

Beis Yaakov High School

Inspection report

LEA Salford
Inspection dates 20-21 May 2009
Inspected under the auspices of the Pikuach

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

Type of School	Secondary	School address	69 Broom Lane
School category	Voluntary Aided		Salford M7 4FF
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Female	Telephone number	0161 708 8220
Number on roll	212	Fax number	0161 708 9968
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Ziskind
Date of previous inspection	22-23 March 2006	Headteacher	Rabbi Yochanan Goldblatt

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Introduction

The Inspection was carried out by two Accredited Inspectors over two full days.

Description of the school

Beis Yaakov High School is a Voluntary-Aided school for girls which serves the North West Orthodox Jewish Community in Salford, Bury and Manchester. Girls also attend from Leeds and Liverpool. It moved to a new site and purpose built buildings in September 2006. The school day is fully integrated and finishes later than in most state schools at 4.50 pm to give time for the Limmudei Kodesh curriculum. In recent years the school has enjoyed a steady growth in numbers.

There is a crèche on site for the children of teachers and an independent sixth form which did not form part of this inspection. Almost all pupils speak English fluently but there are a number from homes where English is the second language as both parents are from abroad. The proportion of pupils with learning or other disabilities in the school is rising. Beis Yaakov is a nationally accredited Healthy School.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of its provision for Jewish education

The Limmudei Kodesh department of the Beis Yaakov School is good overall. There are a number of outstanding teachers who should serve as role models for the whole staff. The school is proud of the integration between the Kodesh and Chol departments and cites its recent day based around 'Perek Shira' as an example of this.

The Limmudei Kodesh department ensures that the religious ethos of the school has a vibrant presence throughout the day and in recent years it has become more prominent and successful. Each Yom Tov is marked by a special event which raises its profile and ensures the girls are fully prepared for the halochos and special significance of the Yom Tov.

The quality of the teaching is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection. The more successful teachers have blended the formal didactic style so typical of Kodesh teaching with a variety of approaches like paired and group work which engage the girls and help them take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils make good progress in most lessons and many attain a high level of attainment.

Since the last inspection, lesson planning has also improved and most of the lessons observed were well planned. The School SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator) directs and closely supervises a team of teaching assistants who withdraw and support pupils during Kodesh lessons. However, teachers' planning needs to improve to include an element of differentiation in the lesson, with a much greater emphasis on marking and assessment.

A good proportion of the Kodesh staff are utilising the opportunities given by the interactive whiteboards. Many of the staff, during meetings with the inspectors, mentioned the need for additional training and resources in this area.

Good staff pupil relationships and pupil discipline are strengths of the school.

The move to the new building in September 2006 has provided an excellent environment for the girls. This has increased their educational and extra curricular opportunities.

The Principal is ambitious for the school to attain the highest possible standards and is highly respected by his staff and senior leadership team for his vision and understanding of key educational issues. He has developed a leadership team keen to continue the recent improvements and so the school has a good capacity to develop further.

Grade 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more consistency in the quality of Kodesh teaching
- Improve the quality and quantity of marking and assessment
- Complete the work on developing a coherent curriculum

Achievement and standards

Most pupils are interested and engaged and ambitious to do well. Most of the teachers have high expectations of their pupils who respond positively. The many outstanding lessons encourage the girls to make outstanding progress. The school has made a major effort to improve the fluency of the reading of Hebrew. In most classes observed, pupils were asked challenging questions and they responded in a thoughtful way. There were many examples of in-depth thinking and penetrating questions from the pupils. They were encouraged by their teachers through the praise they received. If this was extended to all the lessons then the standard of achievement would become outstanding.

The school recognises the need to provide more challenging work for the most able girls but this needs greater thought and development.

The school is aware of the fact that the GCSE results in Kodesh related subjects need improving and has taken steps, like allocating additional time for teaching and revision, to address this issue.

The school is aware that the progress made in assessment in the secular department should be mirrored in the Kodesh department. It is anticipated that with the appointment of the new Kodesh deputy head, this will be achieved.

Grade 2

Personal development and well-being

The school understands the importance of the five outcomes of the ECM (every child matters) agenda and ensures that pupils feel safe and secure in their school.

As one would expect in a Beis Yaakov school 'shmiras Haloshon' and 'midos tovos' are stressed in every aspect of school life.

The development of the 'Looking In Looking Out' project together with the sociometric software helps the staff identify and rectify potential social problems.

During the inspectors meeting with the school council, the girls stressed the inclusive nature of the school and how they were always willing to help each other even when they are in different year groups. There is an on-going 'chesed' programme to which many girls belong. They organise numerous visits to senior citizens in the community and have many fund-raising drives. The girls also benefit from learning organisational skills through leading these activities. The school council has developed into a body of influence and the girls feel it has the ability to persuade the management to make changes.

The girls enjoy a range of after school clubs such as gym, cookery, aerobics and health management. They would like to see these programmes extended to more residential trips.

Thirty-five parents returned the questionnaires sent out to ascertain their opinion on the school. The vast majority were highly complimentary about the school and its leadership.

Grade 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning in Beis Yaakov is good with some outstanding features. Many of the lessons observed were outstanding, with some good and a few barely satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers know their subject well, use a range of resources including ICT, teach with a variety of styles and involve the active participation of all the pupils. They are excited and passionate about their teaching and convey this and the love of their subject to the girls. In most lessons planning is thorough and this supports the teachers in delivering their lessons thus ensuring the girls stay on task. The outstanding teachers are reflective practitioners keen to take advice in order to further improve their teaching.

In some lessons, teaching is didactic and often confused with lecturing so there is little teacher-pupil interaction.

The school understands that marking of exercise books used for class-work requires improvement and the new Deputy Head in charge of monitoring Kodesh will take an active role in this. The Senior Leadership Team recognises that effective assessment of pupil progress and achievement is a vital teaching tool and crucial to raising standards even further.

The SENCO and teaching assistants work hard to provide an excellent standard of support including withdrawal of girls from lessons in order to prepare them for the more demanding Kodesh lessons. The class teachers need to take more responsibility for guiding the work of the teaching assistants in their lessons to ensure that the less able pupils have full access to the curriculum.

The displays around the school produced by the girls are of the highest standards and are a good reflection of the ethos of the school. The display of the 'shvotim' at the top of the middle staircase was created by the gifted and talented pupils and could serve an exemplar for other schools.

Grade 2

Curriculum and other activities

Since the last inspection there has been a major curriculum drive with small groups of teachers established to work on their sections of the curriculum. The work on Chumash and Rashi is almost complete and significant progress has been made on the halocho curriculum. This has started to impact on teaching and learning and the school recognises the vital role this will have in raising standards.

The current curriculum is broad and covers many areas with specific emphasis on Chumash and Rashi. The other areas include Nach, Dinim, Tephilloh and Jewish History. Enrichment programmes include visiting speakers whom the girls find inspiring. The emphasis on the teaching of the Yomim Tovim since the last inspection has helped cement the relationship between home and school as mentioned by the parents in the questionnaires.

A special day was organised around the subject of 'Perek Shira'. The girls studied themes where the topic of conservation and the environment was the basis for every lesson. It was fully cross-curricular and innovative in its approach. This event was planned and supervised by the Deputy Head in charge of the extra curricular events.

Grade 2

Care, guidance and support

Pupils feel safe and cared for in the school's warm and inclusive environment. They know who to go to when they have a problem and the school provides the services of a qualified counsellor. In recent years the development of the 'mechanchos' structure has enhanced the way in which the school cares and supports each and every pupil.

The school clearly meets the statutory requirement for providing collective worship on a daily basis. The girls are expected to daven shacharis at home on Mondays and Fridays when assemblies take place. They daven mincha in school daily and are expected to either 'bensch' or say 'Al Hamichyah' at lunch time. The atmosphere at 'davenning' shows that they take their 'tephilloh' seriously. The girls enjoy singing during 'davenning' so consideration could be given to increase this element in the future.

In their final years the school prepares its pupils for progression from school to seminary through discussions and bringing in relevant and experienced speakers.

Grade 1

Leadership and management

Since the last inspection the school has strengthened its leadership team. With the increased size of the team there needs to be a greater clarity in the roles and responsibilities of each member of the team. The Principal has a clear understanding of the needs of the school and works tirelessly to engage all staff in his desire to improve the school.

The Principal also carries out the role of Headteacher and Head of Kodesh and despite the burden of these roles copes through his dedication and the time he devotes to the school. He understands the importance of delegating some of his responsibilities and has appointed a second deputy head to take charge of a number of aspects of the Kodesh programme. The senior leadership team works in a largely democratic fashion and the Principal understands the need to persuade rather than dictate to his staff. However he also realises that at times he must take a firm stand.

The school development plan sets out an ambitious programme with the Kodesh aims fully integrated with the secular curriculum. Given the importance of the Kodesh programme, the school should consider whether it would benefit from its own discrete section. The detail and quality of reporting in the SEF are good.

The Governors understand their role and act as a critical friend to the Principal challenging him and supporting him in equal measure.

Grade 2

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 unsatisfactory.</i>	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of pupils?		
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being?	1	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do pupils achieve?		
The <i>standards</i> 1 reached by pupils	2	
How well pupils' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils	2	
How well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the pupils?		
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including collective worship	1	
The behaviour of pupils	1	
The attendance of pupils	2	
How well pupils enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which pupils adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution to the community.	1	
How well pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of pupils' needs?	2	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils?	2	
How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported including provision for collective worship?	1	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils?		
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are protected	Yes	
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

The extent to which schools enable pupils to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Pupils are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	NA
Pupils are educated about sexual health.	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that pupils stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Pupils are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Pupils, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable pupils to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote pupils' basic skills.	Yes
Pupils have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	NA
Education for all pupils aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	NA

