

# JFS School

## Inspection report

---

LEA	Brent
Inspection dates	5-6 May 2009
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach

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

---

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	The Mall
School category	Voluntary aided		Kenton
Age range of pupils	11-18		Middlesex HA3 9TE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8206 3100
Number on roll	2015	Fax number	020 8206 3101
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Russell Kett
Date of previous inspection	3-4 April 2006	Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Miller

---

---

© Pikuach copyright 2006

Website: [www.bod.org.uk](http://www.bod.org.uk)

This document has been modified from the *Every child matters: framework for the inspection of schools in England from September 2005* with their permission.

It may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

# Introduction

## Description of the school

JFS was established in 1732 and is the largest Jewish comprehensive school in Europe with 2015 students on roll including 518 in the Sixth Form. It is an orthodox school and the Foundation Body is the United Synagogue. All of its students are *halachically* Jewish and are drawn from a broad religious spectrum and range of Jewish and non-Jewish primary schools. There are about 60 primary schools represented in the student body and approximately 33% of students starting JFS are from non-Jewish primary schools. The school has a small but significant number of Israeli students.

The levels of attainment of students on entry to the school in both Jewish knowledge and *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) are diverse.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Unsatisfactory

Note: an Outstanding grade means that "all or almost all of the school's work are at least good, and significant elements are exemplary" (Pikuach Evaluation Schedule, Jan 2006)

Two Pikuach inspectors spent two days at the school, meeting with teachers, students (both formally and informally) and governors as well as observing lessons and scrutinising work. The inspectors were appreciative of the autonomy and flexibility they were given by the school during the inspection.

## **Overall effectiveness of its provision for Jewish education**

Jewish ethos permeates the entire fabric of the school. The staff, both Jewish and non-Jewish, share the school's vision and work together to ensure it is fulfilled. For example, non-Jewish members of staff accompany most Jewish Studies trips and outings and there is a continual programme to integrate both Jewish and non-Jewish staff into the values and ethos of the school.

The effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding. Students achieve very well and demonstrate high levels of personal development and have a first-rate attitude to work. Many of them provide excellent role models for the younger students.

Achievement and standards at national examination level are outstanding. Success rates at all levels have been consistently high over the last three years. Learners make good or better progress and many achieve high grades in their Jewish subjects. The development of their spiritual, moral and cultural understanding is excellent.

The Department has set itself the task of raising the level of teaching and learning from good to outstanding. Learners are well motivated and keen to succeed. The lesson observation scheme is effective in promoting and ensuring the development of high level teaching skills

The Department achieves its aim of providing a curriculum that is relevant and meaningful to the life of its students. Text study classes, which are run in parallel to the general Jewish Studies classes, are offered to all pupils who wish to attend. Extended Day activities will include a high level text class from September 2009. The department provides excellent enrichment opportunities for learners through informal education for example the lunch and learn programme and the Taste of Israel programme for Year 9 students.

Guidance and support for learners is outstanding. The school places the needs of the learner at the heart of everything it does. The pastoral system is comprehensive and tutors provide excellent support within a structure fully integrated with the religious education programme. The school provides a safe and secure environment. Values are taught which help students adopt and use strategies for dealing with personal issues such as peer pressure, bullying, stereotyping, anger, sibling rivalry and jealousy.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The Department is run to an extremely high level of professionalism by the Head of Jewish Studies and his deputy. They, together with senior managers and governors are fully committed to the school's mission and Jewish ethos. They successfully promote a supportive and collaborative culture. In this they receive excellent support

from the Headteacher whose emphasis on distributive leadership gives the Department the confidence to succeed even further.

Responses to the parents' questionnaire show that the majority of parents are supportive of what the school has to offer them in terms of Jewish Education. Many would value an even more active part in the school's Jewish life

### **Grade: 1**

### **What the school should do to improve further**

1. Continue reviewing areas of the curriculum which the Department has prioritised.
2. Raise the level of teaching and learning from good to outstanding
3. Review further the progress of the teaching of *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew).
4. Continue the development of the Department's assessment tool to measure the impact of the Year 7-9 text study curriculum.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

The Department judges the effectiveness of the sixth form as outstanding and the inspectors concur with this view. Students are polite, courteous and have an excellent attitude to work. They demonstrate outstanding personal development. Many support and mentor younger students, for example often helping to prepare them for *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. In this way, many provide excellent role models for the younger members of the school. They help their local Jewish community very effectively. Inspectors witnessed charity meetings where sixth formers chaired meetings of younger students to decide on activities that would raise money for selected local and national charities. In addition to meeting the needs of students taking national examinations in Jewish Studies in which they achieve excellent results, the school now offers structured programmes for all 6<sup>th</sup> form students, which includes the opportunity to discuss and debate Jewish issues relating to the contemporary world and a text-based option.

### Grade 1

## Achievement and standards

Examination results for GCSE, A/S level and A level in both Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* are consistently high with the overwhelming majority of grades at A or A\* at GCSE. For example in 2008, 73% of pupils achieved A or A\* in their Jewish Studies GCSE and 92% in their *Ivrit* GCSE.

As a result of the exceptional grades attained year on year, a fast track class for the most able Year 10 students was created in September 2006. Consequently, GCSE Jewish Studies can now be taken in one year, followed by the A/S level Religious Studies paper at the end of Year 11. In 2007, a first cohort of 27 more able students sat the exam scoring 15 A\* grades and 12 A grades. These students sat the AS examination in June 2008 with 80% of the results at Grade A. The Department continues to analyse the results and evaluate the impact with the second cohort. In addition, there has been a significant increase in the number of students studying *Ivrit* for GCSE in the past year.

Expertise by members of the Jewish Studies Department in the use of electronic assessment has resulted in the creation of a tool to track pupil progress and achievement for Years 7-9. This system is now being introduced across the whole school. The Jewish Studies curriculum is predominantly values-based and students are assessed in the areas of knowledge, understanding and the ability to think reflectively. Results, which are compared to pupils' achievement in secular subjects, show that pupils of all ability are making good progress.

Assessment for the parallel text classes in Years 7-9 is in the developmental stage and the Department has appropriately identified this as a priority area of development.

Pupils are assessed for prior knowledge, aptitude and ability on entry and again within the first term. Able pupils who have not been to Jewish primary schools are fast-tracked in *Ivrit*. The choice of general Jewish studies or the parallel text study track is available to all pupils regardless of prior knowledge or ability.

## **Grade: 1**

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

The last Pikuach Report (2006) stated that "The school judges the personal development and well-being of students as outstanding and the inspectors agree." It also stated that "most students have very positive attitudes about the school and feel that they learn important Jewish values in their Jewish Studies." This remains the case and this judgement is further supported in the responses received by the current inspectors through the parental questionnaire.

The provision through the Department for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent especially as the bedrock of the school's approach to Jewish education is to instil within its students a deep appreciation and sense of Jewish values. The inspectors were highly impressed by students' attitudes to Jewish Studies which were very positive in all lessons seen. The behaviour of students both in class and around the school was exemplary. The inspectors also studied evaluations from students which revealed that the overwhelming majority of students enjoyed their Jewish Studies. This view was supported by discussions held with students chosen at random.

Students are taught about having healthy relationships, the dangers of smoking and drug abuse. Seminars on HIV, AIDS, Tay Sachs, Bone Marrow disorders and Mental Health issues are given to the Sixth form, working closely with external Jewish organisations such as Jewish Care and the Jewish Aids Trust.

In order to support students in adopting healthy lifestyle, the Department has developed strong links with a wide range of Jewish charities, as well as health and welfare organisations. *Streetwise* provide regular pastoral care in an informal way to the student body. The inspectors welcome the proposal to create a position of responsibility which would co-ordinate various aspects of health education throughout the school.

## **Grade 1**

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

The inspectors agree with the Jewish Studies Department's evaluation of its teaching provision.

The Department has set itself the task of raising the level of teaching and learning from good to outstanding. The leadership is well placed to achieve this objective. Learners are motivated and engage well in lessons. They acquire good subject knowledge and understanding. Learners develop very good communication skills and express their views with confidence. Teachers use a range of activities and strategies to meet learners' needs. Some outstanding lessons were observed in which teachers demonstrated excellent classroom management skills, outstanding use of ICT and where students were encouraged to use higher order thinking skills. In some lessons, a brisker pace, clearer learning objectives and higher expectations would have led to a higher level of student achievement.

The marking of students' work was an issue at the time of the last Pikuach inspection. There is clear evidence that this issue has been addressed and marking is now more consistent and informative. A standardised homework programme for years 7-11 has also been developed.

A thorough system of monitoring teaching and learning is in place. Senior Jewish Studies staff regularly observe colleagues teaching and the effective feedback they give enables teachers to develop new ideas and share good practice. Teachers meet frequently to discuss learning and this has led to a culture of continuous professional development. Teachers are sometimes recorded so that they can reflect on their practice and a DVD has been produced to demonstrate how teachers can develop pupils' thinking skills. This is now used throughout the school. As the Jewish Education department includes the teaching of Hebrew as a modern foreign language, targeted training in language acquisition skills for senior staff responsible for the monitoring of teaching and learning should be undertaken.

### Grade 2

### Curriculum and other activities

The aim of the Jewish Studies Department is to provide a curriculum that is relevant and meaningful to the life of its students. It achieves this aim through a formal programme of Jewish Studies. Informal enrichment opportunities for learners provided by the Department are excellent. Activities are wide ranging and include overseas programmes, educational seminars, charity and fundraising events, *Bar and Bat Mitzvah* celebrations and extra-curricular Jewish learning, all of which helps to bring learners and teachers together as a

community, learning with and from one another. Religious celebration and commemoration enhance personal and spiritual development and promote positive relationships among learners and teachers. The school provides access to two voluntary daily services, *Shacharit* (morning) and *Minchah* (afternoon). It does not provide compulsory daily collective worship.

The formal curriculum from Years 7 – 9 is based on thematic *Torah* studies from which students are taught to understand key issues and elements and how to relate them to contemporary life. For example, the Year 9 course takes a detailed look at the Ten Commandments, highlighting Judaism's view on certain issues and contrasting it with the views of other faiths and cultures. A parallel text study course, where subjects are studied in more depth and in Hebrew, is offered as an option to all students in Years 7-9.

In Years 10 and 11 all students study for their Jewish Studies GCSE. More able students combine this with a text option and have the opportunity to take this examination a year early and then go on to study for the Religious Studies 'AS' Level in Year 11.

As part of the continual review of the school's curriculum, the Department has completed a re-write of the Year 9 general Jewish Studies curriculum and are currently reviewing the Year 7 -9 text study, as well as the 6<sup>th</sup> form general Jewish Studies curriculum.

The work of a dynamic subject leader for *Ivrit*, together with the commitment of the *Ivrit* department, has resulted in a significant increase in the numbers of students taking the subject at GCSE and A level. The school has identified the further expansion of *Ivrit* as a GCSE and A level option. The inspectors recommend that a review of the past 5 years is necessary to inform this proposed expansion.

Through its provision of a varied curriculum, the school meets its mission statement by developing thoughtful, tolerant, responsible and caring young citizens who have a strong sense of identity with Judaism and Israel.

Through the development of its curriculum the school aims to help students understand how they can live in a cohesive community. There is good evidence to show that the school actively seeks to work with schools of a different denomination. The process for doing this is supported by the school's partnership with the Three Faiths Forum. This organisation provides a conduit through which students at JFS learn about other cultures and students of other faiths learn about Judaism through collaborative projects.

## **Grade 1**



## Care, guidance and support

JFS takes the issue of safety and security very seriously. It has effective links with the Community Security Trust (CST). The CST runs "Street Awareness" courses for all students once they have entered the school and advises on issues relating to anti-Semitism. The Streetwise organisation provides a friendly 'listening point.' Its informal nature means that students are willing to discuss and share sensitive personal issues such as occasional bullying and peer issues.

Drugline has run regular sessions for students on the issues and dangers surrounding drugs, substance abuse and addiction, one of the themes in a programme of Life Skills seminars for each year group.

During the inspection, the school held an evening for parents to give advice on how to deal with issues of e-safety.

In the formal curriculum, values are taught which help students adopt and use strategies for dealing with personal issues such as peer pressure, bullying, stereotyping, anger, sibling rivalry and jealousy. These strategies are re-enforced by an effective Citizenship programme delivered through the formal Jewish Studies classroom.

### Grade 1

## Leadership and management

The leadership of the Jewish Education Department is outstanding. The Head of Department, his deputy and their staff are fully committed to the school's mission and Jewish ethos and work together to ensure that all activities and relationships reflect Jewish principles and values. There is an effective strategic planning process and good ownership of the strategic aims by staff.

The Governing Body shows commitment to the school's ethos and the newly established Jewish Education Committee is working closely with the leadership on the strategic direction of the Department.

The impact of the Jewish Studies Department is not restricted to its own area. Whole school initiatives such as training for aspiring middle leaders and the development of thinking skills have strongly involved Jewish Studies staff.

The headteacher's personal involvement in the work of the Department is highly commendable. This ranges from the setting up of a series of lunchtime sessions so that he can spend time with *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* students to attending all meetings which involve strategic planning. His emphasis on distributive leadership gives the Department the confidence to succeed even further.

The Department is run to an extremely high level of professionalism which is recognised by the whole school. The development of leadership roles including middle leadership is having a very positive impact. For example, mentoring and coaching opportunities exist for staff with leadership responsibilities. Members of staff value the supportive and collaborative culture and there is effective teamwork at every level. Course planning is closely focused on ensuring the best fit between the curriculum and the needs of the learners.

The meeting schedule and lesson observation process facilitates professional discussion of teaching and learning. Teaching staff receive very good professional development.

Issues of recruitment and retention of high quality Jewish Studies and Ivrit teachers present a challenge to the entire Jewish day school network. The school is committed to recruiting teachers of the highest quality for both its secular and Jewish studies programmes and has strategies in place to achieve this. This Department has recently recruited a number of people from other professions, such as banking and the media, who wish to retrain as Jewish Studies teachers. They have been attracted to the school by its professional culture and training opportunities, including an excellent induction programme for new staff. The augers well for the future.

The inspectors were impressed by the Department's self-evaluation which was undertaken in an objective and reflective way.

The leadership and management of the school show that the Department has an outstanding capacity to improve even further and provides excellent value for money.

**Grade: 1**

The following annex should be completed and attached to this report:

1. The **Inspection Judgement Form** (Annex A)

The inspection report should be published as a single document.

We will not publish Annex A.

**FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY**  
**Inspection judgements**

**Annex A**

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 unsatisfactory.</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

**Overall effectiveness**

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

**Achievement and standards**

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

**Personal development and well-being**

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

**The quality of provision**

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

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

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

