

NORTH CHESHIRE JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Inspection report

LEA Stockport

Inspection dates 8 - 9 May 2007

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 St Ann's Road North

School category Voluntary Aided

Heald Green Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 4LZ Age range of pupils 4-11

Gender of pupils Mixed Telephone number 0161 282 4500 Number on roll 262 Fax number 0161 282 4501 Chair of governors Appropriate authority The Governing Body Mrs G Esterkin Date of previous inspection Headteacher Mrs N Massel

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Introduction

Description of the school

North Cheshire Jewish Primary School was founded in 1970 and is located in the leafy suburbs of Heald Green, within the Stockport Local Authority. It is situated on a large purpose-built campus, with separate buildings for Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school has a strong Zionist ethos and teaches with a traditional centrist orthodox approach to Judaism. The school stresses amongst its core aims the intention, "to give children confidence and pride about their Judaism and have a strong identity regarding their own community and the State of Israel." Pupils come from all areas of South Manchester. There is a wide range of ability, with 7.55% of pupils having special needs, which is below the national average. There is a recently built private nursery on site, many of whose pupils will eventually transfer to the primary school.

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 North Cheshire Jewish Primary School is good, overall, with some very good and outstanding features.

The strength of the Jewish Studies department lies in the management of the department by the Headteacher and her Assistant Head, which impacts on all aspects of the provision. The school's most impressive features are the behaviour of pupils, the way in which staff guide and support pupils, the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation, and standards reached in Ivrit at Key Stage 1. Other impressive features are the way the State of Israel is included in many aspects of school life, the numerous events linked to Jewish Festivals and tradition, enjoyed by parents and children, and the enthusiasm of pupils for Jewish Studies and Ivrit.

The school's Senior Management Team for Jewish Studies is well placed to meet the needs of the school. There can be confidence that the Jewish Studies provision can be further enhanced in the future.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the already prepared in-depth Jewish Studies curriculum for Parsha and formulate a detailed Jewish General Knowledge curriculum, which will ensure progression and appropriate coverage, and lead onto clear schemes of work being drawn up.
- Continue to support the Hebrew Reading skills of pupils throughout the school by focused one-to-one teaching, which will ensure that high standards are reached in this area.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievements and standards of work are good. This is in line with the school's own assessment, which is in part based on the exam successes of those Year 6 pupils who take the King David High School entrance examination and the Year 7 streaming in these subjects in the High School.

In Ivrit standards are good overall and outstanding at Key Stage 1. In Jewish Studies standards vary across the four component parts. Reading is good for familiar texts, and outstanding amongst higher attainers; for unseen text reading standards are barely satisfactory. Pupils are not afraid to attempt to read unfamiliar words and self-correct. The new Aleph Champ system, introduced a few months ago, is already starting to have a positive impact. Pupils are well challenged and can see their own progression and compare their level and progress with those of their classmates. It allows the school to set a benchmark and identify appropriate age-related reading levels.

Pupils' knowledge of and identification with Israel is outstanding. It is a key feature of the school's ethos and permeates not only the Jewish Studies and Ivrit lessons but also the National Curriculum studies, the life of the school and the extra-curricular activities.

Knowledge of the content of *Parshat HaShavua* is satisfactory overall. Some very good examples of translation skills were seen for example in Key Stage 1 and amongst some Year 3 pupils. The latter were able to work out unknown words either from their knowledge of the subject or by analysing the word and breaking it down into its component parts.

Standards in Jewish general knowledge are very good overall. Jewish general knowledge – Key Stage 2 have modern text books and pupil work books for study of key facts. To further develop this area and enhance progression in festival study, a more detailed and cohesive curriculum policy is needed. The school has already identified this as an issue for action.

Progress in Jewish Studies and Ivrit is good, overall, with some outstanding examples where pupils use their own initiative. Within Ivrit, progress is outstanding at Key Stage 1. This is not continued in Key Stage 2, where there is continued progress, but somewhat slower.

Differentiated work is provided for pupils with learning difficulties. They are well supported in the class either by Jewish Studies staff or by their designated learning support assistant.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are proud of being Jewish and enjoy the Jewish Studies and Ivrit lessons and the Jewish life of the school. In both formal and informal conversations with pupils they volunteered that these were key factors in what they liked about the school. They were also able to give reasoned explanations of why this was so and its importance to them now and in their future, such as in preparing for their Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah and communicating with Israeli family and friends.

Pupils' enjoyment is evident in the daily acts of collective worship which they participate in with great enthusiasm and gusto, especially the singing parts. It is also evident in the pride they take in talking about their involvement in the various festival and pre-festival activities.

Pupils are extremely mature, polite and friendly. They show respect to each other and to adults and have very positive attitudes about teachers, whom they feel are friendly and helpful to them. Behaviour is generally outstanding, with pupils concentrating on their work in lessons and socialising well outside classes. Attendance is very good.

Pupils are very involved in the life of school and take responsibility in their involvement in the school council. Additionally, pupils organise a number of activities, such as the end of term *minyan*, the festival activities, and those activities associated with the

twinning with Nof Hagalil School in Israel. Year 6 pupils have specific responsibilities such as helping younger pupils with Hebrew reading, and the 'helping hands' scheme, where they help younger pupils before school and during playtime.

The school places much emphasis on developing good *middot*, which it encourages by prominently displaying charts showing, for example, *kavannah* in *davening*, and a range of *tzedakah* activities to raise monies for local and Israeli charities. Pupils entertain at old-age homes and are aware of and taught about other faiths.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is good and this confirms the views of the school. During the inspection, ten lessons were observed, of which 80% were good or better; the rest being at least satisfactory.

Teachers act as excellent role models for their pupils, and conduct themselves in a most professional manner, being deeply committed to the school. Where teaching is good or better, the pace is brisk, and pupils are involved and interested. In these lessons, questioning techniques are good, and classes are well managed. Teachers offer praise and encouragement and, several times during the inspection, staff were observed giving emotional nurturing to pupils. It is particularly impressive to see how teachers offer a caring and supportive approach to pupils. In those classes, which are less than good, objectives are not as clear and use of resources not so effective. Two of the five teachers on the Jewish Studies staff are covering for maternity leave absencies, which presents a challenge to the Senior Management Team of the school. Induction strategies, by way of documentation and lesson observation, are good.

Generally, the planning and assessment strategies used for Jewish Studies are good and teachers have good subject knowledge. Long, medium and short term planning is thorough. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported appropriately.

Pupils' learning is generally good, with most pupils making appropriate or better progress. They mostly work well and finish the planned activity within the time schedules. They are interested in the subject and are generally very positive. Particularly impressive is the learning and progress of pupils in Ivrit at Key Stage 1. High level discussions often take place in the course of Jewish Studies and Ivrit lessons. For example, in discussing the *mitzvo*h of *Shmittah* in depth, children in a KS1 class noted the connection between Shabbat (the seventh day of the week, when people must rest) and the *Shmittah* year (the seventh year, when the land is allowed to rest).

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The quality and range of the Jewish Studies curriculum is, overall, satisfactory. There are two key broad areas of the curriculum: Jewish Studies and that of the teaching of Ivrit. There is considerable integration between these two subjects. An example of this integration was observed in a lesson focusing on the giving of the Torah but also building on vocabulary in Hebrew.

There is evidence of good effort to improve the quality of the Jewish Studies curriculum, with the curriculum for Ivrit being comprehensive. The Ivrit curriculum includes reading, writing and speaking Hebrew. The Hebrew Reading syllabus, which has been implemented recently, is based on the Aleph Champ programme. The teaching of Hebrew reading has recently been enhanced by the introduction of one-to-one support. However, the impact of this initiative, although obvious, is still not yet embedded, and reading support throughout the school needs to be continued and further expanded if necessary. There is no detailed written Jewish Studies curriculum, which would show how progression is to be achieved in provision throughout the school. There is a comprehensive curriculum for *Parsha*, which is about to be implemented. Topics listed in the Jewish Studies curriculum include Festivals, Sedra of the week, Israel, Prayer and Jewish General Knowledge. In general, this curriculum includes Jewish practice, Shabbat and Festivals, the Synagogue, *Kashrut*, Jewish values, Prayers, Jewish History and Israel.

An in-depth curriculum, linked to detailed schemes of work, would enable the school to greatly enhance an already good provision.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support at the school is outstanding. Pupils know they are well cared for and feel supported. They are happy to talk to their teachers if they have any problems and are very satisfied with the school's response to their concerns.

One of the aims of Jewish Studies lessons and of the Jewish activities is to prepare pupils to be functioning members of the wider Jewish community. To judge from the comments of the pupils this is being achieved. Parents and grandparents are invited to special events and extra-curricular activities, thereby deepening the family involvement and understanding of Jewish life and practices.

The school provides extra classes in Year 6 to enhance the Jewish knowledge and skills of those pupils wishing to go to the Yavneh stream of King David High School.

Security at the school is good, which ensures a safe environment for its pupils. It is well cared for and is a modern attractive building. Much thought has gone into making the inside and outside attractive by the display of many Jewish art works, such as a *Menorah* and a *Magen David*. The school has three *sukkot* for use by different agegroups.

There is at least one, and usually two, acts of collective worship each day: morning prayers in assembly, *birkat hamazon* after lunch and *Kabbalat* Shabbat on Friday. *Tefilla* is very good with some outstanding features, such as pupil participation and in the singing. It is more successful when assemblies take place in Key Stages rather than with the whole school as they can then be tailored to the level of the pupils. Pupils are given their *siddurim* in a ceremony at the end of Year 2.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The management of the Jewish Studies is impressive, with the Senior Management Team promoting the ethos of the school in a very positive and meaningful way, supported effectively by the governing body. The Headteacher constantly monitors the quality of lessons and teacher performance, and goals are evaluated and revised whenever necessary. The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher play a very prominent and active role in all areas of Jewish Studies. The Headteacher provides strong and effective leadership to staff. Induction for new teachers is good and specific. In-service training (Inset) is provided for Jewish Studies teachers and they also participate in whole school planning.

The Senior Management Team ensure that assessment and planning take place effectively and are aware of the need to develop the curriculum in specific areas. Comments and feedback from 125 parents indicate a high level of satisfaction in all areas of the Jewish Studies provision at the school.

The school is well aware of its strengths and the areas which need further improvement, as described in the School Development Plan and Self-Evaluation documentation. It is, therefore, well placed to effect further improvement.

Grade: 2