

# Independent Jewish Day School Academy

## Inspection Report

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<b>Local authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspected under the auspices of</b>	Pikuach
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 March–1 April 2014
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sandra Teacher

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Governing Body
<b>Chair</b>	Anushka Levy MA Hons (Cantab)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rabbi J Ebrahimoff MSc NPQH
<b>Date of previous Pikuach inspection</b>	5 February 2008
<b>Address</b>	46 Green Lane Hendon London NW4 2AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 203 2299
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<b>School website</b>	www.ijds.co.uk

# Introduction

## Inspection team

Sandra Teacher    Lead Inspector

Jeffrey Leader    Team Inspector

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors. They visited eight lessons or parts of lessons including *Tefillot* (prayers). They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies curriculum, the school's self-evaluation document and the school's improvement plan.

The inspection was carried out, in accordance with the statutory duty for Section 48 inspections, at the end of the five-year cycle, although the school has not had an Ofsted inspection since December 2007, as it was previously graded as outstanding.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- The Jewish education curriculum
- The progress pupils make in Jewish education
- The quality of teaching in Jewish education
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship
- Leadership and management in Jewish education.

## Information about the school

- The Independent Jewish Day School Academy is a one-form entry Jewish Voluntary Aided Primary school with a nursery. The school predominantly serves the Hendon Jewish community in the London Borough of Barnet.
- The school's extended hours provision includes 33% of time devoted to Jewish Studies. *Ivrit* is taught as part of the *Kodesh B'Ivrit* curriculum as the modern foreign language.
- The school is heavily oversubscribed and, for September 2013, there were 68 applications for 28 places.
- The vast majority of pupils live less than two miles from the school and are involved with the local community. Since September 2013 the school has broadened its catchment area to provide opportunities for children in the broader community to join the school.
- Pupil mobility within the school is below the national average with most pupils starting in Nursery and remaining until Year 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The acting headteacher has been in post since December 2012 and also holds the post as Head of *Kodesh* (since 2004). The Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in September 2010.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The achievement of pupils in their Jewish education</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the duty to fulfill the daily act of collective worship</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish Education, including through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>

### **Overall Effectiveness: the quality of Jewish education provided in the Independent Jewish Day School is outstanding**

- Pupils have excellent educational experiences at school and these ensure that they are very well equipped for the next stage of their Jewish education.
- The school's thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including *middot* (values), enables them to thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community.
- The pursuit of excellence in all of the school's Jewish educational activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising and highly successful drive to strongly improve and maintain the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils over a sustained period of time.
- The school is successful in meeting its aims of 'encouraging a love of *Torah* learning, a passion for *mitzvot*, a sense of responsibility towards others and a commitment to Israel'.
- All leaders and managers, including governors, are highly ambitious for their pupils and lead by example.
- The school's Jewish curriculum (*Kodesh b'Ivrit*) provides highly positive experiences and rich opportunities for high-quality learning.
- Teaching is good in all subjects of the *Kodesh* curriculum; in particular, the teaching of reading and writing and understanding Hebrew. This leads to outstanding achievement and excellent progress over time.

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

- Further develop the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (*Ma'agal HaShana*) to ensure that teaching and learning is consistently good by including all seven areas of learning and expanding the curriculum into learning and development bands.
- Further develop leadership and management in the *Kodesh* department to ensure that there is more rigorous monitoring of targets for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

## Achievement of pupils at the school in their Jewish education is outstanding

- Taking account of their starting points, the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress is high in relation to their potential.
- Pupils develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect, including reading, writing and understanding Hebrew, together with an ability to communicate and formulate their ideas verbally and in writing.
- From *Hachana and Kita Aleph*, children learn their Hebrew phonic sounds and can already begin to read and write. The school is developing the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum to encompass *Kodesh* into all the seven areas of learning.
- Younger pupils, when reading to inspectors, read not only accurately and fluently but with expression.
- From *Kita Bet*, they already have a good grasp of *chumash*, through studying *Bereshit*, and their *chumash* skills progress as they move up the school.
- Older pupils were able to understand the concept of building the Golden Calf, from the perspective of different commentators, including Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, Ramban, Rashi and the *Or Hachayim Hakadosh*.
- When learning about *Pesach*, younger pupils studied in depth the difference between *chametz* and *matza*. They were able, both in English and Hebrew, to identify the ingredients suitable for the making of *challah* and distinguish these from the ingredients of *matza*; whilst older pupils considered the *Haggadah* paragraph *Ve'hi She'amdah*, ('And it is this') and were able not only to grasp the concept of slavery but to debate the different explanations for its meaning offered by the *parshanim* (commentators).
- Boys learn to *lein* from a young age, and all pupils have the opportunity to extend their learning through the popular extra-curricular activities such as the *midrash* club, which, although after school, enjoys a full attendance.
- Achievement in *Ivrit* is outstanding, and when the Israeli Deputy Minister for Education visited the school on the day of the inspection, the pupils were easily able to converse in Hebrew with him and his wife.

- Inclusion of pupils of all abilities within the school is excellent. The school is developing ways to ensure that every pupil achieves according to their potential and in particular, those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.

## **The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education is good :**

- Both teachers and teaching assistants have excellent subject knowledge, coupled with commitment and passion for learning, which transfers itself to their pupils and impacts positively on their learning.
- The pupils themselves, when talking to the inspectors, felt that their teachers were supportive and approachable.
- One Year 6 pupil, when asked what he would miss most when leaving the school, replied 'celebrating *chagim*'.
- Teaching is effective because of the wide range of stimulating and interesting activities which support differing learning styles. Activities included matching words, sticking in the correct letters, and puzzles, which all relate to pupils' work in *Chumash*. Whilst showing their enjoyment in pursuing these activities, the pupils were constantly referring their learning to the text.
- In another lesson, two pupils mixed ingredients into two separate bowls, one to make *challah* and the other *matza*. This was an example of the experiential learning, which brings learning to life, and which teachers use as a constant reinforcement.
- The very high adult:pupil ratio, which provides either individual support or support for small groups of pupils who find some of the work more difficult, is a great strength. Teachers are developing skills to ensure that all work is matched to pupils' abilities and individual learning needs.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children were busy learning about the ten plagues, and the learning was impressive when the teacher magically turned water red to represent the blood. However, the new systems for assessment, which make good use of the latest technology, are not yet fully embedded within the *Kodesh* curriculum, so that the children and their parents are not always clear about the next steps in their learning.
- The use of the outside area for learning does not mirror the inside environment, and so does not always effectively promote further knowledge.
- Comments in pupils' books trigger constructive dialogue between teachers and pupils regarding their *Kodesh* targets. In some classes, pupils were provided with an opportunity to request specific targets by writing to their teachers on a special target board. A boy in Key Stage 1 wrote on his target board: "I love speaking *Ivrit*, I would like to speak only *Ivrit* in *Kodesh* lessons". A girl in Key Stage 2 wrote on her target board: "I am a member of the *Tzedaka* committee, I would like to improve my spelling in *Ivrit* and respond to letters from charities in Israel only in *Ivrit*, this will help us communicate effectively and help people in need".

- When inspectors looked at pupils' books, some teachers had taken the time and trouble to write comments in *Ivrit* script, but these could not always be understood by all the pupils and so they are not always clear about how to improve their work. Some pupils had difficulty in reading and understanding the positive comments because of the style of the writing.

## **The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs is outstanding:**

- Inspectors judged the school to be at the forefront of successful innovative design in some areas of the Jewish curriculum, much of which has been imported and adapted from Israel.
- Senior leaders have also been involved in producing an exciting ETGAR handbook and the IJDS general knowledge book, which are also used by other schools, and involve competitions, which help to motivate and excite the pupils.
- The curriculum aims to meet the needs of all pupils with a consideration of particular styles of learning, so that it is not only about getting to know the content of the *parasha* (Torah portion) but also understanding the *middot* (values) contained within the stories.
- The school is developing skills in *Chumash* and has in place tracking systems which assess the development of these skills on a termly basis. In the future, this is expected to give a long-term picture of pupil progress over time.
- The curriculum is constantly being reinforced by practice at home, so that learning and home practice appear seamless. Often parents feel that: 'It is the children driving *halacha* at home.'

## **The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding**

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. All adults show considerable respect for the school's Jewish ethos and all present themselves as good role models.
- The outstanding teamwork between all staff ensures that there is no divide between the *Kodesh* and *Chol* strands of the curriculum. The seamless integration of all aspects of Judaism cascades down through the school to create a warm and nurturing environment and allows pupils to feel comfortable with Judaism and proud to be Jewish.
- Opportunities for the moral development of pupils are created. For example, in the teaching of *Parashat Ha'Shavua*, a particular *middah* is highlighted each week. Moral awareness is an integral part of the behaviour policy of the school.
- Pupils work with the elderly and run the *Sedarim* for them. They also help other children less fortunate than themselves through having pen pals both in Israel and in Africa. They

have met with refugees from Bosnia to try to understand what it might feel like to have to leave your home.

- Pupils are actively involved in collecting funds for charities, thereby bringing to life the concept of *Tzedakah* and developing an understanding and empathy for the needs of others. One pupil sold 'goodies' from his driveway and was awarded the Jewish Child of the Year award in 2010. Another pupil sits on the Fair Trade committee which develops activities to make the school more aware of its responsibilities towards *Tikun Olam* (repairing the world).
- Some beautiful displays around the school reinforce the religious ethos, as does the effective use of music, especially in some lessons. The calm environment as pupils move about the school, and the pupils' friendly and helpful demeanour, speak volumes about the development of pupils' positive inter-personal behaviour – *Bein Adam L'Chavero* (relationships between people). They also demonstrate their understanding of the importance of *tzeniut* and how to apply it to their daily lives.
- The school provides some excellent extra-curricular activities which impact on pupils' spiritual and cultural development. These include the school choir, dance club and *leining* club. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in student committees where they can develop an understanding of democracy, as well as furthering their ability to work co-operatively with others. Further opportunities for social development are provided through responsibilities, such as older pupils helping and supporting the younger pupils with reading and homework.
- The school has successfully created an inclusive environment. Its equal opportunities policy has a positive impact on the quality of learning and achievement in Jewish Studies. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Boys and girls are given different but equally prominent roles in *Tefillah* and assemblies in accordance with *Halachah* and the Jewish ethos of the school. In the girls' *Tefillah*, Year 6 pupils gave a thoughtful *D'var Torah* on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*. The statutory duty for collective worship is met. Both boys and girls are given the choice to participate in *Mishnah and Gemara* lessons.
- While the majority of pupils are of Ashkenazi tradition, the school makes a point of highlighting Sephardic traditions at every opportunity. For example, the *Teimani* customs concerning *matza*.
- The school has strong links with a local non-Jewish primary school and there are regular meetings at the times of other faith celebrations, such as Eid and Diwali. As some of the staff members are Scottish, they regale their pupils with stories of their own culture.
- The pupils take part in cultural and sporting events with other Jewish and non-Jewish schools, and this gives contributes to their understanding of the wider world.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish education is outstanding**

- The inspirational leadership by the acting headteacher and Head of *Kodesh* supports the outstanding achievement of the pupils.

- The budget has been used more creatively since the school became an academy and additional resources have enriched the *Kodesh* curriculum.
- The headteacher has focused relentlessly on improving teaching and learning, and has been instrumental in bringing teachers from Israel, including *B'not Sherut*, to support the successful *Ivrit b'Kodesh* curriculum.
- All staff are involved in the appraisal process, with focused support for individual needs. This has included sending the non-Jewish teachers to Israel so that they understand the ethos of the school.
- Rigorous self-evaluation supports a rigorous drive for improvement, and the school has recognised that there is a need for a structured senior leadership team, especially in *Limudei Kodesh*.
- Governors and the Religious Principal provide strong support and visit regularly. They are supporting the acting headteacher in making sure that all pupils attend regularly, especially in periods following a *chag*, when some parents may be tempted to extend their holidays in Israel. These absences have been linked to some underachievement for these pupils in their Jewish and general studies.

## Views of parents and carers

*Pikuach* carried out their own parental online survey and also talked to parents whilst visiting the school. Having scrutinised the results, the school has decided to carry out a consultation as regards *Kodesh* written homework. Here are just some of the very positive comments from parents:

- 'The Independent Jewish Day School is a wonderful, warm school and the LK department promotes a true love of *Torah* and *mitzvot*. We are amazed at the constant excitement for learning our children have. Our son has had wonderful support to move forward and progress over the last few years and we are very grateful to all the staff for all their continuous dedication and hard work.'
- 'My child is highly inspired by his JS teachers and he teaches the whole family *Ivrit!*'
- 'We are delighted with the *Limudei Kodesh* at school. The Hebrew curriculum is very rewarding. There are so many activities outside formal learning that support the classroom learning goals. It is wonderful and our whole family benefits.'
- 'Our daughter is now coming to the end of her final year at the IJDS and we are thrilled with everything she has achieved. Not only does she have good knowledge and good skills, but she is passionate about her *Limudei Kodesh*. Sharing her *Divrei Torah* with us on a Friday night is a highlight of her week ... and of ours!'
- 'My son comes home excited about his Jewish Studies and happy to learn more. That the *Kodesh* is in *Ivrit* is a major feather in the cap of the school. Both my sons are able to speak more than I could when I was years older. We are thrilled with the school, the love they imbue in our children for Judaism and *Kodesh* and the warmth they show children.'
- 'My daughter has loved her *Kodesh* education throughout the IJDS. The level of teaching



has been impressive and consistent throughout. She has an excellent grasp of Hebrew and of Jewish Studies. She has been allowed to engage and learn on an equal footing to the boys. Her level of general knowledge is impressive and I can see the value of the *Kodesh B'Ivrit* programme, now that she is clearly comfortable looking at and working out the meaning and issues in new texts.'

- 'The school has a tremendous Jewish heart and soul - something that we as a family really value and appreciate.'
- 'The way all the *chagim* are celebrated across both *Kodesh* and *chol* is fantastic. There is a wonderful atmosphere around each *chag*.'
- 'If only we had this opportunity as kids!'

# 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.