

ROSH PINAH PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority: Barnet

Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach

Inspection dates: 5th & 6th March 2025

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

Type of school: Primary

School category: Voluntary aided school

Age range of children: 3 – 11 years

Mixed /Single sex: Mixed

Number on roll: 398

Chair of Governors: Dawn Frangi

Headteacher: Ms Jill Howson

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Inspection team

Lead Inspector: Rebbetzen Esther Cohen

Team Inspector: Mr Richard Felsenstein

Introduction

Inspectors make 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. The school kindly agreed to have a trainee inspector shadowing the inspectors as part of her training. Inspectors visited 10 *Kodesh* (Jewish Studies) lessons across various Year groups, observed *Tefillah* (Prayers) and *Bentching* (Grace after meals) in different Year groups and Key Stages, held discussions with the School Council, Y2, and Y6 pupils, and spoke informally with pupils across all school Years, members of staff and different stakeholders. They heard pupils read Hebrew, had numerous discussions with the Headteacher, Deputy Head, Head of *Kodesh*, Deputy Head of *Kodesh* and other stakeholders including the Chair of governors, Vice-Chair of governors, members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), teachers, the *Kodesh* teaching assistant, and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo). Inspectors looked at children's work, their books, displays, photos of past celebrations and events, curriculum, assessment policy and outcomes, the Jewish Studies (JS) Improvement Plan and Self-Evaluation Form, documents and policies.

Information about the school

- Rosh Pinah Primary School is a Modern Orthodox Zionist school serving the community in Edgware and surrounding areas. The school was founded in 1956 by the then minister of Edgware United Synagogue, Reverend Saul Amias, MBE. It achieved voluntary-aided status in 1968 and moved the Junior school from its original location to its present location in Edgware in 1986, when it became a two-Form entry school. Rosh Pinah is situated on spacious grounds and offers an inviting, welcoming atmosphere. The school accepts the religious authority of the office of the Chief Rabbi.
- The Headteacher joined the school in 2016 and became full-time Headteacher in 2018. The Head of *Kodesh* has worked at the school for 11 years. The Jewish Studies team consists of four *Kodesh* teachers and one class teacher who have responsibility for teaching *Kodesh*. This year the school appointed a full-time Teaching Assistant for Jewish Studies.
- The school currently has 398 pupils on roll, of whom 39 pupils are in Nursery. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is 13% (national average is 13.6%), with 11% having SEN support. 2% of pupils have Educational Health Care Plans. There are 3 EAL (English as an additional language) pupils and 3 pupils who are Pupil Premium.

Inspection judgement

Grade

Quality of Jewish Education	2
Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development	1
Leadership and management	1

What is it like to attend this Jewish school?

- Rosh Pinah Primary School is a happy place for pupils, with a shared goal of fostering their love for Judaism. It strives to instil a deep understanding and appreciation of Judaism within the school community. 97.74% of parents either agree or strongly agree that their child is happy at school. The school has created a purposeful and safe place for pupils to thrive and a place that has a community feeling. 91.86% of pupils say that they know whom to go to if they have a problem. One pupil stated that, "SLT do a great job protecting us all the time."
- Pupils at the school come from a wide range of Jewish family backgrounds, varying in religious knowledge and practice. They represent a wide range of religious and socio-economic contexts. Pupils benefit from being part of an inclusive school, dedicated to meeting the needs of all pupils and providing the best possible education for every child in its care. A parent commented that, "My child has SEN needs, and the JS team are truly the best at communicating with her and getting the best out of her."
- At Rosh Pinah pupils are put at the forefront of everything the school does. Pupils benefit from and are inspired by the passion and dedication with which the Head of *Kodesh*, the Headteacher, SLT and governors lead the school. One pupil said, "I love all my teachers. They do a great job of making me look at stuff from a different perspective."
- There is a warm, friendly and caring Jewish community atmosphere, modelled by stakeholders which is reflected in the way pupils behave towards one another and towards adults at the school. Inspectors saw happy children throughout the school. 91.86% of pupils shared that their Jewish learning teaches them to treat all people with respect. A parent summarised what it is like to attend the school: "A gorgeous environment that brings out the best in children. Supports them with a fantastic school and parents' community. The school manages to do great in teaching the National Curriculum whilst also including Jewish elements through the day."
- There are 3 Jewish Studies lessons a week, varying between 45-50 minutes. Usually one lesson is a skills lesson, focusing on reading, writing or *Rashi* (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040–1105), considered the greatest commentator on the Bible and the Babylonian Talmud) skills. The second lesson is a *Parsha* (weekly Torah portion) lesson which links with *Chumash* (Bible). The third lesson is a topic lesson which covers topics such as *Brachot* (Blessings), *Kashrut* (Kosher dietary laws), Israel or *Etgar* (General Knowledge programme for a national school competition). During the build-up towards *Chaggim* (Jewish festivals), lessons might focus on learning about the forthcoming Jewish festival.

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

Quality of Jewish Education

- The quality of Jewish Education at Rosh Pinah Primary School is consistently good.
- The school's Jewish curriculum intent is strong and provides memorable cross-curricular learning and experiences for all pupils including SEND pupils who are supported in their Jewish education by other adults under the direction of the SENDCo. The SENDCo supports the Jewish Studies staff in how to set manageable learning expectations and develop resources adapted to the needs of individual pupils. All pupils benefit from the enriching and celebratory opportunities provided by the school, such as Year 1's *Chagigat Siddur* (celebration of receiving a prayer book), Year 2's *Chagigat Chumash* (celebration of receiving a volume of the Bible), *Oneg Shabbat* (*Shabbat* celebration), and celebrations of Jewish festivals, to name just a few.
- Inspectors saw lessons which are at least good, some with very effective and strong elements. The introduction to lessons is a high point of teaching and learning, engaging pupils in retrieval practice activities in a pacy and effective way. However, during the main body of the lesson, consideration needs to be given to pacing and information overload. Pupils would benefit from the inclusion of opportunities for modelling (where the teacher demonstrates the task, explains his or her thought process, and a pupil then models it before the class practices), summarising (a pupil condenses instructions or new learning to reinforce understanding of other pupils), and metacognition (pupils think about their own thought processes and learning strategies, and share it with other pupils) during delivery of the main body of lessons
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a highlight of the school. It is immersive and strong, with excellent cross-curricular links and a good balance of adult-led and independent learning opportunities. During a visit to a lesson in Reception, inspectors observed a variety of indoors and outdoors *Alef-Bet* (Hebrew letters) activities, such as shaping letters with Playdough, drawing *Alef-Bet* letters on the floor outside with chalk and drawing letters on the iPad. The *Kodesh* Teaching Assistant worked one-to-one, reviewing the new letter and assessing pupils, therefore addressing misconception at an early stage and supporting all pupils to make progress. The relationship between pupils in Reception is caring and kind as was observed when a boy shared his Playdough with a friend without being asked.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of the Jewish lessons they teach. They care for their pupils and invest in them, helping pupils progress and achieve well over time. One pupil remarked, "We get certificates and DOJOs and lots of praise and the Head of *Kodesh* is just so kind and nice. She definitely cares and appreciates us a lot." Another pupil said, "I know she (my teacher) loves me. I think she likes everyone. She loves teaching our class, you can just see."
- The school has invested considerably in developing pupils' Hebrew reading throughout the Year groups. Pupils benefit from regular weekly homework shared on Google Classrooms, which is monitored by their parents. Pupils talk positively about their Hebrew reading homework and are given rewards for completing the tasks. Hebrew reading accuracy is still an area for growth. Inspectors listened to Hebrew Reading from Years 2 and 6 across the ability range and listened to some pupils reading Hebrew words in lessons. Results were mixed. Some pupils read fairly accurately; others made more errors. Inspectors agree with the school's SEF (Self-Evaluation Form) target, which is: "...to ensure greater coverage of Hebrew skills in lessons." Special attention needs to be paid to improve pupils' accuracy in

reading from the *Siddur* during *Tefillot* and *Bentching*, thereby ensuring all pupils are pronouncing the words of prayers correctly.

- The school's assessment of pupils' Jewish knowledge and understanding is effective. It does not unnecessarily burden staff or pupils and is used well to inform teaching. Jewish Studies assessment procedures have been brought in line with secular subjects. Teachers ensure that most pupils, including those with SEND and additional needs, are making good progress and achieving well over time. Lesson plans provide opportunities for differentiation (ensuring work covered matches the needs of all pupils at different levels). Assessments are carried out termly in Hebrew reading and Hebrew script writing (Years 2-6), *Parsha* is assessed at the end of each *Sefer* (Book of the Torah), and *Chagim* after each *Chag* (Jewish festival). Progress is tracked, regularly reviewed, with teacher interventions put in place where appropriate. In Hebrew reading, the intervention involves weekly review of Hebrew letters, with the teacher noting progress. The pupil is reassessed, and in one case, the teacher reported on the intervention form that the pupil "...now knows every single letter and can blend with a single vowel." In the last reading assessment in December 2024, out of 59 pupils in Year 6, 5 pupils (8%) were showing "accelerated progress", and 53 pupils (90%) were working at their expected levels.
- Teachers provide appropriate feedback, which enables pupils to make progress and gain confidence. The Jewish Studies marking policy provides clear guidelines for teachers to follow. Inspectors scrutinised exercise books in Years 2 and 6, and during lessons. Pupils self-assess their learning at the end of each lesson against the success criteria. The "Triangle" marking system in KS2 (Key Stage 2), and the "Smiley Face" marking system in KS1 (Key Stage 1) are both linked to the lesson's learning objective. The teacher highlights the learning objective in purple (objective achieved), yellow (almost achieved, or aspects achieved) and green (objective not achieved). The teachers use the same system as the pupils to mark the work, therefore helping pupils understand how well they completed the task. In some books scrutinised the smiley faces and triangle were incomplete. It is suggested that thought could be given to reviewing previous learning objectives in the pupils' books, to check against pupils' understanding.

What does the school need to do to improve the 'Quality of Jewish Education.'

- Ensure greater coverage of Hebrew reading and writing in lessons in order to consolidate pupils' Hebrew reading accuracy and fluency.
- Consider and make use of best pedagogy to enhance pacing and to support pupils developing their understanding. This might include opportunities for modelling, summarising and pupils explaining their thinking to themselves and to others.
- To address and ensure accurate reading of the words of *Tefillot* and *Bentching*, read from the *Siddur* and/or PowerPoint presentation.

Quality of Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development

- Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development at Rosh Pinah Primary school is outstanding. The way the school goes about developing pupils' Jewish character, values, well-being and emotional growth is exemplary and worthy of being disseminated. During *Tefillah*, pupils are

encouraged to reflect in a coherently planned way, each day focusing on a different reflective aspect. Inspectors observed 'Wishful Wednesday', when pupils were encouraged to think of a wish or request from *Hashem* (God) to focus upon during their *Tefillot*. One pupil stated that, "*Tefillah* every day like Meaningful Monday and Wishful Wednesday, and so on. It is all about connecting to *Hashem*."

- The school fulfils its statutory requirement of collective worship. Prayers take place every morning and after lunch. Pupils talk meaningfully about their connection with *Hashem* and why that is important to them. A Year 4 pupil explained why we say *Tefillot*: "Saying thank you to *Hashem* for waking us up. Talking to *Hashem* to thank Him for what happens. *Hashem* is important to me. *Hashem* created this beautiful world. Just thank *Hashem*."
- Pupils across KS1 and KS2 are able to reflect on their *Kodesh* learning and experiences to draw out meaningful lessons which they can apply to their lives in and outside school. This came across particularly strongly through informal conversations and focus group discussion, when pupils shared their thoughts. A Year 6 pupil explained how Esther from the *Purim* (Festival commemorating Esther, Queen of Persia, who saved the Jewish people from execution by Haman, the advisor to the Persian king) story inspired her: "She is a woman and so brave and she stood for Jewish culture and was not afraid to be brave. She believes in God and has trust in God, and that He will always make things right." Pupils exhibit a keen awareness of the spiritual and display high levels of personal conduct towards their peers and adults at school.
- All members of staff, are good role models for pupils' personal behaviour, attitude and spiritual development. During assemblies, all staff follow from a *Siddur* and engage with the palpable Jewish feeling within the school, hence becoming role models for the pupils.
- The curriculum extends beyond the academic. It provides for pupils' broader development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors saw several examples of this during their visit, such as the pupils' attitude, understanding and sensitivity towards Israel. Another example is their learning and respect for other faiths, seen in their comments when learning about Diwali.
- The school encourages communal responsibility. The School Council picks two *Tzedakahs* (charities) each term. A Jewish charity and a non-Jewish charity and speakers from the charity are invited in for Assembly. In addition, *Tzedakah* is collected each Friday and the school has run several other charitable initiatives such as the Camp Simcha Toy Drive. The school prepares pupils for life in the Jewish and wider community by developing their understanding of fundamental Jewish and British values.
- The school's intent and its implementation, as well as the work observed in the *Kodesh* Department and wider school, supports and encourages pupils to develop resilience, confidence and pride in their Jewish identity. Pupils shared perspectives on *Emunah* (acknowledging the Divine), *Tzelem Elokim* (awareness of the spiritual in all humankind), and can talk confidently about *Kedusha* (experiencing holiness in everyday life). Pupils in Year 6 shared their experience of taking part in the school's *Shabbaton* (an event or programme of education held over the Sabbath). A pupil told inspectors that, "A whole Year [group] went to this place, and we experienced *Shabbat* (Sabbath) together. It was memorable because we did it with our friends. Being together made everything more powerful." A second pupil added: "Our teacher taught that the word 'Amen' is powerful, especially children saying it for *Hashem* and everyone joining in with *Hashem* – it was meaningful and powerful. We were understanding our religion and having fun at the same time." A parent shared their experience of the school saying that, "Whenever I attend the school for anything related to Judaism, like

the *Oneg*, I am blown away by the joyous celebration and pure spirit. I am so happy to have my child in such a wonderfully Jewish environment.”

What does the school need to do to improve the ‘Jewish Personal and Spiritual Development?’

- To provide additional age-appropriate opportunities for pupils in all Year groups to think reflectively and engage in meaningful discussion during lessons, either in pairs, small groups or as a whole class.

Quality of Leadership and management:

- Leadership and Management at Rosh Pinah Primary School is outstanding. The school is an excellent model of a caring and supportive school community that has well-being, authentic *Torah* (Bible) learning, *Mitzvot* (Commandments) and *Middot* (good character traits) at its core. A member of staff said that, “We have the best team, led by the very best. There are so few of them and all part-time but the impact they have is phenomenal. The kids love JS and the JS teachers. We are so lucky.”
- Leaders, including governors and the school’s Rabbi, are passionate about the Jewish ethos of the school. They have a shared vision and are committed to ensuring that every pupil, regardless of their starting point, leaves Rosh Pinah with a ‘love of Judaism’. The Chair of governors explained: “We want children to feel it, to love it, and embrace all the festivals.” Leaders are ambitious and are continuously investing in school improvement. They have an accurate knowledge and understanding of both the school’s strengths and areas for development. This is done through governors’ meetings and the different governors’ sub-committees, one which is called the EEW (Education, Ethos and Welfare) Committee. The Head of *Kodesh* sits on the EEW Committee, which meets termly. She reports on all aspects of Jewish Studies for that term and addresses questions about plans, assessment and meeting targets. This then gets reported back to the full Governing body. This ensures full accountability for the delivery of the *Kodesh* staff.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the progress in the school. They regularly visit the school and are involved in monitoring activities such as joint learning walks, books scrutiny and pupils’ discussions to gain an insight into how Jewish Studies is taught, pupils’ attitudes towards their learning and also their attainment in it. They are aware of the school’s financial situation and together with the school, ran a successful fundraising event to support the school. The leadership of the school, including governors, articulates and communicates the school’s essence, a strong commitment to high standards of work and to pupils’ Jewish personal and spiritual development and well-being.
- The Senior Leadership Team is a highly cohesive and effective team and works collaboratively to implement the vision and ethos of the school. The Head of *Kodesh* champions Jewish Studies and models excellent practice in academic and spiritual matters, and has shown a thorough understanding of the school, ensuring that Jewish learning has a high profile. She is a visionary and works hard together with the SLT, her team and other stakeholders to translate their vision into action for the benefit of the pupils and the school community. A parent said that, “The Head of *Kodesh* is a fantastic Head of JS who leads her team with humility and kindness. She is very well organized, and all school staff are kept well informed on various *Chaggim* activities and assemblies throughout the year.”
- The Head of *Kodesh*, supported by the SLT and the *Kodesh* staff, ensures that issues raised through self-evaluation of Jewish Education provision and its impact are addressed by effective strategies for improvement. This was evidenced, for example, in the changed provision for Hebrew reading homework, its robust framework for assessing progress in

Hebrew reading and other areas of Jewish Studies and in the strategies that have been put in place to enable pupils' spiritual development during *Tefillah*.

What does the school need to do to improve the 'Quality of Leadership and Management?'

- Ensure that Jewish Studies teachers receive further focused professional development with developing aspects of pedagogy.

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 Rosh Pinah Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 182 people responded to the survey.

Pikuach invited pupils at Rosh Pinah Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 87 pupils responded to the survey.

Pikuach invited members of staff at Rosh Pinah Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. 33 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.