

# CLORE TIKVA SCHOOL

## Inspection report

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LEA	London Borough of Redbridge
Inspection dates	16 and 18 July 2007/1 and 3 Av 5767
Reporting inspector	Ms Angela Gluck Wood
Team inspector	Mrs Loretta Harstein

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

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Type of School	Primary	School address	115 Fulwell Avenue, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 2JN
School category	Voluntary aided		
Age range of pupils	3—11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll	450	Telephone number	020 85511097
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Richard Burack
Date of previous inspection	4—6 March 2002/ 20—22 Adar 5762	Headteacher	Mrs Lenna Rosenberg

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## Introduction

### Description of the school

The school has been in existence for seven years and, from small beginnings, now offers education across the age-range and is currently over-subscribed. Most pupils live in the local area but some travel from other parts of London and Essex. Pupils vary considerably in their experience of Jewish life outside school. While most are from the Progressive Jewish community, others are from Masorti and Orthodox communities, and a small number are not Jewish.

The school was founded with a pluralist philosophy that is reflected in the school's ethos. Girls and boys have the same opportunities in prayer and ritual practice. Judaism is taught with reference both to traditional teachings and progressive interpretations. Pupils are also taught about the beliefs and practices of other religions, in line with the Redbridge Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Examples of Jewish experience are integrated into the teaching of some aspects of the National Curriculum.

Emphasis is placed on enabling the pupils both to develop a fulfilling Jewish identity and to play a meaningful role in society as a whole. The development of a spiritual outlook and an ethical lifestyle is at the heart of the school.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school's provision for Jewish education

The school provides exceptionally well-rounded Jewish education of high quality. It can be justly proud of its accomplishments to date and the direction in which it is heading. It has acted effectively on all the recommendations of the last *Pikuach* inspection of Jewish education. These include:

- improvement in the use of assessment when planning learning opportunities;
- several initiatives for the professional development of staff;
- fuller integration of Jewish education and the National Curriculum.

The school is in a continual process of self-evaluation and has made additional improvements. While it is broadly realistic about its strengths, the inspection team judged that it slightly under-valued itself in its recent review exercise.

The governing body and senior leadership give the school a very good steer. The focus is clear and the sense of purpose strong. There are harmonious and productive relationships between members of the school community and effective teamwork amongst staff and leaders. There is great respect for pupils' family traditions and commitment to the process of forming secure Jewish identities. Pupils benefit from a holistic approach to Jewish life and learning, from appropriately challenging teaching, from a stimulating environment and from the devoted care of adults at school.

There are no weaknesses and the few aspects that need some attention are already in hand. The school is fully able to sustain the provision it is already making, and has the creativity and drive to forge ahead.

### Grade: 1

### What the school should do to improve further

- enhance pupils' understanding of the traditional *t'fillot* (prayers) used in assemblies and their fluency in reading them
- extend the provision of learning resources, especially books available to pupils for independent use

### Achievement and standards

Pupils amply achieve the standards that the school sets for Jewish education. Challenging targets are set for individuals and groups, and pupils are highly motivated to reach them. Information on pupils' Individual Education Plans, where appropriate, is thoughtfully used to set standards and to match teaching to prior learning.

In the Foundation Stage, pupils acquire basic Jewish skills and knowledge securely through stories and a range of practical experiences. They listen to and speak *Ivrit* (Hebrew) clearly and confidently, through songs, games, greetings and simple conversations. They also develop the approaches and attitudes to learning in *Ivrit* and Jewish Studies that stand them in good stead in later years.

*Ivrit* reading in Key Stages 1 and 2 is very good. Younger pupils acquire a firm *Ivrit* vocabulary through word recognition and picture reinforcement. Even pupils who struggle to read at a good pace have learned the tools for decoding letters and vowels, and they read accurately and assuredly. This enables them to recognise words and phrases without visual clues. In one of the classes observed, pupils were able to read *Ivrit* words with the letters in reverse order in a puzzle that the teacher had devised. At Key Stage 2, pupils' comprehension deepens substantially. By Year 6, they are on their way to reading fairly fluently and with understanding, and they write *Ivrit* script with precision.

Key Stage 1 pupils can recount the main observances of daily *t'fillah* (prayer), *Shabbat* (Sabbath) and festivals, and their origins. They have a very sound knowledge of a range of stories in the *Torah* (first part of the Jewish Bible) and understanding of the range of their meanings. They are aware of the possibility of differing interpretations and can apply the values and beliefs within them to their own lives and the world today. These aptitudes are further developed at Key Stage 2, when pupils can handle challenging texts and a range of religious concepts and moral issues. They have a marked ability to solve problems and resolve conflicts. Their empathy for the individuals and groups they encounter in their studies is outstanding.

At all stages, pupils make very rapid and secure progress in Jewish Studies and *Ivrit*. This includes the pupils who, when they enter the school, have little or no knowledge and understanding of Judaism or exposure to Jewish experience. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is excellent.

## **Grade: 1**

### **Personal development and well-being**

The *Pikuach* inspection team agrees with the school's appraisal of itself that personal development and well-being are outstanding. It is indeed a strength of the school.

The school successfully addresses the five outcomes identified in the government document 'Every Child Matters': being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, economic well being and making a positive contribution.

Interesting and deep discussions were heard in almost all lessons observed that clearly showed the outstanding nurturing of pupils' spiritual and moral

growth. There were, for example, explorations of *pikuach nefesh* (the saving of life) and of *derech erez* (respect for others). Every opportunity to emphasise these and other concepts was taken in the classroom and around the school. For instance, pupils are encouraged to work together in pairs and groups in the lessons and the teachers were frequently heard thanking pupils, and indeed each other. In conversations between staff and pupils – as well as between the pupils themselves – concerning behaviour, Jewish terms and references are used to articulate attitudes and values.

Pupils' social and cultural development is excellent. There are many activities such as Israeli dancing, before and after school clubs, links with other schools and residential weekends, which successfully enhance the pupils' social development. Their cultural development has been enriched by such experiences as visits to the Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre (in Nottingham), hosting the Jewish Way of Life exhibition and the partnership with a school in northern Israel.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the school by, for instance, playing leading roles in assemblies and Jewish rituals, such as *havdalah*, and by formulating interview questions for the selection of the school counsellor. They also contribute to the outside community by inviting guests from the community to their celebrations and by making collections for charity, such as for Macmillan nurses.

Behaviour around the school and during lessons, *t'fillah* (prayer) and meals is consistently exemplary. Attendance is very good.

**Grade: 1**

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning, across the Foundation, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, is outstanding, with half of the lessons observed being excellent.

Almost all the staff teaching *Ivrit* (Hebrew) and Jewish Studies have qualified teacher status. They have sound to excellent knowledge of their subjects. Support staff are used most effectively to promote good learning experiences for all members of the class, especially those with special educational needs.

Professional development in Jewish Studies, an area for action highlighted in the 2002 *Pikuach* inspection, now successfully includes staff in Jewish education and the National Curriculum. It is one of the school's strengths. The practice of non-Jewish Studies teachers remaining in the classroom during Jewish Studies lessons to assist the teacher and to absorb the content of lessons is also a form of

professional development. Likewise, the induction of all teachers into the ethos of the school and the content of Jewish Studies has proven to be most effective. Such a focus on professional development has had positive ramifications for the quality of teaching and learning.

Lesson plans are comprehensive and sharply targeted, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the class at the start of the lesson. Teachers challenge pupils with differentiated questioning and a range of other appropriate teaching methods so as to elicit the most from each pupil. This promotes very good progress across the age ranges.

Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* resources in classrooms are deployed well and interactive whiteboards, in particular, are used to great effect to promote learning. However, the range of resources for Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* needs to be increased. In particular, the library is short on fiction and non-fiction books with Jewish, *Ivrit* and Israeli content.

The assessment and monitoring of pupil progress is excellent and it is evident that the school has now implemented the recommendations by the *Pikuach* inspectors in 2002. It is now well focused and facilitates effective planning for further learning and the identification of additional learning needs, for which there is excellent provision. The monitoring of teachers is now well established and is proving effective.

A scrutiny of recent reports showed good reporting skills. A scrutiny of pupils' work showed that teachers need to embed fully the principles of formative assessment when marking pupils' work, so as to make more constructive comments to the pupils.

The teaching of *Ivrit* is a strength of the school. Lessons are well planned, vigorously paced and stimulating. Teachers use imaginative resources and a wide range of learning activities, and teach with flair. Other members of staff are present in these lessons to learn the concepts and vocabulary and use them in their own classrooms.

Pupils at all ages enjoy *Ivrit* and Jewish Studies. They bring positive attitudes to learning and actively engage in lessons. They build on what they have learned and apply it well, are keen to succeed and cooperate productively with one another.

## **Grade: 1**

### **Curriculum and other activities**

The school offers a very broad, balanced and varied experience of Jewish education. This is clear in Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* (Hebrew) lessons, assemblies and other opportunities for *t'fillah* (prayer), a good range of extracurricular

activities and, most significantly, the overall atmosphere of the school. The symbolic design of the building, the ample high quality display around the site and the music played in the entrance area are rich in references to Judaism and the land of Israel. The extensive use of *Ivrit* signage in classrooms and around the site conveys one of the school's priorities. It also ensures that even very young children, who are unable to read the words, are nevertheless bathed in the language from the very beginning. Thus the school's ethos makes a substantial contribution to the high standards that pupils achieve in Jewish Studies and *Ivrit*. The pupils' poster "We love being Jewish!" in the central circulation area sums up the part the school plays in the development of their Jewish identity.

The school exceeds the minimum legal requirement to provide religious education. It has adopted the local (Redbridge) Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, although not obligated to do so, so as to provide learning in world religions. This is in keeping with the school's commitment to prepare pupils for life in a modern pluralist society and to imbue them with a love of people and the world. In addition, there are timetabled Jewish Studies lessons each week, taught either by the school's Jewish Studies specialist or by the class teacher who is mentored by the specialist.

*Ivrit* teaching involves the pupils in acquiring appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures for learning about Judaism, as well as for secular subject matter. For example, Key Stage 1 pupils can use *Ivrit* words and phrases to identify Jewish artefacts and can form *Ivrit* sentences about Jewish festivals. Furthermore, a characteristic feature of the school's provision – and one of its many strengths – is the way in which aspects of Jewish and Israeli culture are reflected in the teaching of several National Curriculum subjects, particularly English, history, geography, art, music and ICT (information and communications technology). One notable example is the in-depth study of *Hana's Suitcase* (a Holocaust biography) in Year 6 literacy. The school's far-reaching integration of Jewish education is carefully planned and supported, and draws on the expertise and total commitment of all the staff involved. It provides the pupils with a coherent and almost seamless Jewish experience that further enhances their learning and achievement.

Enabling the pupils to understand the basic concepts and values underlying Judaism and to make informed and well-reasoned decisions is a distinctive emphasis of Jewish education at the school. This holds true whether it is a focused subject, an aspect of the National Curriculum or the 'Second Step' programme, which fosters pupils' social and emotional development. The School Council is offered wide powers and enabled to play a vital role in the school's direction. It is effectively the school's junior leadership team and is highly valued by its members and by other pupils. Pupils are given many opportunities to show initiative and to assume responsibility: they respond with enthusiasm, confidence and determination. A clear example is their

response to the invitation to be linked with a school in the Galilee region of Israel.

In and out of lessons, staff have very high expectations of the pupils' conduct, learning and achievement. In the behaviour they demonstrate and in the values they express, they provide the pupils with excellent and inspiring role models.

**Grade: 1**

## Care, guidance and support

Provision for care, guidance and support in this school is excellent and consequently has a positive impact on the personal development of the pupils. The inspectors agree with the statement made in the school's self-evaluation that, "Visitors are aware of the spiritual Jewish values and supportive warm atmosphere as they walk around the school."

The school encourages the growth of the pupils' self-confidence at every opportunity. For instance, at lunchtime a nurture club available that boosts self esteem. Teachers were very often heard praising pupils and more than one teacher stopped to encourage a child who was distressed at changing schools. Discussion with the pupils showed that the pupils know which adult they can turn to for advice, support and reassurance. The school is intolerant of bullying and racist behaviour, and adopts safe procedures.

The school promotes a healthy life style and guidance is given to the parents on what food is suitable for their children. The school actively encourages the choice of healthy food at meal times and drinking water is available in each class. The play areas are well equipped to allow a variety of sporting exercise activities to be followed during break times.

The school is committed to pluralism within Judaism and it meets the statutory requirements of providing collective worship on a daily basis for all its pupils. The collective worship policy demonstrates continuity and progression, and reflects the Jewish calendar. There are opportunities for both girls and boys to participate. The planning and resources for collective worship are very good and the range and balance of activities is appropriate for the age and experience of the pupils.

On Mondays, there is a *havdalah* (ceremony to mark the return to the working week after the Sabbath) during assembly; assembly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, worship is held in the classrooms, with the Tuesday assembly being themed; on Thursdays there is a *Torah*-based assembly; and on Fridays a *Kabbalat Shabbat* (to welcome the Sabbath) assembly and celebration of achievements. There are many teachers present in the hall assemblies and many participate and help the pupils. *Brachot* (blessings) are recited appropriately after washing hands before eating bread at lunchtime. *Birkat Hamazon*

(thanksgiving after meals) is recited in *Ivrit* in all classes before the start of afternoon school. Thus collective worship takes place in a range of contexts, groupings and settings.

Almost all Key Stage 1 pupils were seen to join in the recitation and singing of prayers both in the hall and classrooms. The Key Stage 2 pupils fully and happily participated in the classroom but less well in the hall and some of those that participated were pronouncing words inaccurately. Foundation children are gradually and successfully being introduced to the process of saying *t'fillot* (prayers).

In particular, classroom assembly was seen to be a spiritual experience and to make a positive contribution to, and an excellent impact on, the pupil's understanding of the school's ethos and values.

**Grade: 1**

## Leadership and management

The school is superbly led, with vision, commitment and energy. The headteacher and deputy head inspire and motivate staff to give the best of themselves for the benefit of the pupils. They demand of staff no more than they give themselves. They are very effective managers and their well-organised systems enable them to maximise their time in relating to individuals and groups. They are a positive presence in the life of the school, are very much in tune with its daily life and have the respect of staff, pupils and parents alike.

Jewish education, including Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* (Hebrew) lessons, has gone from strength to strength. Since the last *Pikuach* inspection, the appointment of a Jewish Studies coordinator in conjunction with the *Ivrit* (Hebrew) coordinator, has enabled teaching in these subjects to be more effectively supported and monitored, through specific induction and training courses for teachers and their ongoing professional development. Provision is enhanced through support and advice from the Leo Baeck College and through professional dialogue with two other pluralist Jewish schools. The *Ivrit* coordinator has played a vital role in this and also creating, writing and developing the *Ivrit* curriculum throughout the school. With the imminent departure to Israel of the Jewish Studies coordinator, the school has appointed an assistant headteacher for whom Jewish education will be the main responsibility. As part of the senior management team, this post will further enhance Jewish education both symbolically and practically. There are signs that the impact of Jewish education will be even greater in the future.

From the questionnaires that parents returned to the inspection team, it was evident that parents have every confidence in the school and appreciate what it provides for their children. Parents are made welcome in the school and feel that staff are approachable. The school values home-school links highly. It

consults parents widely and treats their requests seriously. Parents' views are taken into account in the school's ongoing development.

The increasing popularity of the school has meant that it is over-subscribed. The admissions criteria are complex but clear and the governing body needs, for the first time in the school's short history, to implement procedures for parental appeals. Another challenge facing the governing body is in encouraging more parents to make a contribution to the costs of providing Jewish education at the school. In comparison with other Jewish schools, the amount that Clore Tikva requests is low, as is the proportion of parents who respond; the quality of Jewish education that their children receive is high.

A major factor in the school's success is the model of Jewish education that imbues every facet of school life. It is evident in the teamwork that exists between all those who work at and for the school, including governors, leaders, teachers and support staff. This gives the school a clear sense of direction and focuses energies on shared goals. The governing body has plans to become more involved in the school's daily learning and other activities. There is a great deal of mutual support and collaboration amongst staff, and the quality of working relationships is exceptionally strong.

**Grade: 1**