

PIKUACH INSPECTION REPORT
MICHAEL SOBELL SINAI SCHOOL

DFEE SCHOOL NUMBER: 304360

NAMES OF INSPECTORS
MR RONNIE COHEN
MRS LORETTA HARSTEIN

DATE OF INSPECTION

13TH - 16TH MARCH 2000

**INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 23 OF THE
EDUCATION (SCHOOLS) ACT**

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the inspection was to report on:

- the educational standards achieved in *Limmudei Kodesh* in the school
- the quality of Jewish education provided

1.1 THE SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS

- the arrangements for collective worship
- the management and efficiency of *Limmudei Kodesh*

The inspection was carried out under section 23 of the Education (Schools) Act 1996

1.2 BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Name of School	Michael Sobell Sinai School
Type of School	Voluntary Aided Mixed School
Age Range of Pupils	3-11
Headteacher	Mrs Vivienne Orloff
Head of Limmudei Kodesh	Mrs Doreen Samuels
Address of School	Shakespeare Drive, Kenton, Middlesex
Telephone	020 8204 1550
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Chair of Governors	Mr Jonathan Lamski
Local Education Authority	Brent
School Registration Number	304360
Reporting Inspector	Mr Ronnie Cohen
Team Inspector	Mrs Loretta Harstein
Date of Inspection	13 - 16 March 2000

1.3 INTAKE OF PUPILS AND THE AREA SERVED BY THE SCHOOL

Michael Sobell Sinai school is the largest Jewish Primary School in Europe with 627 pupils currently on role. It is a Voluntary Aided Modern Orthodox Zionist Jewish Day School under the auspices of the United Synagogue. All pupils who attend the school are Jewish and are asked to support and share the school's values and ethos which include "to provide the pupils with the essential skills for their future lives in the context of Orthodox Jewish beliefs, practices and values and a love of Israel".

The profile of the school has changed significantly since its inception in 1981, with only 14% of its pupils now living within the local borough and an even smaller proportion actually living within the school's catchment area. About 60% of the remaining pupils travel to the school from the boroughs of Harrow, Barnet and Hertfordshire, and some pupils travel from Camden. This diversity is reflected in the backgrounds from which the pupils come in terms of the religious spectrum. The school has pupils from homes which represent the whole range of observance from Orthodox to the right of the United Synagogue via traditional, Masorti and Reform families to homes which are non-religious and, in a few cases, anti-religious. Some pupils come from a home in which the father is non-Jewish. Thus the baseline level of Judaism and familiarity with Jewish practice varies hugely. Moreover, the pupils come from a range of family units, with increasing numbers of pupils from single parent homes.

1.4 SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

1.4.1 Statistics

Table of full-time pupils

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Nursery	30	27	57
Reception	39	25	64
Y1	40	42	82
Y2	47	41	88
Y3	41	36	77
Y4	40	42	82
Y5	51	41	92
Y6	50	35	85
Total	338	289	627

Religious Affiliation

Orthodox-United Synagogue

Number of EAL pupils

(First language Hebrew, Russian, Persian, French) 31

Free School Meals

Number of pupils receiving free school meals 32

Special Educational Needs

Proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs 36%
 Number of Statemented pupils 12 (further 2 pupils being currently assessed)

Teachers and Classes

Full-time equivalent Limmudei Kodesh teachers 11.7
 Full time Limmudei Kodesh staff 6
 Part time Limmudei Kodesh staff 15
 Pupil to teacher ratio in Limmudei Kodesh 53.8:1
 Average class size for Limmudei Kodesh 23.7

Teaching Time for Limmudei Kodesh per week

Pre Key Stage 1 Integrated Day
 Key Stage 1 7.5 hours per class per week
 Key Stage 2 8.5 hours per class per week

Destination of Year 6 pupils*

	Boys	Girls	Total
J F S	28	17	45
Hasmonean	6	13	19
Immanuel College	4	1	5
Other Schools, both private and local authority	6	5	11

* these figures are for 1999 but they are very typical of the figures for the last four years

The school was inspected in the week immediately prior to *Purim*. An Ofsted inspection was concurrent with the Pikuach Inspection.

1.5 RECORD OF EVIDENCE BASE OF THE INSPECTION

Lessons Observed

Year	N	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
	4	2	2	3	3	4	5	6	28

The Inspection was carried out by two inspectors across eight inspection days. In the course of the inspection, apart from lessons observed, pupils were observed on six occasions at *Tefillah*, at break, at lunchtime and as they moved around the school. A representative sample of pupils were interviewed and pupils were tested on several aspects of the curriculum. Discussions were held with the Headteacher, the Head of *Limmudei Kodesh*, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator for the school, the Chair of Governors, the Chair of the *Limmudei Kodesh* Committee and the Representative of the Chief Rabbi's Office, as well as with members of the Ofsted inspection team.

Policy documents, the *Limmudei Kodesh* Curriculum, teachers, lessons plans and records and reports were studied carefully before and during the inspection. In addition a parents' meeting was held and parents were invited to complete a questionnaire which was then analysed.

2. MAIN FINDINGS

1. The Michael Sobell Sinai School has a very good *Limmudei Kodesh* department which has made significant improvements since the last inspection and which now has many good and very good features. The *Limmudei Kodesh* provision, based on the tenets of modern orthodox-zionism, now has a significant place not only in the overall curriculum but also in the hearts and minds of the pupils. The school and the Department can be justly proud of this position.
2. The management of the school and of the *Limmudei Kodesh* are underpinning strengths of the school. The Governors, supported by the Representative of the Chief Rabbi's Office, share the vision about the direction of the school as a modern orthodox zionist school and deal effectively and efficiently with the practicalities which come before them and which fall within their remit and which support the Headteacher, the Head of *Limmudei Kodesh* and the staff.
3. The standards achieved by pupils in *Limmudei Kodesh* are consistently good and are markedly better than at the time of the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2, where pupils are more knowledgeable and have greater in-depth understanding of many aspects of the curriculum. Standards achieved by many pupils are above, and sometimes well above, those that might be generally expected of pupils of this age.
4. Oral work in particular is usually of a high standard. The policy of stressing the importance of Hebrew reading as an underpinning aspect of *Limmudei Kodesh* is proving successful.
5. Progress in *Limmudei Kodesh* is good overall, with very good progress at Key Stage 2. Many pupils enter the school with a low base-line knowledge of Judaism and they make particularly pleasing progress. Pupils of varying attainment all make at least sound and often good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, despite the almost total lack of specific in class support for them.
6. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response to *Limmudei Kodesh* are very good. Pupils display an obvious increasing and joyous commitment to their Jewish heritage and its underpinning ethos. This is a strength of the school.
7. The school complies with the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for its pupils. However, far beyond compliance, the acts of collective worship, which constitute both *Tefillah* and *Bensching* (Grace after Meals) make effective contribution to the school's Jewish values and ethos. *Tefillah* in the nursery and in Key Stage 2 is particularly effective. *Tefillah* at Key Stage 1 is less effective.
8. Assessment has developed since the last inspection and is now good. Procedures to monitor pupils' progress are good. Record keeping is good and records are used effectively to promote educational continuity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
9. Marking is summative, with ticks, crosses or marks, rather than formative, where suggestions for improvement are added, and there are some inconsistencies. A heightened level of moderation of marking methods will enable the *Limmudei Kodesh* department to share best practice and consequently improve the level of pupils' work.
10. There is an acute problem of a lack of in-class support in *Limmudei Kodesh* for pupils with special educational needs. The very good will and deep devotion of the current *Limmudei Kodesh* staff go some way to ameliorate the worst aspects of the problem. However, the levels of additional pressure on this good will and devotion are now very high.
11. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well structured and reflects well the aims and ethos of the school. It is supported and strengthened by a range of extra-curricular activities such as *Ohel Torah* which adds to the effectiveness with which it meets its aims.

12. There is cross-curricular work which gains from its being designed by *Limmudei Kodesh* staff. However, the department's access to Information Technology is limited and this restricts the opportunities for the fullest access to the curriculum.
13. *Ivrit* is taught informally but effectively in Nursery and in Key Stage 1 through the use of songs and stories. There is now a discrete policy for the teaching of *Ivrit* for Key Stage 2 pupils. There are some inconsistencies concerning time allocation to *Ivrit* in the upper classes of the school. In order to resolve them, the school must resolve the issue of *Ivrit*'s position in the curriculum, as an underpinning element for *Limmudei Kodesh* and not simply as a modern foreign language.
14. Teaching has improved considerably since the last report. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the period of the inspection. The vast majority of lessons seen had good or very good teaching and, occasionally, the teaching was excellent. Teachers are committed to the subjects which comprise *Limmudei Kodesh* and to high standards.
15. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of their subject area. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Differentiated materials, when used, are used effectively. However, during the inspection, teachers did not display a wide range of teaching styles and methods.
16. Nearly all staff are either qualified or working towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
17. There is an effective induction programme and a burgeoning mentoring programme for staff.
18. Since the last inspection, some excellent literature has been introduced both in the library and as class text books. *Siddurim* and *Chumashim* are in good condition now.
19. Accommodation is good. Rooms and resource areas are appropriately decorated with pupils' work. In Nursery, there is little evidence of Hebrew lettering and *Limmudei Kodesh* on walls.
20. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent. Provision for their social and cultural development is good with some very good aspects. The underpinning policy for this area, which is a strength of the school, is that SMSC provision is based on Jewish values. The whole staff support and implement this policy. Pupils show due regard and concern for each other, and for school and their fellow pupils' property. They display *derech erez* towards all adults in the school.
21. The school provides a warm, safe, caring Jewish environment. The school has effective support, guidance and welfare procedures which range from reports to parents to counselling in times of bereavement and other family "low points". Very good security arrangements contribute to a safe and secure environment for the children.
22. The school has good partnership with parents and displays particularly effective sensitivity towards the range of Jewish observances at home. There was good attendance at the parents' meeting and a high return (178) of questionnaires. The vast majority of parents who responded (86%) agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to approach the school with matters concerning their child's Jewish Education.
23. The *Limmudei Kodesh* department is almost entirely supported by voluntary contributions made by parents. The collection of all income possible would mean that, after paying staffing salaries, there would be little money left for other expenditure. However, the school struggles to collect in all contributions. The *Limmudei Kodesh* Department's total reliance on the vagaries associated with voluntary funding leaves it vulnerable to dramatic fluctuations in the level of available provision. The Chair of the Governing Body and the Chairs of Finance and *Limmudei Kodesh* Committees are working particularly hard and with some success to overcome this problem.

24. The Department is efficiently managed and effectively led by the Head of *Limmudei Kodesh*, whose dynamic and industrious leadership provides the role model which secures the very highest levels of commitment and performance both from the staff and the children. Her leadership is an underpinning strength of the Department. In all her endeavours she is supported unflaggingly and with much effect by the Headteacher.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve further the quality of Jewish education in the school, the governors and the staff need to:

* enhance considerably the in-class support in *Limmudei Kodesh* for pupils with special educational needs in order to bring them at least to the levels of support which they receive in their secular studies. This will ensure that such pupils maximise their own potential and will ensure that there will be no detrimental effects on the progress of their fellow pupils.

- increase pupil access to IT provision in *Limmudei Kodesh*.
- establish a more vigorous moderation of marking to establish greater consistency.
- resolve, and convey to parents, the position of *Ivrit* within the *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum as the language which underpins the *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum and not simply as a modern foreign language.
- firmly structure the curriculum development policy and adopt, within that policy, the underpinning tenet that ,when planning curricula, there must be regard to resource implications, both human and material.
- encourage teachers to employ a more diverse range of teaching styles and methods.
- review the organisation of *Tefillah* at Key Stage 1 in order to bring it into line with the high standards of *Tefillah* of the Nursery and at Key Stage 2.

3. STANDARDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

3.1 ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS IN LIMMUDEI KODESH

- 3.1.1 The standards achieved by pupils in *Limmudei Kodesh* are consistently good and often very good when judged against the school's expectations. Achievement is markedly better than in the last inspection at all key stages, but particularly at Key Stage 2.
- 3.1.2 At Nursery and Key Stage 1 pupils achieve above expectations in several aspects of the curriculum. Key Stage 1 pupils achieve particularly well in Hebrew Reading, thus rewarding the sensible appointment of a Co-ordinator for Reading for this key stage and for her hard work.
- 3.1.3 Heavy emphasis is placed on Hebrew reading throughout the school as the key to progress in all aspects of *Limmudei Kodesh*. Reading, as a result, is of a good and occasionally very good standard throughout the school.
- 3.1.4 Pupils in all key stages demonstrate high standards of oral work. At key stage 1 this is demonstrated in the pupils' response to questions. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils are able to engage in debate around a *Chumash* based text.
- 3.1.5 The school has taken the view that formal independent writing not be introduced until Year 1. In this year only block writing is undertaken. Script writing is introduced from Year 2. There is good evidence that the later introduction to script writing has led to good standards generally. However, writing opportunities remain restricted and are too often confined to the less challenging completion of worksheet questions and exercises.
- 3.1.6 Progress in Jewish studies is good overall, with particularly good progress at Key Stage 2. Many pupils enter the school with a low base-line knowledge of Judaism and they often often come from backgrounds of minimal supportive observance. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 6 pupils have made very good progress, and have achieved a good level of knowledge understanding and skills.
- 3.1.7 Pupils with special educational needs also make progress, which is often achieved despite the lack of in-class support which they receive.

3.2 PUPILS ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR AND RESPONSE TO JEWISH STUDIES

- 3.2.1 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response to Jewish Studies are very good. There is an obvious and increasing joyous commitment to their Jewish heritage and its underpinning ethos. This is a strength of the school.
- 3.2.2 In lessons, the pupils of the nursery work co-operatively, display motivation and concentration and show keen interest in Jewish Studies.
- 3.2.3 The majority of pupils at Key Stage 1 also concentrate and are interested in their studies. However, on some occasions, the minds of these pupils are insufficiently engaged or challenged.
- 3.2.4 At Key Stage 2, pupils show motivation and deep interest, and sustain concentration in often very challenging lessons.

- 3.2.5 At Key Stage 2, pupils also display an effective and heartening understanding of Jewish values and concepts. Constant seeking of deeper clarification and information was observed in the older classes but the use of Information Technology for this purpose was not seen.
- 3.2.6 At all key stages, those pupils with special educational needs who receive in-class support, apply themselves to the task in hand. However, many pupils with special needs are without help and are not always sufficiently engaged or motivated.
- 3.2.7 Throughout the school, pupils show a high level of *derech eretz* to each other and to adults. The pupils always look smart and are neatly dressed. There is no litter either about the school or in the playground.
- 3.2.8 In their actions and in their speech, pupils show concern for the feelings, well-being and property of others. This is a response to the emphasis which teachers place on such issues during their teaching.
- 3.2.9 The pupils take up willingly the opportunities to display leadership qualities in a range of scenarios from the playground, where some pupils take on the role of “play leaders” to *Tefillah*, where pupils act as *Gabba'im* and some even *Leyhen*.
- 3.2.10 Pupils display an increasing awareness in depth of Judaism as they progress through the school. Older pupils respond positively to their burgeoning commitment to their Jewish identity and display this response in a range of ways. For example, in general discussions, they take the underpinning values of Judaism as their yardstick when debating social and moral issues. More directly, the older pupils respond positively to *Ohe! Torah*, the voluntary activity that takes place once a week before school, which focuses on *Tefillah* and further study.
- 3.2.11 Despite a variance in their backgrounds, all pupils show an increasing commitment to, and pride in their Jewish heritage and identity.

4. COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

4.1 TEFILLAH

- 4.1.1 The school's arrangements for Collective Worship comply with the statutory requirements to provide daily opportunities for collective worship. However, far beyond compliance, the acts of worship, which benefit from the school's implementation of points raised in the last inspection, now reflect and enhance the ethos and Jewish values of the school.
- 4.1.2 The services follow the cycle of the Jewish calendar and are age-appropriate. Morning *Tefillah* is either taken in individual resource areas in year groups, to allow for more individual attention and for teaching to occur, or, on some days, there is *Tefillah* in one hall for Key Stage 1 and in another hall for Key Stage 2. *Birkat Hamazon* is taken in year groups just before the commencement of afternoon lessons. Staff ensure that the pupils say appropriate *brachot* whenever pupils have snacks. The nursery organises its own morning *Tefillah* and its own *Birkat Hamazon*.
- 4.1.3 In the nursery, *Tefillah* is well organised and is inspiring. Pupils are chosen to lead the *Tefillah* and teachers and pupils are constantly involved as the *Tefillah* progresses. This is a good learning experience for the pupils.
- 4.1.4 The good learning experience of the Nursery is not replicated at Key Stage 1 where the *Tefillah* is uninspiring. The pupils are not asked to lead the service and most pupils are insufficiently engaged in the proceedings. Those pupils who do participate do not recite all the words accurately. An OHP is used to point to the text as the words are said, but the text is overcrowded on each page and the value of using the OHP is therefore negligible. Few teachers sit in an advantageous position which allows them to articulate the words clearly and at the same time check that the pupils are enunciating them accurately.
- 4.1.5 Key Stage 2 *Tefillah* is well organised and inspiring, with appropriate pupil participation and leadership in such areas as *leyhening*. The pupils are mostly accurate when reciting *Tefillot*. Opportunities for spiritual moments are taken. For example, the pupils were encouraged to think and pray silently, in their own way, for a *Refuah Shleymah* for a member of staff who is seriously ill.
- 4.1.6 Other acts of *Tefillot* occur such as *Oneg Shabbat* and *Festival Tefillot*. These together with the voluntary *Ohel Torah*, where boys and girls pray, breakfast and study together make *Tefillot* meaningful and effective.
- 4.1.7 The *Tefillah* policy accurately reflects the school's values and effectively develops the pupils' appreciation of communal prayer.

5. QUALITY OF JEWISH EDUCATION

5.1 TEACHING

- 5.1.1 The overall quality of the teaching which has improved considerably since the last inspection is now good, with several examples of very good teaching and, occasionally, examples of excellent teaching. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was observed throughout the school. In the Nursery, all lessons seen were at least very good. At Key Stage 1, a third were good or better and at Key Stage 2, three quarters were good or better. Where teaching is very good, teachers set clear targets which challenge pupils, and lessons are taught at a brisk pace with good differentiation strategies being used. Where teaching is only satisfactory, pace is somewhat slow, pupils are not always engaged and there is a lack of diversity of teaching methods and materials.
- 5.1.2 In nearly all lessons, teachers use praise and encouragement well and regularly, particularly and effectively with pupils with special educational needs, for whom *Limmudei Kodesh* teachers display the maximum understanding and commitment.
- 5.1.3 The *Limmudei Kodesh* staff have a secure knowledge, understanding and a deep commitment to their subject area and to their pupils' Jewish educational and spiritual needs. *Limmudei Kodesh* staff present themselves as excellent role models and reinforce Jewish behaviour and *middot*.
- 5.1.4 The *Limmudei Kodesh* staff participate effectively in a range of extra-curricular activities and events which range from Holocaust Study Days to *Matzo* baking and the *Chanukah* Fun Factory. They not only teach effectively in what is often an informal ambience, but also, exhibit an understanding of the curriculum as it relates to the differing educational needs of the pupils.
- 5.1.5 The *Limmudei Kodesh* staff are particularly well qualified and all have IT skills. It is regrettable therefore that the full range of teaching materials and teaching aids were limited, and in many classes, they were almost exclusively confined to text-books and teacher-prepared worksheets. This led in some cases to lessons which were too teacher-oriented or less exciting than they might have been.

5.2 ASSESSMENT, REPORTING AND RECORDING

- 5.2.1 Since the last inspection, assessment reporting and recording procedures have developed and are now good.
- 5.2.2 Assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress are good and efficient and are well co-ordinated. However, marking is mostly summative rather than formative and some inconsistencies were found. A heightened moderation of marking methods will enable the *Limmudei Kodesh* department to share best practice and consequently to improve the level of pupils' work.
- 5.2.3 The assessment procedures that are in place for pupils with special needs are good and lead to informed planning of the next stage of their work. Unfortunately, there is a lack of the necessary resources to implement the plans made for these pupils. This is a weakness of the current system of funding SEN which has a concomitant effect on the department.
- 5.2.4 Record keeping is very good. It is comprehensive and is used effectively to promote educational continuity within and between key stages.
- 5.2.5 The school has an efficient and effective reporting system. There are two open evenings per year at which an open record of the discussions held is created, agreed upon by parents and teacher, and which is updated at each open evening. These reports are clear and informative.

5.3 QUALITY AND RANGE OF THE CURRICULUM

- 5.3.1 The Limmudei Kodesh curriculum and the time allocated to it reflect effectively, and support well, the school's aims and ethos. The curriculum offers a well planned and in-depth syllabus in Kodesh subjects and it promotes the development of moral and spiritual values within a modern orthodox-zionist framework.
- 5.3.2 Limmudei Kodesh takes up approximately 25% of the curriculum time. This comprises lesson time and time for *Tefillah* and *Bensching*.
- 5.3.3 Since the last report considerable and effective work has been done on developing the curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 2 and this means that the curriculum is now broad and balanced and is appropriate to the needs and interests of the pupils. It shows breadth across a wide range of subjects while placing paramount importance on the foundation skills of Hebrew reading, Chumash and textual study. Nevertheless, there is still much developmental work to be done. There is currently no written policy for curriculum development. The department is aware of this and of the need to include in such a policy such issues as resource ramifications.
- 5.3.4 A clear *Ivrit* policy has been established. *Ivrit* is taught informally until the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils have formal *Ivrit* lessons in Key Stage 2. There is a need for the school and the department to clarify the position of *Ivrit* as an underpinning strengthening of Limmudei Kodesh
- 5.3.5 A *Tefillah* curriculum has been drafted to allow pupils to build up their knowledge and practice of *Tefillah* consistently and appropriately throughout their school career. The evidence of *Tefillah* in the upper school indicates the success of this policy, since pupils in Year 6 clearly have competence in nearly the full weekday *Shacharit* service

- 5.3.6 The Department is effectively addressing the issues of repetition with increasing maturation via its spiral curriculum .This is an effective curriculum of upwardly spiralling knowledge and skills associated with the *Chaggim*.
- 5.3.7 There is good evidence of cross-curricular links between Limmudei Kodesh and elements of the National Curriculum.For example a Limmudei Kodesh topic on Egypt in Year 2 includes studies of Egyptian life at the time of the Pharaohs. This curriculum is not yet accompanied by an effective time-table allocation for such cross-curricular activities. The Limmudei Kodesh curriculum is used effectively to teach the ethical aspects of elements of the National Curriculum. For example in Year 6's course on Jewish Living ,the Jewish ethics concerning marriage and relationships are taught within the programme of Sex Education.
- 5.3.8 The normative *Limmudei Kodesh* curriculum is enhanced by a wide-ranging series of extra-curricular activities and events. The school's provision includes regular additional activities such as *Ohel Torah* and clubs such as *leyhening* club for the older boys and *Anim Zemirot* for the younger children and choir for all pupils .Pupils also engage in yearly events such as Holocaust Study Days in the weeks before *Yom HaShoah*.
- 5.3.9 An outstanding success of the curriculum is the effective linkage between the *DafParashah* programme and the *Middah* of the Month. This summarises the successful integration between Torah text -based stories and *dinnim* and the *Middot* with which the pupils are expected to engage in their daily lives. This integration is a microcosm of the success of the work of the department for which this is a cornerstone of its *raison d'etre*.

5.4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

- 5.4.1 The school has an equal opportunities policy. Within it reference is made to support of pupils,whose first language is not English. This support is successful in the classroom.
- 5.4.2 Although the religious ethos of the school requires certain differences in the Limmudei Kodesh curriculum at Key Stage 2 in particular, nevertheless the school's expectations of both boys and girls are equally high and both are equally valued. Girls are encouraged to do all that they can within *halachah*
- 5.4.3 There is a burgeoning *Sefardi* community in the school,and the lessons effectively cover both *Sefardi* and *Ashkenazi* customs and culture
- 5.4.4 In a community where pupils come from different backgrounds of religious observance, the school successfully ensures that Limmudei Kodesh and indeed,Judaism, is attractive and joyous irrespective of background, knowledge or ability.

5.5 PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- 5.5.1 Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent. Provision for their social and cultural development is good with some very good aspects. The underpinning philosophy for this area,which is a strength of the school,is that SMSC provision is based on Jewish values.
- 5.5.2 The school promotes the spiritual and moral development of the pupils by effectively linking Torah text based precepts to *Middot* with practical elements, such as *Tsedakah* and *bichur cholim*, within the community of school and the wider community.

5.5.3 The whole staff support and implement the policy. Teachers act as excellent role models for the pupils. They are rewarded with some poignant and spiritual moments. For example, when the pupils prayed silently for the well-being and *Refuah Shlemah* of a young member of staff who is seriously ill.

5.5.4 Pupils show due regard and concern for each other and for the school's and their fellow pupils' property. They display *derech erez* to all adults in the school.

5.6 SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND WELFARE

5.6.1 The school provides a warm, safe, and caring Jewish environment

5.6.2 The school has effective support guidance and welfare procedures which range from reports to parents to counselling in times of bereavement and other family "low points"

5.6.3 Very good security arrangements, involving the parents contribute to safe and secure environment for the pupils.

5.6.4 The department also provides excellent guidance to promote Jewish observance. The school displays particularly effective sensitivity towards the range of Jewish observance at home or of the range of family mores and no child is made to feel inadequate or embarrassed .

5.6.5 The department has effective procedures in place to monitor the personal development of the pupils and effectively contributes to the smooth passage of pupils to the next stage of their Jewish learning.

5.7 PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

5.7.1 There are twelve statemented children, one at stage 4 and two under request. The school has 36% of its pupils with special needs

5.7.2 Provision in the *Limmudei Kodesh* department for pupils with special educational needs is poor. The very good will and devotion of the current *Limmudei Kodesh* staff go some way to ameliorate the worst aspects of the problem . However the levels of pressure on this good will are now very high.

5.7.3 There are effective procedures for the assessment of pupils but there is an acute lack of in-class support and this does not match what is required. This situation is exacerbated by the loss of support staff throughout the school as they are used for short and long term supply teaching.

5.7.4 The lack of in-class support is particularly bad in Reception and at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, the deleterious effect does not affect the higher attaining pupils who are taught in accelerated groups. However, the non-accelerated groups continue to be affected by the lack of in-class support.

5.7.5 The SEN files for the department are fully up to date with copies of relevant information from external agencies and with pupils' Individual Education Plans. However, the resources to match these identified needs are not available. This is true for both material resources, including appropriate IT software and access and for human resources, since there is a lack of appropriate support staff. This is a weakness.

5.8 PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

- 5.8.1 The school has good partnerships with parents . There was good attendance at the parents' meeting and a high return, 178 out of 224 questionnaires. The vast majority of parents who responded (86%) agreed or strongly agreed that they found it easy to approach the school with matters concerning their child's Jewish Education.
- 5.8.2 There is strong support for the school. Communications on every day matters are written via a message book/homework diary but in matters of gravity parents can make appointments to see members of staff or the Head of the department.
- 5.8.3 Parents are happy to seek advice on personal and Jewish issues both for themselves and their children and appreciate the support they receive in times of difficulties and stress.
- 5.8.4 Families have responded well to initiatives such as the LIFT (Learning is Fun Together) and other family education programmes. These initiatives should be revived as soon as possible. Parents are thus encouraged to support the work of the classroom, though only a small number are involved in the classroom during the school day to help the LK staff. Many parents, via the PSA, contribute to such matters as security rota. The vast majority of the Governing Body are parents of past or present pupils of the school and occupy positions over and above those which specifically represent parents.
- 5.8.5 Parents are invited to open evenings, curricular evenings and a variety of school events.
- 5.8.6 The school has links with the Chief Rabbi's Office, in the person of a senior rabbinic figure, whose contribution is enormous. Additionally the department has created very good community links with the *Rabbanim* of the orthodox synagogues whose *Kehillot* include families at the school and they come into school to participate in such events as model *Sedarim* and the Year 6 *Siyyum*.
- 5.8.7 Good links have been established with the secondary schools to which the pupils transfer. It is an encouraging fact that so many of the pupils from the school go on to Jewish High schools.

6. MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

6.1 MANAGEMENT

- 6.1.1 The management of the school and of the *Limmudei Kodesh* department are underpinning strengths of the school.
- 6.1.2 The Governors, supported by the Representative of the Chief Rabbi's Office, share the vision about the direction of the school as a modern orthodox Zionist school and deal effectively and efficiently with the practicalities which come before them and which fall within their remit and which support the Headteacher, the Head of *Limmudei Kodesh* and the staff.
- 6.1.3 The Department is efficiently managed and effectively led by the Head of *Limmudei Kodesh*, whose dynamic and industrious leadership provides the role model which secures the very high levels of commitment and the high standards of performance both from the staff and the children, who come under her charge, which are features of the school.
- 6.1.4 An underlying strength of the *Limmudei Kodesh* department is the total support, given unflinchingly and with much effect by the Headteacher.

6.2 STAFFING, RESOURCES FOR LEARNING AND ACCOMMODATION

- 6.2.1 The *Limmudei Kodesh* staff have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and they provide good role models for the pupils. They work well with secular staff to create a positive atmosphere.
- 6.2.2 All staff are either qualified or working towards Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). This is a major improvement since the last inspection.
- 6.2.3 There is an effective induction programme and a burgeoning mentoring programme for staff.
- 6.2.4 Since the last inspection, some excellent literature has been introduced both in the library and as class text books. *Siddurim* and *Chumashim* are in good condition now.
- 6.2.5 Information Technology resources are very limited in the Department. This is a major contributory factor in the Department's heavy reliance on worksheets.
- 6.2.6 Accommodation is good. Rooms and resource areas are appropriately decorated with pupils' work, except in Nursery where there is little evidence of Hebrew lettering and *Limmudei Kodesh* on walls. Generally, there is insufficient *Limmudei Kodesh* resources in the Nursery. Greater integration of *Limmudei Kodesh* with secular wall work should be considered throughout the school.

6.3 EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL IN RELATION TO JEWISH STUDIES

- 6.3.1 The *Limmudei Kodesh* department is almost entirely supported by voluntary contributions made by parents. The collection of all income possible would mean that, after paying staffing salaries, there would be little monies left for other expenditure. However, the school struggles to collect in all contributions. The Limmudei Kodesh Department's total reliance on the vagaries associated with voluntary funding leaves it vulnerable to dramatic fluctuations in the level of available provision. The Chair of the Governing Body and the Chairs of Finance and *Limmudei Kodesh* Committees are working particularly hard and with some success to overcome this problem.