

Lubavitch Girls Primary School

Inspection report

LEA: Hackney
Inspection dates: 12 - 13 September 2006
Inspected under the auspices of: Pikuach

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	107 – 115 Stamford Hill
School category	Voluntary Aided		London N16 5RP
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		
Gender of pupils	Girls	Telephone number	020 8800 0022
Number on roll	143	Fax number	020 8809 7324
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs H Lew
Date of previous inspection	N/A	Headteacher	Mrs F Sudak

© Pikuach copyright 2006

Website: 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

Lubavitch Girls Primary School is a well-established one-form entry voluntary aided, orthodox Jewish school for girls aged 3-11. The roll is 143 and includes a small nursery attached to the school. There is also a larger independently run nursery on the premises. The school is housed in the Lubavitch Foundation headquarters building situated in the London Borough of Hackney. It caters mainly for girls of the strictly orthodox Jewish community affiliated to the Lubavitch Chassidic movement. Approximately 20% of the pupils are from families affiliated to other Jewish communities. Most pupils live in the Stamford Hill, Stoke Newington and Tottenham areas of the boroughs of Hackney and Haringey although some come from much further afield including Bournemouth and Luton. For the first forty-five years of its life the school operated independently but in April 2004, it achieved voluntary aided status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of its provision for Jewish education

The Jewish Studies department of the Lubavitch Girls Primary School is very good overall with some outstanding features. It knows itself well and takes effective action which improves the achievement and standards of the pupils.

The needs of the overwhelming majority of the pupils are met, resulting in contented and healthy pupils working in a safe and secure environment. The well-being of pupils is of primary consideration and bears out the school's mission statement, based on the directives and teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi M M Schneerson, which aims to provide a Torah-true education in an atmosphere of love, warmth and respect.

Among the school's strengths are its leadership and management. The headteacher and senior management team have a very clear vision of the school and understand what is needed to continue to build on its strengths and move the school forward. A significant feature that contributes to the school's success is the unity that exists between the Jewish Studies and secular staff. They work together to create a whole school community that reinforces the unique, religious ethos of the Lubavitch Chassidic movement. Another major strength is the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and the excellent manner in which they conduct themselves during davening, in the classrooms, and around the school admirably reflects its Jewish values and ethos. This permeates every aspect of the school day.

Teachers and pupils relate very well to each other. The teachers are well-supported by the senior management team and other members of staff, and they in turn are highly dedicated and motivated. The school places great emphasis on pupils gaining the skills to read and write Hebrew and these are well-developed and built upon as pupils advance through the school.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

The inspectors found no weaknesses and they agree with the school's view regarding those areas identified for further development. They are:

- to improve assessment procedures by producing level descriptors in line with the National Curriculum
- to improve the quality of resources by providing more computer software

Achievement and standards

The standards achieved by most pupils including those with learning difficulties are very good. This was confirmed by observation of lessons and testing of a representative sample of pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6. The school places great emphasis on Hebrew reading and writing so that by Key Stage 2, most pupils read with outstanding accuracy and fluency and demonstrate well-developed writing skills in cursive script.

Most pupils meet challenging targets. This was particularly evident in the *Chumash* lessons observed where pupils learn Hebrew grammar as an aid to developing their skills of translation and comprehension of the texts. Pupils in Key Stage 2 commence the study of *Rashi* script. This enables them to read, translate and comprehend selected commentaries of *Rashi* and impressive standards are achieved in these skills with excellent progress noted in Year 6.

Jewish general knowledge, *Loshon Hakodesh* (Hebrew language) and *dinim* (Jewish laws and customs) are taught consistently throughout the school and high standards are achieved. This is largely due to the constant reinforcement in all classes across the school.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

The school judges the personal development and well-being of pupils as outstanding and inspectors agree. A range of activities is provided for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Davening takes place every morning in each classroom and the excellent manner in which this activity is conducted is a major strength of the school, and reinforces the school's religious ethos. Teachers give pupils encouragement and assistance and this is reflected in their appropriate conduct thus demonstrating their understanding and appreciation of the significance of prayer.

The school encourages pupils to adopt safe practices and lead a healthy lifestyle. The school is committed to healthy eating and provides a range of appropriate choices at lunchtime.

Behaviour is very good both inside and outside the classroom and numerous examples were observed of *derech eretz* (respect) being extended towards the inspectors. The school has a very calm environment and everyone moves around the building in a quiet and orderly manner. Pupils contribute to the Jewish and wider communities in a variety of ways, for example by collecting money for *tzedakah* (charity) which benefits both Jewish and non-Jewish causes. Pupils have produced Rosh Hashanah cards with appropriate greetings written in Russian for Jewish families in the Ukraine. There are regular visits to local homes for the aged where pupils befriend and entertain the residents.

Visits are organised that provide for the pupils' cultural development. These include visits to museums and public institutions such as Buckingham Palace.

From discussions with the pupils, it is evident that they feel safe and secure at the school and enjoy their Jewish Studies lessons.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good and some examples of outstanding teaching were observed. No lessons were less than satisfactory. Teachers conduct themselves in a professional manner and they are excellent role models. They plan their lessons well taking account of pupils' varying needs. All teachers conduct regular assessment and maintain accurate records which are used to inform future planning. They have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and employ a variety of incentives to achieve this objective. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Teachers are deeply committed to the school and their pupils. The displays in the classrooms and around the school create an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning. The outcome of their dedication and hard work is a proactive and effective team. Both *Limmudei Kodesh* and *Limmudei Chol* teachers work in harmony as one team striving to achieve shared goals. This unity is reflected in the good examples that exist of an integrated curriculum.

All classrooms are provided with inter-active white boards and these are used effectively. Other resources include a range of age-appropriate *seforim* (sacred texts), and workbooks. The school intends to develop its current range of software.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The quality and range of the curriculum is very good. It is suitably broad and balanced and admirably reflects the religious ethos and values of the school. Approximately 50% of the school day is devoted to *Limmudei Kodesh*, which reflects the school's aim to provide quality and depth in religious education.

There is very good integration with the secular curriculum. The school is successful in promoting a love and knowledge of Judaism, and combines with the secular curriculum, to promote the intellectual, social and spiritual growth of the pupils. Examples of integration of the curriculum include art, design and technology, science and creative writing.

The school places great emphasis on teaching the skills of reading and writing and this is the major focus at Key Stage 1. This provides a solid foundation on which to build, so that pupils gain confidence and pleasure from more advanced studies as they progress through the school.

Extra-curricular activities enhance the formal curriculum. For example, a weekly Shabbaton is organised in the Lubavitch shul and all pupils are encouraged to attend.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The school is successful in promoting the pupils' health and safety. Clear policies on Anti-Bullying, Health and Safety and Child Protection are in place. There is a strong family atmosphere that permeates the school and all staff show genuine kindness and consideration towards pupils and each other.

Discussions with pupils reveal that they feel very safe and secure and know to whom they should turn in the event of a problem. Where pupils have concerns regarding their well-being, they are encouraged to write a letter to the headteacher and the matter receives appropriate attention.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding and underpins the school's many strengths. The headteacher provides strong leadership and she is ably supported by the effective senior management team.

The school was granted voluntary-aided status in April 2004 under the Hackney Learning Trust as a result of the efforts of the headteacher and staff. This achievement was followed by a period of instability under new leadership. With the re-appointment of the former headteacher, the weaknesses were addressed and since then, the school has gone forward and flourished.

The headteacher is highly regarded by governors, staff, parents and pupils. She is actively involved in directing and developing curricular policies and practices of the *Limmudei Kodesh* department. In-service training (Inset) is provided for *Kodesh* teachers and they also participate in whole school inset when appropriate. Teachers appreciate the support they receive from the senior management team and other members of staff. Each teacher has responsibility for one area of the curriculum. There is a generous complement of support staff and they are deployed effectively enabling pupils to achieve high standards.

The school has effective assessment procedures in place and is now planning to develop this further with the introduction of level descriptors in line with those in the National Curriculum.

Grade: 1

