enthusiastic and dedicated *Rebbes* under the leadership of the Head of school. As one parent said: "Staff are super dedicated and give much of their personal time to create a fun learning environment."
- Pupils are proud to belong to Lubavitch Boys' Primary School and have positive attitudes towards school and their *Kodesh* learning. This is because of the care shown by the *Rebbes* and other members of staff.
- The lessons are meaningful to pupils and they actively engage in Jewish texts and experience and participate in Jewish practice. This was seen throughout the inspection in the pupils' *Davening*, on learning walks and lesson observations, and it was reiterated in discussions with pupils.
- The informal curriculum, of which *Tzivos Hashem* (Army of God) is a part, is engaging and relevant to the pupils. The pupils know that they are part of thousands of children across the world with a joint mission to spread the light of *Torah* (five books of Moses) and are striving to make the world a better place. As one parent said, "They have done a fabulous job of instilling the strong *Chabad* (Lubavitch) values that are our ethos and I am very proud of this."
- Pupils benefit from seeing that all the staff are passionate about the school's Jewish ethos and their Jewish education.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) benefit from a separate spacious unit and outdoor area. A range of indoor and outdoor activities is set up and pupils rotate between them and learn through play. Inspectors observed *Krioh* (Hebrew reading) being taught using a range of learning and play activities. This resulted in all pupils being fully engaged in their learning, and at their own level.
- Safeguarding at Lubavitch Boy's Primary School is effective. This is because of the care displayed by members of staff. As a parent commented: "My son has been here since Reception and has always had a safe environment. The *Kodesh* teachers have been consistent, he's had great friends and the secretary looks after each boy like her own child."

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, most 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

- Pupils are proud to be Jewish and have a close connection to *Yiddishkeit* (Judaism) because of the well-constructed and sequenced informal curriculum that provides Jewish knowledge and skills for future learning and communal involvement. The *Kodesh* curriculum enhances the Jewish ethos of the school, particularly in the *Parsha* (weekly Torah portion) lessons, *Tzivos Hashem* and *Chidon* programme (learning the 613 *Mitzvos* Commandments in-depth), where pupils participate in discussions about moral values that they can learn from *Torah* (Bible) events and personalities.
- Pupils make good progress in their Jewish education because the *Rebbes* have a secure subject knowledge and use a range of resources that inspire and motivate their pupils.
- Pupils have the opportunity to explore and experience *Yiddishkeit* and learn about aspects of the Jewish way of life which is made meaningful to them. The Lubavitch ethos and curriculum furthers this aim and simultaneously trains pupils to become *Sheluchim* in the future.
- Pupils celebrate and learn about the history, *Dinim* (laws) and *Minhogim* (customs) of the *Yomim Tovim* (Jewish Festivals) as they occur throughout the year.
- Teaching in *Kodesh* is overall good across the school. In order for lessons to be outstanding, lessons should be less teacher-led and more focused on pupils' active learning, in particular at the start of the lesson, to ensure that all pupils are fully engaged.
- *Rebbes* ensure that most pupils, including those with SEND and additional needs, are making good progress and achieving well over time. Assessment data shows that in March 2023, 61% of pupils were working at or exceeding expected levels in *Krioh*. This is an improvement from December 2022 when 33% of pupils were working at or exceeding expected levels in *Krioh*.
- The school's assessments are used effectively to identify gaps and to address these through interventions. Pupils with SEND would further benefit from an on-site SENDCO to advise the *Rebbes* and guide the LSAs (Learning Support Assistants) so that additional strategies are used effectively in all parts of the lesson. In addition, the school should ensure that the best use is made of the additional adults in the classroom.
- Lesson observations and book scrutiny are used to monitor progress, and feedback is given to the *Rebbes* and discussed at the *Kodesh* Inset (In-Service training). The Head of school runs weekly staff meetings with a clear agenda, so that good teaching practice is shared with their colleagues and integrated in their teaching. The *Rebbes* are constantly developing their skills to further enhance their teaching. Parents are full of praise for the education their children receive.
- 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 *Krioh* (Hebrew reading) according to their own levels of ability. This was evidenced through hearing pupils of varying abilities read in a variety of classes, in particular Year 2 and Year 6, where the pupils enjoy using the school's

reading scheme. In Reception *Krioh*, there were a range of carefully planned activities, such as using magnets, clay, and imaginative play. For example, pupils took the role of the class Rebbe where he had to 'teach' the words to the other pupils, resulting in pupils taking ownership of their learning. Pupils were also learning where to put the *Nekudos* (vowels), and blend two-letter words. A pupil commented: "We are putting clay under the letters to make a vowel." Another pupil said: "I am making letters, I like that." They also reinforced words learnt the previous day and used a timer to assess the speed of reading.

- Pupils develop detailed *Chidon*, *Yedios Klolus* (Jewish General knowledge) and skills across the *Kodesh* curriculum and achieve well as a result. This was evidenced when the inspectors tested the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. Most pupils are confident and display good *Yedios Klolus*, skills and understanding appropriate to their age, ability and background.

## Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

- Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development is outstanding because of the exemplary manner in which the school develops pupils' Jewish character and values. The school ethos pervades all areas of the school. This is reinforced to pupils through displays in both the classrooms and corridors. Inspectors noted displays relating to *Yomim Tovim* (Jewish Festivals), for example a *Shavuos* (Festival celebrating receiving the *Torah*) display of the *Luchos* (Ten Commandments) with small *Sifrei Torah* (*Torah* Scrolls). There were also pictures of the *Lubavitcher Rebbes* and other *Gedolim* (Great Rabbis) as role-models and inspiration for the pupils. In particular, at the school entrance, there was a display for the month of *Iyar* (Hebrew month), which contained school events, *Yahrzeits* (anniversary of death) of famous *Gedolim* and pupils' birthdays, making each pupil feel valued. There were also current events, such as the coronation of Charles III, linking their Jewish values with British values.
- Pupils fully engage with *Davening*, which is woven seamlessly into the fabric of school life. The majority of pupils were observed *Davening* with *Kavonoh* (sincere feeling, devotion of the heart) and understood why they were *Davening*. As one pupil commented: "I really like *Davening Shemonei Esrei* (*part of prayer recited whilst standing*); talking to *Hashem* is the best thing ever." This shows real *Morah* (Experiencing Spiritual Awe and Wonder at the World around them) and showed the appreciation of the pupils for what they have, through *Tefillah*. Having the opportunity to be the class *Chazan* (cantor) also motivates the pupils to remain focused on their *Davening* and promotes good behaviour, as a Year 2 boy said, "I really like being the *Chazan*." In addition, pupils were able to explain the meaning of what they were *Davening*. As part of *Davening*, pupils are encouraged to give *Tzedakah* (charity) each day and there is a *Pushke* (Charity box) in each classroom and funds are sent to a range of charities, including *Hatzaloh* (ambulance service) and for youth group activities. This is an excellent example of *Tzelem Elokim* (The connection between Human Beings) and a clear understanding of the spiritual impact it has on the pupils.
- Pupils were also observed saying *Brochos* (blessings) at break time and *Bentching* (Grace after meals) with *Kavonoh*.
- As pupils progress through the school, they are offered appropriate levels of challenge, insight and understanding of *Mitzvos* (Commandments) and other Jewish experiences and activities, through both the formal and informal curriculum. For example, the *Tzivos Hashem* programme plays a huge part in promoting pupils' personal and spiritual development, as it increases their understanding and enthusiasm for *Mitzvos* and *Ahavas Yisroel* (love of Israel). This programme begins with Year 1 pupils at the rank of "private" in 'Hashem's army', and they are motivated to work hard to move up the ranks. This is reinforced at home and is a joint school and home venture to encourage pupils to *Daven* properly, for example, to say *Modeh Ani* (I give thanks) as soon as they wake up. It also includes treating others considerately, *Kibbud Av v'Em* (honouring parents) engaging in *Chesed* (kindness), giving *Tzedakah* (charity) and even going to sleep on time like a *Chayil* (soldier). A Year 6 pupil said that their favourite

*Mitzvah* is charity because, “*Tzedakah* is so important as you are helping other people.” *Kedusha* (Experiencing holiness in everyday life) ensures that the pupils appreciate the practice of *Mitzvos* and makes them and their surroundings feel special and closer to *Hashem*. The school maintains a database on each pupil’s rank and progress, and parents can access the information about their child. Points, certificates, medals and prizes are given out at school assemblies as a way of encouraging the pupils to perform more *Mitzvos* and to move up the ranks. A Key Stage 2 pupil said, “For me, *Ahavas Yisroel* and *Kibbud Av v’Em* are really important.”

- Most pupils exhibit a keen awareness and enjoyment of spirituality and of their school. A pupil said “I love wearing my *Yamulkah* (skull cap) because it is a school *Yamulkah*, and I love my school.” Another pupil said that “Having a *Mezuzah* (scroll containing a passage of the Torah) on the door is special, I like kissing it,” - a further example of *Kedusha*.
- Pupils gain from an excellent extra-curricular activities programme, which plays an enormous part in their personal and spiritual development. The overriding aim of these activities is ‘to create an island of confidence’ for the pupils. The school finds the strengths of each pupil which helps them develop as a person. Examples are pupils learning *Mishnayos Ba’al Peh* (learning parts of the Oral Torah by heart), with individual targets, and the *Chidon* programme, for which they are tested as part of an international competition. Pupils at Lubavitch Boys’ Primary School have received silver and bronze trophies and prizes. As a pupil said, “One of the most memorable moments for me was the prizes we received last year for learning *Mishnayos Ba’al Peh*, it was very special.”
- Pupils spoke enthusiastically about being in the school choir and talent show, their visits to a local old age home, and *Menorah* (seven-branched candelabra) competition at *Chanukah* (festival of lights). Year 6 also have an overnight stay in Buckhurst Hill. A parent commented on the extra-curricular activities, saying: “This is one of the strongest points the school offers, and is a huge part of the school’s success as it has a range of programmes that gets all the boys involved. The boys absolutely love and thrive with these programmes which cater for all their needs, levels and abilities.”
- Pupils were very positive about all the school has to offer them. A Year 6 pupil said “I really enjoy the *Siyum* (special meal) we have when we finish a *Masechta* (tractate of *Talmud*). I like the atmosphere, and the food!” Pupils’ personal and spiritual development in school impacts their lives outside school. As one Year 2 pupil said: “*Chumash*, *Mishnayos*, *Davening* and singing. We do them in school and at home.” This clearly combines *Emunah* (Acknowledging the Divine) with *Morah* and shows how much the pupils “live” their spirituality.

### Quality of Leadership and management:

- Leaders, including governors, have a clear and ambitious vision of Jewish education and pupils’ spiritual development and well-being. They focus on improving teachers’ pedagogy and their ability to deliver spiritually rich lessons and experiences that enhance Jewish education. The Head of boys’ school and the executive Head of Lubavitch MAT are an effective team and work together to drive the school forward.
- The majority of the *Rebbes* have taught in the school for many years and are an integral part of the running of, and success of, Lubavitch Boys’ Primary School, as they know the families well and imbue the Lubavitch ethos into the school. They work together with the families in a cohesive manner.
- The senior leadership team ensures that issues raised by self-evaluation are addressed by effective strategies for improvement. Governors challenge the Head of school to ensure effective and fair deployment of staff and resources, in order to secure good educational outcomes for all groups of pupils including those with SEND.
- The Head of school has introduced and implemented robust systems and structures to monitor and track pupil progress with the aim to ensure that all pupils successfully complete their programme of study. For example, assessment outcomes in *Kriyoh* and *Chidon* are shared

with the *Rebbes* and incorporated in the planning of subsequent lessons. This has led to an improvement in *Krioh* as can be evidenced by the *Krioh* assessments.

- The school benefits from a curriculum coordinator who has carried out subject audits and identified key areas for improvement together with the Head of school. One impact of this is that in *Mishnayos*, they have identified that pupils were able to cover more material in the time allocated for this subject, and this has resulted in additional material being taught over the course of the year.
- Whilst the *Rebbes* have had a number of changes in leadership and direction of the school, the governors are hopeful that the current Head of school will remain in position for an extended period of time, giving stability to the school. The Head of school is introducing modern teaching methodology, such as transforming passive learning into more active learning, which will greatly enhance the pupils' learning. The inspectors are hopeful that these methods can now be fully implemented, so that pupils take more ownership of their learning and continue to improve their standards.
- Leaders ensure that teacher expectations in *Kodesh* are appropriately high and differentiated according to pupils' capabilities and interests.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

- To introduce and implement child-centred pedagogy in order to enable all pupils, including those with SEND, to make at least expected progress.
- To develop the formal curriculum so that it is coherently planned, sequenced and progressive. The school will then be able to develop assessments in additional subject areas such as *Chumash* and *Gemorrah* (Talmud).
- To expand the Senior Leadership Team of the Lubavitch Boys' Primary School to include middle managers and an on-site SEND coordinator, who would then develop the coordination of provision for those pupils who have learning difficulties.

<b>Statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (tefillah)</b>	<b>Met</b>
---	------------

## Summary of Questionnaires

**Pikuach invited parents and carers of pupils at Lubavitch Boys' Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 45 people responded to the survey.**

The comments below encapsulate their views:

- Our son never wants to miss a day of school.
- All the *Kodesh* teachers put their heart and soul into our school.
- I am very proud of our school!
- We are grateful to all the staff.

**Pikuach invited pupils at Lubavitch Boys’ Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 27 pupils responded to the survey.**

The comments below encapsulate their views:

- We received prizes for learning *Mishnayos Ba'al Peh*.
- My *Rebbe* is very enthusiastic.
- We have a *Siyum* when we finish a *Masechta* and we have food.

**Pikuach invited members of staff at Lubavitch Boys’ Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 8 out of 10 members of staff responded to the survey.**

The comments below encapsulate their views:

- The boys behave very well.
- The *Rebbes* have an excellent rapport with the boys who in turn feel comfortable to share any concerns, which we can then deal with.
- We have a very experienced staff who deal with any issues without even needing leadership support.
- We work together as a team and continually discuss ways and methods to help each individual boy.

## **GLOSSARY**

### **WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN:**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>JUDGEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
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.