



Lubavitch Boys' Primary School

Inspection Report

Local authority	London Borough of Hackney
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach
Inspection dates	6 th & 7 th of May 2014
Lead inspector	Rabbi R Atlas

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Male
Number on roll	108
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	Hindy Lew
Headteacher	Frieda Sudak – Executive Head; Rabbi Shmuel Karasik – Head of School
Date of previous school inspection	n/a
School address	135 Clapton Common London E5 9AE
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Introduction

Inspection Team

Rabbi Reuven Atlas

Lead inspector

Dr Leon Bernstein

Team inspector

This first inspection was carried out with 4 days' notice after a long Bank Holiday weekend. The inspectors visited 11 lessons taught by 8 teachers, with a particular focus on Jewish Studies and the teaching of Hebrew. The inspectors listened to children read in Hebrew, translate familiar Chumash and apply skills to unseen text. The inspectors questioned children on Torah General Knowledge, and spoke with children, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors looked at school planning and policies, school self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching, the notes of advisers and the questionnaire responses of parents.

Information about the school

- Lubavitch Boys' Primary School is a one-form entry Jewish Voluntary Aided Primary school serving children of the orthodox Jewish community. Children attend from the local area and from a range of London suburbs. Boys graduate to join *Lubavitch* secondary provision, with some going to Hasmonian High School.
- This school has been established for over fifty years, but less than two years ago joined the federation of governance shared by two other local *Lubavitch* schools and became voluntary-aided. Thus this is the school's first Pikuach Inspection following the Ofsted Inspection last January.
- The mornings are devoted to Jewish study and worship forums, with most sessions timetabled in the morning, and a last lesson at the end of the day for some classes.
- Provision for Reception is provided off-site at Lubavitch House, Stamford Hill, London N16 and direct responsibility for its leadership lies with the Executive Head and the Head of EYFS. The Nursery is separately constituted.
- The recently refurbished building is bright and well suited to the numbers of children and the demography of classes, including areas for group enrichment. The same is true for the large Reception facility.
- The majority of children have English as a first language. English is the language of instruction.

- The school experiences little-to-no mobility of children in the most latter years, but suffered a loss of children prior to the reforming of its constitution. Whilst there are eight boys in Year 6, there is full form entry in Year 1, to be replicated in September 2014. The numbers of the rest of Key Stage 1 also reflects a growing intake.
- The proportion of children eligible for the pupil premium is significantly low compared to the national average.
- The proportion of children with special educational needs supported throughout the school is approximately ten percent.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
The achievement of children in their Jewish education	2
The quality of teaching and assessment	2
The extent to which the Jewish Education curriculum meets children's 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
The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish Education, including through partnerships	1

Key findings:

The quality of Jewish education is good because:

- Most teaching is good, with some outstanding features observed
- Assessment, tracking and assessment-led intervention are of high quality – innovative, highly effective and indicative of progress over time.
- Strategies to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development – both curricular and extra-curricular – abound, and very good outcomes were observed.
- The Executive Head, Head of School and Governors pursue well-researched and planned strategies for improvement and development, and implement them universally and successfully.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Not all lessons were planned with an understanding of how children best progress, with staged activities and realistic targets.
- Strategies are required in some classes to engage more children in learning for more of the time – including planning to successfully field 'questions and answers' whilst ensuring the pace of the lesson.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Support, train and develop all teachers to adopt the developing excellent practice observed
- Further advance the development of the middle management team
- To further apply developing assessment strategies across all areas of the curriculum, including informative marking
- To develop the position of a trained Special Needs Coordinator who would then develop the coordination of provision for those children who have learning difficulties.

Main Report

The achievement of children in their Jewish education is good for the large majority of children

All children's progress is monitored carefully via the rigorous tracking system implemented by the school.

Children with special needs in *Kodesh* are closely observed, with the assistance of the *Menahel* who arrived at the school six months ago. All *Rebbes* report to him and he ensures monthly notes are handed to him to monitor the progress of the boys academically and in terms of behavioural development. Through a variety of creative innovations, including imaginative use of Information Technology (IT), accurate records are drafted and disseminated to relevant staff so that each boy's needs can be addressed. The Head of School has constant access to the tracking and liaises with the boys' *Rebbes* to check that effective intervention is employed.

Staff expressed a desire for more in-class help with children who have learning difficulties and the school is open to the idea of addressing this, budget permitting. The *Rebbe* in charge of Special Educational Needs in *Kodesh* welcomes the opportunity for further training and is also keen to expand current provision by recruiting an assistant to help specifically with Hebrew grammar skills. The school is happy to consider this for the future, again if funding allows it.

Some boys are referred to external professionals for emotional and behavioural support. The school meets the challenge well of including these boys, but in one class their inclusion was seen to hinder progress.

Reading was secure. Tracking and appropriate intervention were observed in Reception, and the school emphasises reading practice and micro-assessment throughout all years. Children's progress over time is clearly noted. High outcomes were evident across a range of children with differing abilities.

Children's confidence with *Chumash* text was apparent. A group of Year 2 boys could identify prefixes in unseen text. (A boy correctly assessed that a particular leading *mem* did not mean 'from' but was actually part of the *shoresh*). Year 6 boys were adept at isolating the *shoresh* and applying suffixes. The boys are less competent with 'facts' of *Chumash*.

Script writing from Year 2 onwards was of the highest standard.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good:

Children were observed to take responsibility for their own learning (a whole group of Reception children were observed to be reading fluently without direct supervision at their table). This involvement in learning was often generated by advanced, imaginative and interactive use of IT, probing worksheets and probing oral 'questions and answers'. Children were usually observed to enjoy their lessons – confirmed by informal conversations with several children.

Especially in *Mishna* and *Gemara*, where the lesson lends itself to boys asking many questions, not all Rebbes were adept in fielding one boy's question while keeping other boys usefully engaged. Some *Rebbes* found it hard to move on from these question sessions and maintain a suitable pace.

The school's assessment regime, whilst not yet complete, is highly effective. The understanding of tracking progress over time has been built into easy-to-interpret spreadsheets in several curriculum areas and this is a 'beacon' feature of the school. Information is used to directly respond to an individual child's learning with focused intervention and improvements noted over time.

The extent to which the Jewish Education curriculum meets children's needs is outstanding:

The curriculum encompasses skills, knowledge, progression and personal development.

The Reading curriculum ensures stage-upon-stage progression and targeted practice throughout the school. Individual children are afforded bespoke reading sheets in their particular areas of inaccuracy. The impact was verified when hearing an academic range of children read.

The *Chumash* curriculum promotes a skills-based approach, with emphasis on word banks and grammar awareness. This permeated lessons observed, and its effectiveness validated by orally examining an academic range of children in their decoding unseen text.

Mishna and *Gemara* also promote skills. Children are encouraged to interpret the textual clues to orientate themselves in the text, deciding whether there is an 'argument' or 'question' in the particular section.

The unique *Davening* curriculum prioritises the *Lubavitch Chassidic* emphasis on *Chayos* – lively and enthused prayer – which is engendered by learning selected translation and adding stories. Lively tunes add to the experience.

In many lessons, children have a 'Creative Writing' notebook in which they are encouraged to write lesson summations in their own words. This is a recent strategy introduced in the wake of the Ofsted Inspection in January 2014, encouraging creative English writing whilst asking the children to respond to the teaching. Marking of these notebooks was informative and on some occasions displayed warm relationships between children and teachers. In Key Stage 1, children copy-write, thus strengthening their handwriting skills in both Hebrew and English script. Especially lower down in the school, Hebrew script writing was observed to be accurate and beautifully presented.

There is a plethora of informal education strategies. Swipe cards promote General Knowledge as part of an internet-enabled worldwide *Lubavitch* initiative. Schemes for extra-learning are periodic and effectively refreshed creating much excitement and assuring one hundred percent participation.

The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including the duty to fulfill the daily act of collective worship, is outstanding:

Forty-five minute daily *Tefilla* sessions take place in each class at the beginning of the day. Some classes are combined to enhance the *Chayos* – lively atmosphere – of the sessions, which are also enhanced by tunes, pace and volume. Some children were observed to be disengaged, perhaps due to the length of the sessions. Most of *Shacharit* is included and this requires that some sections are said too quickly for some of the children. However, this strategy was justified by the leadership. *Tefilla* is assessed in terms of speed and accuracy, with some children having underlined those words in their Siddur that they were pronouncing inaccurately.

The *Chayos* approach has successful outcomes. The following is a quote from a member of an outlying community where Year 5 recently spent a *Shabbaton*:

They were joyous in their davening, engaged with the tefillot and fully participative in collective tefillot where they sung with complete gusto - putting the adults to shame! It is sometimes very difficult to measure spirituality - but here it was only too evident.

Bentching in the Key Stage 1 session was outstanding, with full commitment. In Key Stage 2 there was general enthusiasm, but some boys were disengaged.

Snippets of ethical lessons permeate the day, even in the dining room during lunch.

Boys spoke respectfully to each other, to their teachers and to the inspectors.

Social and moral development were underscored by the *Rebbe* who supervises lunchtime sports activities, where there is an emphasis on supporting a weaker player and the eradication of teasing.

The boys engage with the community by opening their school to the public on occasions such as *Chanukah*. The school organises a *Shabbaton* in an outlying Jewish community, with an emphasis on contributing to that community. *Lubavitch* cultural responsibility for the welfare of every person permeates the school, and a continuous-running sub-titled video display of the late *Lubavitcher Rebbe* interacting with all different types of people underscores this approach.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish Education, including through partnerships, is outstanding:

Whilst there remain areas for improvement in the quality of teaching and children's achievement, the high quality of the new and developing assessment strategies evidence strong and effective leadership. The universal take-up amongst the most senior members of staff further attest to adept management.

Teaching and children's achievement, is at least 'good' overall and certainly much improved over a short recent period of time. There are indicators that the management is in place for still further improvement. Some classes were indeed already outstanding.

The Head of School, the Executive Head, the *Menahel*, the Head of Early Years (EYFS) and the Governing body are aware of each other's roles and share in the process of planning long term goals and ensuring delivery in the corridors and classroom.

The Head of School displays a keen awareness of the holes which need plugging, has engaged in observation of other schools and has brought some training to the school – an area which could be further pursued. His observed calm handling of behavioural issues, and the perceived respect with which he is regarded by staff, point to outstanding management. Written staff briefings are prepared daily.

The Head of School is stretched by a large range of responsibilities. Governors are aware and actively pursuing the recruitment of middle managers.

Partnerships with *Lubavitch* schools worldwide assist curriculum development and extra-curricular activities. Two school winners in an internationally-run *Torah* competition will be offered the opportunity to attend a final in New York.

There was little evidence of partnerships with parents. A weekly newsletter is well formatted and informative and includes a timeous update as to what the children have been learning that week.

The Head of School engages in performance management, and the Governors state the same intention with regards to the Head Teacher. This area is in an early stage of development and will need expansion. In discussions, the Head of School displayed a keen sense of self-evaluation and proposed development plans further indicate the same.

The Head of EYFS displayed effective assessment strategies and intervention for Reception children learning to read and showed how children are making good progress. She showcased an ongoing project of 'loving a fellow Jew' with direct relevance to classroom dynamics.

The Executive Head and the two Governors interviewed displayed similar acute awareness of the reality of the school's position and keen imagination in progressing the school further. All parties mentioned their collaborative modus operandi.

The leadership explained the past loss of confidence in the school, with financial restrictions dictating a loss of resources. They meet the challenges of the small and potentially demotivated classes which remain in the school from that era.

Views of parents and carers:

The parent survey indicated that the vast majority agree, or strongly agree, with the positive descriptors of the school. A very small minority picked up on the theme of the school not encouraging families to play an active part in the school's Jewish life.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
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

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.
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.