

Mathilda Marks-Kennedy Primary School

Inspection report

Local authority	Barnet
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2013
Lead inspector	Sandra Teacher

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	Mixed
Number on roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Millett
Headteacher	Jillian Dunstan
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sandra Teacher Lead Inspector

Sharon Raphael Team Inspector

- This inspection was carried out by two inspectors, who visited eight lessons or parts of lessons including *tefillot* (prayers). This included observing all Jewish Studies' teachers and one *Ivrit* teacher across five year groups, plus one reading lesson and one *Ivrit* lesson. Inspectors observed *tefillah* in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors held meetings or telephone conversations with the Patron, the Principal, governors, staff and groups of children. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies curriculum, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation document and the school's improvement plan. They also heard pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the Headteacher, Head of Jewish Studies, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator, the Head of Foundation Stage, groups of class teachers and teaching assistants, the Principal of the school, members of the governing body, the Patron of the school, Jewish Studies teachers, the *Ivrit* coordinator and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers in a group discussion and through the online *Pikuach* questionnaire.
- This inspection took place at the end of the five year cycle for Section 48 inspections using the latest revised version of the *Pikuach* framework. The school requested that *Ivrit* should not be included in the inspection but the inspectors looked at the contribution that *Ivrit* makes to the quality of Jewish Studies Education.
- The inspection team looked in detail at the following:
 - The progress pupils make in Jewish Studies
 - The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish Studies
 - Leadership and management of Jewish Studies including the quality of the curriculum
 - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship (*Tefillah*).

Information about this school

- Mathilda Marks-Kennedy is a one-form entry Jewish Voluntary Aided Primary School with a Nursery. The school services the Mill Hill and Edgware Jewish communities in the London Borough of Barnet.
- The school's extended hours provision includes 12% of time devoted to Jewish Studies. *Ivrit* is taught as part of the curriculum as the modern foreign language.
- The school is heavily oversubscribed and, for September 2013, there were 89 applications for 26 places.
- The vast majority of the pupils live less than two miles from the school and are involved with the local community. This change since the previous inspection means that the school no longer has a large percentage of Israeli pupils.
- There is little mobility within the school, with most pupils starting in Nursery and remaining until they leave at Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is low compared to schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or at school action plus is above the national average.
- The listed school building is in serious need of renovation and expansion. The site is extremely limited with space at a premium. Some of the classrooms are small making it difficult to have specialist areas for children and group work.
- The current Headteacher has been in post since September 2008. The Deputy Headteacher has been in post since April 2009. The current Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in April 2008.
- The date of the school's last Ofsted Inspection was 28/06/2007.
- The date of the school's last Pikuach Inspection was 03/12/2007.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
The achievement of pupils in their Jewish education	2
The quality of teaching and assessment	2
The extent to which the Jewish Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
The extent of pupils' 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

Overall effectiveness: the quality of Jewish Studies provided at Mathilda Marks-Kennedy (MMK) is outstanding because:

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because diversity and difference are valued and celebrated, and the school is very successful at meeting its aims.
- The quality of *tefillah* is outstanding and enables the pupils to be prepared for involvement in community prayer.
- The drive, commitment and inspiration of the Headteacher, Governors, Principal and Head of Jewish Studies ensures that children make good progress and achieve well in their Jewish studies.
- The curriculum has been well thought through and enables the children to link Jewish learning to their everyday lives.
- The teaching is good and relationships are excellent, modelling on its Jewish ethos and values.
- Partnerships with parents are outstanding, and the family atmosphere within the school strengthens the pupils' education.
- Pupils have excellent Jewish educational experiences so that they are well equipped for the next stage of their Jewish life and education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to work to raise standards by:
 - implementing the school's new assessment system in Jewish Studies so that progress can be tracked throughout a pupil's time at the school in all the curriculum areas
 - ensuring that feedback and marking, always helps pupils to know the next steps they need to take to move their learning on, and how to improve their work
 - organising training for the Governing Body to enhance their knowledge of their role as leaders in a Jewish school.

Achievement of pupils in their Jewish studies is good

Achievement and progress is good for all pupils. Those with special educational needs and those who do not speak English at home make the same good progress as their peers and achieve well in their Jewish education.

The Early Years Foundation Stage gives the children a good start to their Jewish education and they make good progress in all the areas of learning. They are beginning to learn about the stories contained in the weekly *parashah*, and these are linked to *middot*.

The pupils know about *Shabbat*, the *chaggim*, and there are monthly *Rosh Chodesh* celebrations, but the greatest strength is in their sense of identity, which celebrates diversity both within Judaism and between different cultures. Music and song reinforce the *tefillot* they experience first thing in the morning but, rather than being part of a standard service, the pupils sing the songs for pure enjoyment. Key pupils lead the service and recite the *havdalah* blessings.

Pupils make particularly good progress in reading Hebrew. Recognising this as an area for development, the school has put in place a system whereby every pupil is taken out individually to read. Standards are slowly rising in reading, but Hebrew writing skills are not measured as part of the Jewish Studies curriculum. Learning *Ivrit* also contributes to pupils' knowledge base and even the children in Reception and Nursery are easily able to understand directions in Hebrew given by the teacher and to respond in Hebrew. Throughout the school, there are signs in both languages to reinforce the reading recognition and the acquisition of key vocabulary.

The school is undertaking pioneering work in setting up an assessment system so that progress can be clearly tracked and measured. The baseline, setting out pupils' different starting points and covering all aspects of Jewish studies, is not yet complete, so assessment continues to be an area for development, although all staff know the children really well, and know what they need to focus on to move their learning forward.

The integration between Jewish education and daily learning is an area the school is working hard to develop. Some very good examples were seen during the inspection visit, such as making acrostic poems about *Succot*, and the *bracha* tree in Reception, where the children

have to choose the correct bracha – to match the fruit they are eating. There are strong links with the literacy curriculum, art and music and design technology. There is clear evidence that the pupils' subject knowledge builds effectively on prior learning. So, for example, in a *chumash* lesson, the pupils had to identify and work out for themselves the Hebrew words from familiar roots.

Pupils' comments from their end of term *siyyum* reflects their learning of sections from the Book of *Bereshit*. One pupil wrote: 'I have learnt and achieved many things, such as translating, grammar and *Rashi*.'

School leaders recognised that general knowledge needed further input, so have introduced a levelled General Knowledge Curriculum with challenge booklets for the pupils to improve their knowledge in all aspects of the curriculum. This has been greatly enjoyed, with a high level of participation.

The quality of teaching and assessment of Jewish studies is good

The quality of teaching and learning overall is good because all adults know the children well and there are excellent relationships. Parents are involved in their children's learning with the Family *Parashah* Scheme in Year Six and the weekly Family *Parashah* Sheet which include questions for discussion at home.

Using information and communication technology, Year Five pupils produced their own *Haggadot*, so that they could take their learning home and impress their families with their knowledge. Cultural differences were identified so that the children learnt from each other and shared personal experiences.

Jewish studies staff and all other adults receive effective support, both from the school and external consultants, particularly with regard to Jewish subject knowledge and pedagogy. All staff are being encouraged to gain qualified teacher status.

Where teaching was most effective, all the pupils were engaged and a purposeful learning environment was created. For example, in a *chumash lesson*, the pupils actively engaged with the electronic whiteboard to help them understand the meaning of words. The teacher encouraged lively discussion over the meaning of the word *Artzenu* and how it linked to the Modern Hebrew.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children become independent learners. They learnt, for example, the *bracha* for lighting the *Shabbat* candles. Personal, social and emotional development is strong. The school realises that there is still scope for improvement particularly in the integrated sessions where in activities that relate to Jewish Studies, the Lesson Objective could be built into the seven areas of learning both for indoor and outdoor play. Learning journals do not always specify what a child has learnt within the Jewish curriculum, and next steps for learning are not always shared with parents.

Marking, although focussing on the learning objective, does not always give pupils clear points for improvement so that they know how to better their work next time. Teachers do not always expect pupils to respond to the comments they write when they mark work. A

clearer description of the next steps in learning as regards their Jewish knowledge, rather than just literacy skills, would help to accelerate the learning even more.

The displays around the school improve the learning environment, so that, for example, the pupils can be constantly reminded of Israel and their links to it, through the *Tubishvat* Family Fruit Photography competition, and the timeline of the Jewish people, which is a strong teaching aid.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish studies is outstanding

The drive, ambition, inspiration and commitment of the Headteacher, Head of Jewish Studies, Principal and Jewish Studies' Governors is outstanding and have enabled this school to build strong foundations for its future. The leadership team is very strong and embodies the aims and ideals of the school. It is constantly working to disseminate them to all adults in the school community. It is on a journey to ensure that best practice results in the whole school community embracing the Jewish ethos of the school.

Family and inclusion lie at the heart of MMK, and the strong involvement of all parents, who are wholly supportive of the school's ethos and direction, contributes to the learning environment. Parents work hand in hand with the professional staff, for the benefit of both their children and the school community. A tremendous instance of this, is the celebration of *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, with live music and Israeli dancing in the playground which is enjoyed by both children and carers.

Family learning, organised by the Principal, has strengthened commitment and understanding and this has had a very positive impact on the wider life of the school. In addition, many pupils work at home with their parents to produce technological displays and art and design projects – covering aspects of their Jewish Studies work. This is another area which reflects the passion of the governing body to ensure that this school succeeds in involving the whole school community in its Jewish journey. Families are also involved with the *Shabbatonim*, and this enriches the sense of family and community.

The school has searched for the best expertise to support all the areas of learning by making close links with many schools and educational advice groups, both Jewish and non-Jewish, always searching for best practice. The curriculum committee, comprising governors and staff, reflects this, by having members who are both knowledgeable and experienced. They are evaluating the benefits of interactive learning to make Jewish education come alive for the school's 21st century learners.

The formal curriculum is a living, working document meeting the diverse needs of the whole community. Pupils are introduced to Jewish history, religious practice and ethical values, and these are made interesting and relevant. A wide and stimulating range of additional activities enhances the curriculum and provides the children with a rich experience of Jewish life and beyond. Extra-curricular activities include music, art, dance and special events, such as staying open during *Chol Hamoed Succot* to ensure that every pupil had the opportunity to eat in a *succah*. Older pupils visited the *succah* of the Principal and took part in the *hakafot and hoshanot during their morning tefillah*.

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

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at *MMK* is outstanding. *Tefillah* fulfils the statutory requirement for collective worship. It is also a very positive Jewish experience in which a love of Judaism shines through as the pupils say *tefillot* as part of school assemblies. A prime aim of these assemblies is to help children to develop an understanding of what the prayers mean, and draw attention to saying the prayers both with devotion and accuracy. For example, the teacher made sure that pupils knew the difference between *Baruch Hu* (2 separate words) and *Barachu*. Even many adults pronounce these words incorrectly. Older pupils circulate and help their younger peers, pointing to the correct place in the *siddur* (prayer book). Prayers are also reinforced at lunch time, when the children say *hamotzei* – and sing a lively *benching*.

The buddy system enables pupils to understand differences, and value and support those around them. Pupils are trained to be peer mediators and are able to resolve conflicts without adult intervention. Other pupils value and trust this system.

The wide range of Jewish studies and extra-curricular activities contribute to the religious observance and interest in Judaism. *Tzedakah* is collected for a wide variety of recipients, ranging from local Jewish charities to national and international charities such as Breast Cancer Care.

Unusually this year, *Tisha b'Av* fell during term time, and the school took full advantage of this. The pupils sat on the floor, and tried to empathise with the sadness of the occasion. They experienced a virtual tour of the *kotel* during this time.

The displays around the school evidence interest in all aspects of Jewish life and incorporate acknowledgement and respect for other religions and cultures, such as the peace poster that contributed to *MMK* winning the Barnet Eurovision Song Festival.

There is a high level of respect between everyone in *MMK*, and behaviour is outstanding, so that the school stands as a model of good practice for the other schools in this respect.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach used the online survey for parents and also spoke to a group of parents during the inspection visit. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and in the words of one parent, 'The *kodesh* (*Jewish studies*) teachers are inspirational individuals, giving the children a strong feeling of love for Jewish religious cultural principles.'

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	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. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.