



JFS

Inspection Report

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| Local authority | London Borough of Brent |
| Inspected under the auspices of | Pikuach |
| Inspection dates | 3 rd and 4 th December 2014 |
| Lead inspector | Dr Leon Bernstein |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 11-18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 2,069 |
| Appropriate authority | The Governing Body |
| Chair | Michael Glass |
| Headteacher | Jonathan Miller |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 th & 6 th May 2009 |
| School address | The Mall, Kenton, Harrow HA3 9TE |
| Telephone number | 020 8206 3100 |
| Email address | admin@jfs.brent.sch.uk |
| School website | www.jfs.brent.sch.uk |

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Introduction

Inspection Team

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| Dr Leon Bernstein | Lead inspector |
| Richard Felsenstein | Team inspector |

The inspection was carried out by two Inspectors. They visited 12 lessons, or parts of lessons, in addition to *Tefillah* (prayer) and Assembly. They had meetings with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of Jewish Studies, the Chair of Governors, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including student's written work, the curriculum of the Jewish Studies Department, both formal and informal, data on performance management, continued professional development and recording and tracking data. Joint lesson observations took place and the conclusions drawn by the Inspectors and managers/leaders were identical. The Senior Leadership Team, along with the Head of Jewish Studies, played a full and active part in this inspection, including attending team meetings and discussions with Inspectors.

Information about the school

- JFS is a Jewish secondary school which has provided education to the Jewish community in London since 1732. It is the largest Jewish comprehensive school in Europe, with 2,069 students on roll, including 577 in the sixth form. Most students come from outside the Local Authority to attend JFS.
- JFS is an orthodox school and the Foundation Body is the United Synagogue. Its students are drawn from a broad religious spectrum and a range of Jewish and non-Jewish primary schools. There are about 60 primary schools represented in the student body and approximately 30% of students starting JFS are from non-Jewish primary schools.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from service families is low compared to other schools.

The Inspectors looked in detail at the following:

- The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of Jewish education in the school.
- The quality of leadership, management and governance of Jewish education in the school.
- The achievement and progress over time of pupils in their Jewish education in the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning in delivering the Jewish curriculum of the school, including standards of behaviour and the quality of assessment of pupils' progress affecting it.
- The quality of the Jewish curriculum itself, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
- The quality of provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, including its impact on the whole school community.

Inspection judgements

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| Overall effectiveness | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish Education, including through partnerships | 1 |
| The achievement and progress over time of pupils in their Jewish education in the school. | 2 |
| The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish Education | 2 |
| The extent to which the Jewish Education curriculum meets students' needs | 1 |
| The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the duty to fulfill the daily act of collective worship | 1 |

Key findings

Overall Effectiveness

The quality of Jewish education provided in JFS is good because:

- Achievement is good and the systems of tracking and recording that are currently in place and are being developed enable the students to make good progress from their starting points.
- Students in Jewish Studies benefit from teaching that is at least good and some that is outstanding. This promotes very positive attitudes to Jewish learning and ensures that students' achievement in their Jewish education is at least good.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Diversity and difference are valued and celebrated and the school is very successful in meeting its aims. Pupils resolve conflicts intelligently and seek consensus while accepting the right of others to hold different opinions. Deliberate and effective action is taken to create a cohesive learning community through the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a very positive climate for learning and a respectful harmony among teachers and students.
- The curriculum is outstanding as it has been well planned, developed and thought through, and this enables the students to link Jewish learning and values to their everyday lives.
- Leadership and Management of Jewish Studies and the informal Jewish Studies curriculum are outstanding and ensure that the students make good progress and achieve well in their Jewish education.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- A greater majority of teaching could be outstanding
- Greater monitoring of Assessment for Learning in the classroom, especially in class exercise books, still requires further development.
- A number of students, particularly those seen in the Sixth Form, need to make more rapid and sustained progress across the Jewish curriculum, especially in lessons of non-examinable subjects.
- Not all students are involved in daily acts of collective worship.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the current system of tracking students' progress via the new tracking system.
- Ensure consistency across areas of marking.
- Improve strategies for Assessment for Learning in the classroom, so that all teachers and students can achieve a high level of monitoring of classroom work.
- Continue to address the issue of daily acts of worship for all students.
- Continue to work on raising the level of quality of teaching to outstanding for a greater number of staff. The inspectors feel that the school certainly has the capacity to do this.

Main Report

The achievement of students in their Jewish education is good because:

- Observations of lessons and other learning activities carried out during the inspection demonstrate a very positive impact on the overall learning and progress of students.
- Discussions with students, staff and senior leaders, together with a scrutiny of students' work, show that students acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly and securely in the range of Jewish subjects.
- The proportion of students making very good progress from different starting points is high. In the 2014 public examination results for Religious Studies, for example:
 - 29.6% of students achieved A* or A at A Level.
 - 66.7% of students achieved A*- B at A Level.
 - 68.6% of students achieved A* or A at GCSE.
 - 86.5% of students achieved A* - B at GCSE.
 - 78% of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) achieved their target grade or higher in the public examinations
- The Jewish Studies Department has a robust tracking system of mock examinations matched against predicted results, including students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Moderation sessions track marking schemes from the Examination Board (AQA) and students are then invited to give their

thoughts on their own performance at mocks, and are challenged to improve their marks. This is achieved through strategies and interventions set up by the Department to improve grades. This impacted extremely well on the overall grade of students, with a significant number (78%) exceeding their target grades as a result of these interventions.

- This is a very impressive set of public examination results, and Inspectors feel that it is a direct result of the Jewish Studies Department's constant drive towards an upward trend in academic progress and achievement.
- The Jewish Studies Department has good strategies for intervention to ensure inclusion of all students. Differentiated tasks are embedded into curriculum materials developed in-house, among them Jewish Studies booklets, catering for all students. These have been implemented to enhance students' skills and to ensure all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, have access to all levels of material, at every stage of their learning in order to improve achievement.
- There is specific training for staff to meet the needs of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, led by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and other staff who are able to provide material for colleagues to monitor students' achievement. Every member of the Jewish Studies Department is apprised of details of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and staff are monitored to ensure appropriate strategies have been employed to cater for all groups of learners.
- The Jewish Studies Department measures baseline data in terms of skills and knowledge on entry to the school and tracks the progress and achievement of every student. Target levels for each subject in Jewish Studies are appropriately set and students can monitor their progress through a 'Pupil Progress Tracker'. This enables students to keep track of their achievement over the full range of subjects. The Department has created its own in-house tracker as an interim measure before switching to a new tracking system in February 2015.
- Students read Hebrew to inspectors. Readers ranged from those who were very hesitant and inaccurate to others who were accurate and fluent. Hebrew reading skills are developed in *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) lessons and are similarly strengthened through the Jewish Studies curriculum where, for example, students are taught to navigate their way through the *Chumash* and other texts.
- After interviewing Sixth Form students and observing lessons, inspectors felt that a greater number of students could be achieving more over time, given their starting points. Motivating students to achieve, for example, in non-examinable subjects in the Jewish Studies curriculum, is a challenge which the Department is addressing
- Throughout all years of the school, some areas of monitoring and marking are outstanding, particularly in the students' homework books. However, inspectors feel that the class exercise books lack this same rigour and this requires some

fine-tuning of the monitoring of understanding and progress in the classroom. Ongoing achievement in the classroom in general could be enhanced with effective Assessment for Learning strategies.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish Education is good because:

- Students make good progress and teachers have high expectations of them. The lessons seen by inspectors reflect good planning in terms of selection, sequencing and grading of material appropriate to students' needs. Concepts are taught that deepen students' Jewish knowledge and understanding, and enable them to develop a range of skills across the Jewish curriculum. Such skills include comprehension and analysis.
- Teachers listen carefully to students' contributions and skilfully question them in order to reshape tasks and explanations and improve learning. There is a very positive and healthy climate for learning and students are in the main interested and engaged.
- In the majority of Jewish Studies lessons, behaviour is excellent and teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge, as well as effective classroom management skills.
- Teachers assess students' learning and progress regularly and accurately, particularly in their homework. Inspectors would like to see this rigour in monitoring reflected also in class exercise books, in order for the teacher to track progress over time more methodically.
- In many cases, teachers ensure that students know how well they have done through a very effective 'Pupil Progress Tracker', an innovative and creative method of empowering the students to monitor their own work.
- Where teaching is good to outstanding, the pace is fast, expectations are high and all students are engaged and challenged in a variety of ways. For example, a Year 8 lesson included all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, where students were set the age-appropriate task of dealing with a difficult dilemma regarding '*Shlichut*' (sending a messenger to fulfil a particular task).
- In a Year 9 lesson, students learning about *Lashon Hara* (speaking negatively about someone) had to match various categories of *Lashon Hara* to real case studies that had appeared in the press. The students were able to do this and demonstrated a very good understanding of the concepts involved.
- In a number of lessons, pace is an issue and students could have been moved on faster. This is sometimes the result of the pace being too slow, which leads to some students going off task. On other occasions, the pace is rushed, giving insufficient time for students to complete activities before they are moved on.

- It was also felt in some lessons that the emphasis was on simple question-and-answer work. In these lessons students could have been afforded greater opportunities to ask challenging questions in order to stimulate greater debate, especially amongst the higher achievers.
- Teacher-pupil relationships are very good: Inspectors noted a blend of a serious approach to the work in class with appropriate use of humour.
- When inspectors interviewed Jewish Studies staff, and those outside the Department who were involved in areas of the Jewish Studies curriculum (e.g. school trips) they were impressed with the passion and enthusiasm they display and for their commitment to both the students and the school.

The extent to which the Jewish Education curriculum meets students' needs is outstanding because:

- The school's Jewish curriculum, both formal and informal, provides memorable and rich opportunities for high-quality learning and wider personal development and well-being
- Highly tailored programmes for a wide range of pupils with different needs are in place and continue to be actively developed.
- In interviews with students, including those in the Sixth Form, comments included: "The Jewish Studies Department is open to opinion and comment." A common theme amongst students was that there is "No pressure to fit any particular mould."
- The Jewish Informal Education Programme (JiEP) at JFS is outstanding. Students value it very much. A plethora of carefully structured programmes offer all students every opportunity to explore a range of diverse initiatives provided by the Department. This includes JWOL (Jewish Way of Life), 'Lunch 'N' Learn', attracting approximately a hundred students each week, and trips abroad, including Israel and Poland. One student interviewed remarked, that her recent Poland trip was "...an inspiring educational experience."
- The challenge for staff lies in continuing to develop a Sixth Form programme which stimulates and engages the diverse range of students. For example, a new Sixth Form programme (NEXT) within the recreation options, which began in September 2014 in conjunction with *Aish* in Hendon, has made a very positive impact on students. When interviewed by inspectors, students' responses included positive comments such as "Incredible!" "Inspirational!" "Things you don't think you need but are useful."

The quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because:

- High quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural education permeates both the formal and informal Jewish Studies provision through the school. Students think deeply about their own and others' experiences and try to relate them to a clear set of personal and Jewish values.
- Inspectors found students to be courteous towards teachers, themselves and visitors to the school. For example, inspectors observed Year 9 students presenting different aspects of Judaism to Year 4 pupils from a neighbouring non-Jewish school. Inspectors spoke to Year 9 group leaders who were involved in teaching about *Kashrut*. All of the JFS students remarked how much they had enjoyed the event and how receptive the Year 4 pupils had been to what was being taught. Inspectors found the Year 9 JFS pupils to be impressive, knowledgeable, engaged and articulate. This is a termly event which enhances students' leadership skills and enables them to take on an ambassadorial role.
- Programmes such as Citizenship and Health Education emphasise to students the importance of belonging to a wider local and national British society, as well as the international community, for example, the Electoral System and Resolving Conflict Fairly, and the need to look after themselves. Students are also encouraged to consider a deep understanding of the needs of others – for example, through an involvement in over twenty *Tzedakah* (charity) initiatives, both Jewish and non-Jewish – and have a wealth of opportunities which are successful in stimulating students academically and spiritually.
- In lessons, students work very well in groups, allowing each other to have their say and displaying good learning strategies. They listen attentively and explore ideas with each other and with teachers. In interviews with students, positive comments were made regarding pupil-teacher relationships, with one student expressing how happy he is in Jewish Studies because the "...teachers explain work clearly", while another concluded that "... teachers make the lessons really interesting, especially revision lessons."
- The school makes every effort to ensure that as many students as possible engage in daily acts of collective worship, but there is still further work to be done.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish Education is outstanding because:

- Key leaders and managers, including Governors, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition in maintaining and improving the quality of the Jewish education that the school provides.
- Teaching is good and improving strongly as a result of accurate monitoring,

effective performance management and professional development, which are closely matched to the needs of staff. Indeed, the Head of Jewish Studies oversees a very good cycle of Performance Management. Details of meetings are discussed, as are target setting and professional development. Evidence, including email correspondence, is added to robust monitoring systems throughout the year, and this includes careful monitoring of lesson observations.

- A clear direction has been set by the Head of Jewish Studies, alongside the Informal Jewish Studies team, leading to very good developments in both formal and informal Jewish education.
- Inspectors are very impressed with the way in which the Head of Jewish Studies has an overarching understanding of the needs of the diverse range of students, and steers the Department skilfully in constantly reviewing policies and methodologies to suit their needs.
- The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Jewish Studies all work closely together as a cohesive team to ensure a positive impact on the overall life, ethos and Jewish education of every student. This is highly commendable as they work tirelessly in pursuit of providing an overall outstanding Jewish Studies provision for every student.

Views of Parents and Carers:

- Inspectors met with parents and received written correspondence from parents via email. The vast majority of parents interviewed were very happy with the school, its provision for Jewish Education and with the staff of the Jewish Studies Department.
- Parents commented on the professionalism of the staff and their ability to get the best out of the students. A common view was that the students' appreciation and enjoyment of Jewish Studies was because it was "...not thrust in your face" but as a result of a "...respectful harmony" that permeates the school.
- A small minority of parents who were very happy with the school commented that they would like to see *Tefillah* (prayer) made compulsory, although qualified this by adding that they realised the difficulty of such a task.
- Other comments included one parent who stated that JFS was a school that was "...big enough to cope, small enough to care" while another parent concluded that JFS, with its abundance of opportunities, was "The school that never sleeps!"

Glossary

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. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is 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. Pikuach inspectors may make further visits until it improves. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

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| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and Headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |

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| Overall effectiveness: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |