

North West London Jewish Day School

Inspection report

LEA	Brent
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach
Inspection dates	20 -21 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Rev Michael Binstock

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	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Arnie Kosiner
Headteacher	Rabbi Daniel Kerbel
Date of previous school inspection	10 – 11 December 2007
School address	180 Willesden Lane London NW6 7PP
Telephone number	020 8459 3378
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two Pikuach inspectors. The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's provision for Jewish Education. They observed ten lessons covering all year groups and all Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) teachers plus three davening sessions. They held meetings with the chairman of the trustees, staff and pupils, and scrutinised the school's documentation and samples of pupils' written work. In addition, 80 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and 3 from staff were analysed.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by all groups of pupils
- the quality of teaching and learning *Ivrit*
- the quality of assessment and marking
- the impact of the school's actions to bring about improvement

Information about the school

North West London Jewish Day School is a well established one-form entry voluntary aided Orthodox Jewish school for boys and girls aged 3-11 located within the London Borough of Brent. The school was founded in 1945 and for the past fifty years, has occupied its present site in Brondesbury. It aims to serve the needs of Modern Orthodox Jewish families by providing a rounded secular and Orthodox Jewish education based on the National Curriculum and Orthodox Jewish sources. 30% of the school curriculum is devoted to Jewish Studies including *Ivrit*. There are currently 259 pupils on roll and they come principally from the London Boroughs of Brent, Barnet, Camden and Westminster and Chelsea. The majority come from homes where Shabbat and the dietary laws are observed. Whilst approximately 9% speak English as an additional language (EAL), only a small number need support as most are able to speak and write fluently in English. At the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils transfer to Jewish schools, predominately Hasmonian High School, Immanuel College and JFS.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The quality of Jewish education at North West London Jewish Day School is good overall and outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the last three years, the leadership team has steered the school forward effectively so that improvement has taken place since the previous Pikuach inspection. The school's view of itself is mostly accurate and its track record of implementing change shows it is well placed to build on its strengths and has a good capacity to improve further. There is a warm Jewish ethos throughout North West London Jewish Day School and it successfully achieves its aim to imbue pupils with a love of, and pride in their Judaism.

The outstanding quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision enables children to make an excellent start to school. A high priority is placed on the development of Hebrew reading skills and this commences in the Reception class. This provides children with a solid base from which they are able to build and develop their skills as they move up the school so that by Year 6, very high standards of Hebrew reading are achieved. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching overall is good and high standards are achieved in other areas of the Jewish Studies curriculum. However, the teaching and learning of *Ivrit* is inadequate.

Pupils are happy and they work hard. Parents are supportive of the school as is evidenced from the parents' questionnaire responses which are mostly positive. There is outstanding support for pupils with special educational needs and pupils in Key Stage 2 are placed in various ability groups to aid their progress. There are effective partnerships with other organisations which promote Jewish learning and well-being and enhance the pupils' personal development.

The school promotes community cohesion extremely well, both within the Jewish community and with the local non-Jewish communities. The governing body and trustees play an important role and contribute greatly to the success of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully implement the school's stated aims and objectives for the teaching of *Ivrit* by ensuring that pupils enjoy their learning and successfully develop their linguistic skills
- Improve the quality of teaching in all classes so that provision consistently meets the needs of all pupils across the ability range
- Improve the quality of report writing so that parents are better informed of their children's attainment and progress

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement in Jewish Studies is good overall and is often outstanding. Evidence gained from lesson observation and testing of pupils from Years 3 and 6 indicate that very high standards are achieved in Hebrew reading. Pupils develop excellent skills and most of Year 6 pupils tested were able to read with impressive levels of accuracy and confidence. Likewise, most pupils demonstrate very high standards of translation and comprehension in their *Chumash* and *Mishnah* studies. Achievement in *Ivrit* however is inadequate and discussions with Years 5 and 6 pupils reveal that they do not enjoy their *Ivrit* lessons. The majority of pupils behave well in their Jewish Studies lessons, but some unsatisfactory behaviour occurs in those lessons where they are not actively engaged.

Pupils expressed many positive feelings about their school. 'I like the Jewish atmosphere in the school' commented one Year 6 pupil to the approval of others. Inspectors found pupils to be polite and courteous. Discussions with upper Key Stage 2 pupils reveal that many are thoughtful and articulate. They grow in confidence and enjoy taking responsibility through the school council which provides them with a valuable opportunity to express their views for the benefit of all pupils. They also expressed pride in the 'Chesed Committee' consisting of Year 6 pupils who meet regularly to discuss matters relating to charity and good deeds and to choose which worthy causes to support. This commendable activity benefits both Jewish and non-Jewish charities. Pupils enjoy participating in collective worship (davening) as evidenced from observation and confirmed by the overwhelming majority of parents who completed questionnaires. Pupils' behaviour and concentration during davening is exemplary. These positive attitudes, together with their good academic achievement, make a valuable contribution to their development of skills for their future economic well-being.

Pupils are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. They usually enjoy a healthy choice of menu at lunchtime and only healthy snacks may be brought into school for their break.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching throughout the school is good overall and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is outstanding. Lessons frequently start with a review of pupils' previous learning and provide opportunities for consolidation and reflection. Most teachers use the interactive white board to good effect. Where teaching is good or better, lessons are lively and pupils are kept engaged and their enjoyment is evident. The teaching of *Chumash* is conducted in the traditional formal manner, but good models were observed where teachers make the text relevant to pupils' experiences. For example, a comparison was made in a Year 3 lesson between the difficulties Avram had to overcome on his journeys and the ease of travel nowadays. Teachers employ various strategies to encourage pupils. For example, they give generous praise, award house points and enter names in the 'Golden Book'.

The provision for *Ivrit* was identified as a key issue in the previous Pikuach inspection report and this still remains an issue. The previous report stated that '*A maximum of two lessons per week is devoted to this subject and the focus is on building pupils' vocabulary to enable them to develop their speaking skills. However, most pupils have difficulty in formulating or understanding simple phrases*'. Evidence gained currently from observing two *Ivrit* lessons and from testing groups of Years 3 and 6 pupils reveal that the focus is still on building pupils' vocabulary, but there is no indication that this is achieving the aim of developing their speaking skills. It should be noted that the leadership is very aware of the situation and is taking positive steps to improve the quality of provision for *Ivrit*.

Assessment and record keeping are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Teachers use a range of assessment strategies and examples include questioning, a game called 'Connect 4' to help identify Hebrew letters, reading assessment of individual pupils recorded on pupil progress sheets, and an innovative

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

colouring sheet to assess Year 2 pupils' understanding of *Gematria*. (numerical values of Hebrew letters). Pupils' workbooks are marked regularly but further development is required so that they contain comments on progress towards targets with helpful hints on how pupils can improve their work.

There has been a significant improvement in provision so as to take account of pupils' varying abilities. This is mainly achieved by placing them in ability groups so that work can be matched more specifically to their respective needs. Whilst teachers produce very clear and detailed lesson plans which show awareness of meeting the needs of all abilities through the provision of differentiated work, little of this was seen in practice. This is an area that requires further attention so that all teachers acquire the skills to enable them to provide appropriate and stimulating work for all pupils throughout each lesson.

The previous inspection report noted that the quality and range of the curriculum are outstanding. This certainly remains the case. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it is appropriate to the orthodox Jewish ethos of the school. The curriculum document clearly sets out its rationale, aims and objectives, attainment targets and schemes of work. It is enhanced by various extra-curricular activities including a *Rashi* club, a *Gemara* club and a club for boys to learn how to *layen* (read from the *Torah*). Further enrichment is provided by regular visits from local community rabbis who come to address the pupils at assemblies. There are good partnerships with various outside organisations including Binoh.

The school has a very strong commitment to caring and supporting pupils. This is reflected in the guidance offered to parents when choosing their children's secondary school. Every pupil is known and treated as an individual. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident in approaching an adult if they have a problem. Vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are extremely well supported and the school works very effectively in partnership with outside agencies to meet their needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management of the school in relation to Jewish Studies are good. The headteacher and head of Jewish Studies have a clear vision of what they want pupils to achieve and a strong commitment to ensuring improvement. They provide strong leadership and have clearly taken the department forward from the last inspection in 2007. A strong feature of the school is the cohesion between the Jewish Studies and secular staff who work together towards shared goals.

A secure structure is in place to monitor the effectiveness of the Jewish Studies department and encouraging ambition and driving improvement. Good communication is maintained by regular meetings between leaders and with the Jewish Studies staff and this enables the department to work constantly towards improving and raising its standards of teaching and learning. The department is becoming more rigorous in evaluating its work and is ensuring that assessment plays an integral part in the improvement process. Senior leaders observe and monitor lessons and give feedback to each teacher. A new monitoring and reviewing policy was introduced last year under which teachers attend meetings of the *Vaad HaChinuch* (Education Committee for Jewish Studies) in order to report on, and review their work.

The senior leaders are highly valued by governors and trustees and they in turn are fully involved in the work of the school. The trustees, who include the school's Principal and Halachic authority are responsible for providing the resources for Jewish Studies including the employment of teachers. The *Vaad HaChinuch* monitors and oversees the delivery and development of the curriculum.

Scrutiny of end of year reports indicates a lack of consistency in the level of information provided to parents. For example, one report stated that a pupil had achieved many fine results in the topics covered. However, no indication was given as to what had actually been achieved.

The school is justifiably proud of the links it has forged with two neighbouring schools; one Muslim and the other Christian. Exchange visits take place termly which focus on the festivals and culture of each faith. This laudable interfaith enterprise has resulted in greater mutual understanding and respect.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	N/A
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision for Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The excellent leadership and management team oversees a programme of learning in a

secure and warm atmosphere. The outstanding teaching observed shows the dedication of teachers and their understanding of children's needs. The teaching of Hebrew reading commences in Reception with letter recognition, thus providing a sound basis for further development as children advance to the next key stage.

An attractively designed and informative 'Reception *Kodesh* Newsletter' is sent to parents each week. It tells parents what their children have learned in school and contains questions on the *parashah* with a section to be completed and returned. This provides a valuable opportunity for reinforcement at home.

There is a fully integrated curriculum and some good practice was observed. For example, a group of nursery children were making fairy cakes and were able to explain to the inspector why it was necessary to check the eggs before adding them to the ingredients.

Pupils greatly enjoy their Jewish Studies and were observed working productively in groups with one another. Behaviour is excellent throughout the early years. Children feel confident and safe, enabling them to develop to the best of their ability. Independence is encouraged at every level. Pupils willingly participate in activities, share opportunities with others and learn to make choices.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all parents and carers of pupils registered at North West London Jewish Day School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

In total, there are 170 families registered at the school from whom 80 completed questionnaires were received. These indicated that the majority of parents are happy with the school in relation to its Jewish Studies provision. However, a significant minority were critical of their children's progress in speaking Hebrew.

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. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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 will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.

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.

Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.

Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.