

Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School

Inspection report

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| LEA | Brent |
| Inspected under the auspices of | Pikuach |
| Inspection dates | 28 th – 29 th November 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Jeffrey Leader |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Boys |
| Number on roll | 204 |
| School (total) | |
| Appropriate authority | The Governing Body |
| Chair | Mr. U. Kaplan |
| Headteacher | Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman |
| Menahel | Rabbi Ephraim Klyne |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4-5 July 2007 |
| School address | Parkside, Dollis Hill, NW2 6RJ |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors. The inspectors visited 8 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies Curriculum and the school's Self-Evaluation document.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The progress pupils make in their *Limmudei Kodesh*.
- The quality of teaching in *Limmudei Kodesh*.
- Leadership and Management in *Limmudei Kodesh*.

Information about the school

The Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School is a one form entry Voluntary Aided Jewish primary school situated in the London Borough of Brent. The school was founded in 1989 and was originally based in Woodside Park Synagogue. In 1997, it relocated to the former premises of the Dollis Hill Synagogue in North-West London. It is a strictly Orthodox Jewish primary school with 204 boys on roll aged 3–11 including 30 in the Nursery.

Torah Temimah Primary School aims to provide boys from the Orthodox Anglo-Jewish Community with a high quality Orthodox Jewish education coupled with National Curriculum studies imbued with *Torah* values, enabling all boys to take their place in and contribute to society.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School provides an excellent standard of Jewish education. The *Menahel*, Head of Limmudei Kodesh, Headteacher and Chair of Governors ensure that the strong ethos and philosophy of the school continues to drive it forward. Teamwork and a total unity of purpose are the main reasons for the school's success in *Limmudei Kodesh*. There is a strong commitment to provide the best possible Jewish education for all pupils. The *Kodesh* staff are enthusiastic, well motivated and work very well together. Parents wholeheartedly support the school.

Children in the Early Years and Foundation Stage get a very good start to their Jewish education. Although the teaching at this stage is very formal and teacher-directed, children make very good progress and their learning lays the foundation for their general outstanding attainment in Years 1 – 6. Most of the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Pupils' progress in *Kodesh* is monitored well by their teachers, especially in the area of Hebrew reading where careful tracking of pupils' accuracy and fluency in reading identifies not only those who are doing well but also those who need further help. Support for those pupils with special needs is outstanding, especially for the more able and less able learners. One parent wrote: 'My son has special needs and the school bends over backwards to ensure he accesses *Limmudei Kodesh* to the greatest extent possible.' However, this emphasis of support for the more and less able means that less attention is paid to those pupils of middle ability who could be challenged more. Marking of pupils' work was an issue at the last inspection and this has improved. However, there is room for further improvement as teachers need to write more informative comments that explain why, for example, a piece of work is good or what needs to be done to improve it.

The *Kodesh* curriculum is broad and balanced and very well resourced. Teachers are aware of what needs to be taught to each year group. However, unlike in National Curriculum subjects, there are no attainment targets for *Kodesh*. This would be a useful development for the school. *Kodesh* attainment targets would inform pupils, teachers and parents what each boy would be expected to know by the end of each year group.

Pupils enjoy their *Kodesh* lessons and have great respect for their *rebbe*s. One pupil said that the 'school is very caring.' This is indeed reflected in the excellent level of care and guidance shown by the school towards parents and pupils in need of support and encouragement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve curriculum development by specifying the attainment expectations for each year group. Develop topic areas for the teaching of *dinim* throughout the school
- Meet the learning needs more effectively of the group of middle ability learners.
- Continue to develop marking, focusing on strategies that will make pupils more aware of their strengths and weaknesses in different Jewish subject areas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The levels of pupils' attainment and achievement in *Limmudei Kodesh* are mostly outstanding. This was particularly evident in Key Stage 2 during lesson observations and in testing a representative group of pupils. It was noted that the older pupils had grasped difficult concepts in their *Chumash* and *Gemoro* learning and were able to explain what they had learned at an impressive level. Year 2 pupils demonstrated that their Hebrew reading and script writing were developing very well and those in Year 6 were able to read previously unseen texts fluently and with ease.

The pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills in *Kodesh* exceptionally well. They have developed resilience when tackling challenging activities such as translating and understanding a particular *possuk* or *mishna*. The progress pupils make in *Kodesh* is at least good in each key stage and sometimes outstanding.

Provision for the most able pupils and those with learning difficulties is outstanding. They are withdrawn individually and given work appropriate to their varying needs. *Rebbes* have received training to improve their skills in meeting the needs of all pupils. As a result, the *rebbes*, with guidance from the Special Education Needs Coordinator, are able effectively to track and test pupils' speed and accuracy in their Hebrew reading and make provision for those who need extra support. The school now needs to focus on further training for *rebbes* to help them deal with the needs of pupils in the middle ability group.

Discussions with pupils reveal that they have extremely positive feelings about their school. They enjoy their lessons and have great respect for their *rebbes* and teachers. 'Teachers make the lessons fun' was a view expressed by a Year 5 pupil. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility through the School Council which provides them with a valuable opportunity to express their views and secure improvements for the benefit of all pupils for example, they spoke enthusiastically about the shelter and goal posts installed in the playground.

Pupils understand why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle and one Year 5 pupil spontaneously quoted the appropriate phrase from the *Torah*. Unhealthy snacks may not be brought to school although, as a special treat, this rule is relaxed on *Rosh Chodesh*.

The pupils' involvement in the school through the School Council and their interaction in the wider community are valued. They raise money for a number of worthy causes including non-Jewish charities such as the 'Shoes for Africa' campaign.

Pupils' behaviour and concentration during *davening* is exemplary. In lessons and around the

school, behaviour is good overall and in the best lessons observed, it is outstanding.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

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| Pupils' attainment¹ | 1 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 1 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress | 1 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning? | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe? | 1 |
| How well do pupils behave? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 2 |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 1 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | NA |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

The quality of the *Kodesh* curriculum is good. Further progress has taken place since the previous inspection report published in July 2007, thereby building on the improvements that were noted at that time. This is particularly evident in the good quality of the *Yediyoh Kelolis* curriculum and the excellent resource material that supports the teaching and learning of this topic.

Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced and most appropriate for the needs of the pupils. The teaching of *Chumash* commences in Year 1. *Mishnah* is taught in Years 3 & 4; *Gemoro* in Years 5 & 6 and *Tenach* from Year 3 upwards.

The teaching of *Dinim* takes place but there is no documentation to guide teachers as to what should be taught in this subject, in each of the classes. Furthermore, the curriculum documentation gives no indication of attainment targets for pupils. Consequently inspectors are unable to judge accurately whether the school's expectations are being met or even exceeded. These are areas for further development.

There are some good models of integration of the *Kodesh* and secular curricula. For example, in a *Chumash* lesson dealing with the advice given by *Yisro* to *Moshe* to appoint *sorim* (officers) to assist him, the interactive white board was used most effectively to link the topic to mathematics by highlighting the groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Other examples include the linking of *Kodesh* with creative writing in English.

Display around the school enhances learning. On the topic of *Hakoras Hatov*, for example, a Year 2 display reflects this *middoh*. Pupils had been asked to write examples of *Hakoras Hatov* shown by their parents towards them and by them to their parents. One pupil had

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

written: 'Mummy and daddy give me food and take me places. I give my mummy and daddy a hug and kisses.'

The school admirably fulfils its statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. Pupils *daven* and say *Birkas Hamazon* with great *kavonah* and in Year 6, pupils recite a selection of *Tehilim* each day before commencing their *Torah* studies. There are strong links with external agencies which underpin the school's commitment to provide outstanding levels of care, guidance and support for all pupils.

The teaching is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are motivated and engaged, and in securing good progress and learning. All *Kodesh* teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use to enthuse and challenge most pupils and this contributes to their good progress. Good and imaginative use is made of resources, including new technology to enhance learning. In one Key Stage 1 *Chumash* lesson for example, the teacher skilfully used an inter-active white board with animated features and text to demonstrate the difficult concept of *bris bayn habsorim*. As a result of good assessment procedures, teachers and other adults plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils are provided with detailed feedback, both orally and through marking.

Although marking has improved significantly since the last Pikuach inspection there is room for further development. All of the pupils' work seen by the inspectors was marked with ticks and positive comments such as 'brilliant' or 'wonderful'. However, such comments, although rewarding, need to be explained so that pupils know how well they have done and can discuss what they need to do to sustain good progress. Teachers listen to, observe and question groups of pupils and individuals during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning.

Planning for lessons is mainly good but sometimes lesson objectives are little more than an activity. In *Gemoro*, for example, one objective was to 'ensure that every boy is reminded to write down the translation for the difficult words.' An objective would describe what particular skill or knowledge in *Gemoro* each boy would be expected to achieve by the end of the lesson.

Assessment procedures to support learning have improved since the previous inspection report. There is now a clear written assessment policy that is understood and implemented by all *rebbe*s. The progress of pupils, especially in Hebrew reading, is carefully tracked and regularly reviewed so that by the time they reach Year 6 most pupils are able to read previously unseen text based on tests which measure their speed and accuracy. Similar monitoring and tracking methods are being developed for other *Kodesh* subjects such as *Chumash*.

Very well-targeted support for all pupils has enabled them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Pupils are known as individuals and have high levels of confidence in the school's ability to advise them effectively. The school's work with families, children and a range of agencies to sustain the learning, development and well-being of individual pupils facing challenging circumstances is deeply embedded at all levels. This approach is reflected in the work of the Pupil Support Officer who provides excellent support for pupils and families undergoing challenging times.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team and other leaders and managers are conspicuously successful in inspiring the school community to share a strong sense of purpose in working towards meeting or sustaining ambitious targets in *Kodesh* for all pupils. A strong collegiate atmosphere has been created and belief in the school's success runs through all levels of staff. Monitoring of *Kodesh* teaching and pupil progress by the leadership team and an analysis of the resulting data, as evidenced by the school's self-evaluation document, enable the school, together with its significant partners, to devise well-focused plans which are detailed in the school's Improvement Plan. Actions taken by the school are well implemented. As a result, the quality of teaching is at least good and sometimes outstanding and leaders and managers at all levels are taking highly effective steps to drive up the quality of teaching still further. Consequently, outcomes in achievement and well-being for most pupils are good, and in some cases are exceptionally high.

Governors make a highly significant contribution to the work and direction of the school. They have high levels of insight, are extremely well organised and thorough in their approach. Governors are innovative, passionate about the school, flexible and adapt to new ideas quickly, supporting the work of the staff in improving outcomes for all pupils. They provide high levels of professional challenge to hold the school to account. Governors engage very effectively with parents, pupils and the staff as a whole and are well informed about users' views of the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | NA |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

For most children, the outcomes are at least good and some are outstanding. Children are eager to attend school and make significant gains in their Jewish learning. They have consistently good and often excellent levels of achievement and most children demonstrate very good progress in developing the skills that will help them in the future. Emphasis is placed on teaching the children to recognise the letters of the *Aleph Beis* so as to build a firm foundation on which to develop their Hebrew reading skills. However, although the results are impressive and the teaching is good, the very nature of *Kodesh* teaching at this level means that it is extremely difficult for *Kodesh* teachers to meet all the Early Years teaching requirements as defined by Ofsted. So for example, where a teacher does provide a suitable programme for linking Hebrew sounds and letters, it is more difficult to plan opportunities for children to work alone and in small and large groups and develop activities that promote their emotional, moral, spiritual and social development alongside their intellectual development.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Torah Temimah Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspectors received 51 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 134 families registered at the school.

| | Always | Most of the time | Occasionally | Never |
|--|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 41 | 10 | 0 | 0 |

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory. |
| 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. Pikuach inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.

Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.

Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.

Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.