

# Rimon Jewish Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Local authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspected under the auspices of</b>	Pikuach
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18 March 2014
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Sandra Teacher

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Free
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 – 6 years (at present)
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	50
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Vaughan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zoe Dunn Sarah Campbell (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Address</b>	41a Dunstan Road London NW11 8AE
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 209 1805
<b>Email address</b>	office@rimonschool.org.uk
<b>School website</b>	<a href="http://www.rimonschool.org.uk">http://www.rimonschool.org.uk</a>

# Introduction

## Inspection team

Sandra Teacher      Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out by one inspector and in one day, at the request of the school. The inspector visited Reception and Year 1 for lessons and parts of lessons including *tefillot* (prayers). She held meetings with governors, staff and groups of children. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including children's written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies curriculum, the school's self-evaluation document and the school's improvement plan. In accordance with the protocol that exists between Ofsted (Section 5) and *Pikuach* (Section 48), the lead inspector had a discussion with Her Majesty's Inspector who led the school's recent Ofsted inspection, which took place a week before the *Pikuach* inspection. This is the school's first *Pikuach* inspection.

The inspector looked in detail at the following:

- The Jewish education curriculum
- The progress pupils make in Jewish education
- The quality of teaching in Jewish education
- Leadership and management of Jewish education
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship.

## Information about the school

- Rimon is a one-form entry Modern Orthodox Jewish Primary Free School in Golders Green.
- The school opened in September 2012 in temporary accommodation, but has now moved to the permanent site.
- There is a Reception and a Year 1 class.
- The school motto is 'Wisdom, Knowledge and Joy' and it seeks to foster a love of learning in a socially and emotionally literate environment.
- The school is based on five guiding principles: the rigorous pursuit of academic achievement, a rigorous approach to the teaching of Judaism, international awareness, environmental preservation and personalised learning through a commitment to excellent special needs provision.
- Pupils come from a range of cultural heritages, the largest groups are White British pupils and those from any other White background.
- More than half of the pupils speak English as a dual or second language.
- All of the pupils are identified as Jewish.
- None of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- At 21%, the proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is average.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The achievement of pupils in their Jewish education</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the duty to fulfill the daily act of collective worship</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish Education, including through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Overall effectiveness: the quality of Jewish education provided in Rimon School is very good because:**

- The school has made an impressive start to realise the vision encompassed in its founders' five principles.
- The school has set high expectations for all children, aiming for excellent Jewish literacy as well as basic skills delivered through an enriched, creative curriculum.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because the staff and children show great respect for each other and for the ethos of the school. The quality of *tefillah* (prayer) is good and enables the children to be prepared for involvement in community prayer.
- The acting headteacher, supported by governors and *Kodesh* co-ordinator, are committed to providing and further developing a curriculum that ensures children make good progress and continue to improve in their Jewish education.
- The curriculum is developing to enable the children to link Jewish learning to their everyday lives. The teaching of *Ivrit* contributes to the Jewish life of the school by promoting the use of Hebrew as the language of the Jewish people.
- Teaching overall is good and relationships are excellent, modelling the Jewish ethos and values.
- Partnerships with parents and the wider community are good.
- The school offers a range of Jewish educational experiences so that the children are being well prepared for future stages of their Jewish life and education.
- There is a consistently outstanding atmosphere of learning with the displays in classrooms and around the whole site, clearly linked to *Limmudei Kodesh* and *Ivrit*.

## **It is not yet outstanding because:**

- Systems are still too new to show a measureable impact over time, and the profile of *Kodesh* education needs to be raised through the documentation and within the school website.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that *Kodesh* development is evidenced within the whole-school self-evaluation.
- Further embed *Kodesh* assessment within the Early Years Profile to plan for the next steps children need to take to move their learning on.
- Develop a regular assessment process for daily *tefillah*, to ensure that pupils' progress is evidenced.

## **Achievement of pupils in their Jewish education is good because:**

- Children join this school from a diverse range of Jewish backgrounds. For many, their knowledge and experience of Hebrew and of the *Kodesh* curriculum is limited. However, they are eager to learn and children of all abilities, including the many able pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress.
- In Year 1 and Reception, they are beginning to build up a bank of knowledge of Jewish life, history, tradition and belief. The school's aims set out to engender in pupils 'wisdom, knowledge and joy'. The school is demonstrating notable success in achieving this. Children know about Jewish festivals and customs; for example, *Chanukah* and *Purim*. They take great pride in their Jewish heritage.
- Early Years assessment practices to track pupils' progress are being developed to ensure that achievements in *Kodesh* can be shown in relation to the seven areas of learning which relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Progress in *Ivrit* is good. Children begin to develop their Hebrew vocabulary from the start of their time in the Reception Year. There is a good emphasis on both reading and writing and, from Year 1, speaking and listening skills. This is particularly important, as a high proportion of the children are from Israeli families where *Ivrit* is spoken at home.
- Excellent use is made of the latest technology to aid achievement and learning. The children routinely use tablet computers to write and practise their Hebrew letters and sounds. One child made it clear: "I like practising letters on the iPad."

## **The quality of teaching and assessment in Jewish education is good because:**

- Teachers get on very well with the children and this contributes to children's positive attitudes to learning. Children are motivated to listen, volunteer answers and try their best, because they like their teachers and want to please them.
- Sometimes, it is not just the teacher that they want to please. Reception children excitedly introduced themselves to 'Pharaoh's daughter' who had arrived in a time machine. The children were invited to answer questions about life in Egypt and this

was an excellent introduction to the story of *Pesach*. They spoke of their delight in making crowns and acting out the story.

- Good use was also made of the outside area for the children to build pyramids and to practise their Hebrew letters and sounds with words that are connected to *Pesach*.
- Lessons are well planned to take account of the children's different capabilities and learning needs, although there is sometimes scope in lessons for further stretching the most able. Teachers vary activities, interspersing pair and group discussion with, for example, written work.
- Because teachers make learning interesting and fun, even the youngest children maintain concentration for quite long sessions without getting restless.
- Good support is provided by teaching assistants who also speak *Ivrit* but, at times, they could be more usefully deployed, particularly during the introductory and final parts of the lessons.
- There is evidence of high-quality marking of work. Staff are developing assessment practices such as "next steps" within the EYFS.

### **The extent to which the Jewish education curriculum meets pupils' needs is good because:**

- The curriculum demonstrates both breadth and balance. It includes Hebrew reading and writing, *tefillah*, *parshah*, *chagim* and Jewish way of life. It expresses the Jewish values of the school and is well structured to meet the needs of and engage all learners.
- There is excellent provision for the children to learn about the Jewish calendar and the Jewish way of life. The successful outcomes of these aspects are evident in the children's personal, spiritual and social development and in their deep connections with Israel and its people.
- The Friday preparations for *Shabbat* give the children the opportunity to integrate home and school experiences. The emphasis on the *parshah* with the accompanying story helps build up a historical framework whilst integrating both *middot* and *chagim*; to the extent that the children know that the *korban* was a gift to *Hashem*, and that *Parshat Shemini* tells us about *kashrut* and the animals that we can and cannot eat.
- The school has correctly identified the need for rigorous development of children's Hebrew reading skills to support all aspects of their *Limudei Kodesh* learning.
- There is an effective PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) programme that is grounded in *Limudei Kodesh* and delivered by both *Limudei Kodesh* and secular teachers.
- *Limudei Kodesh* is integrated within the National Curriculum so that *Kodesh* themes permeate the children's learning. For example, when learning about the *Arba'a*

*Minim*, at *Succot*, links are made to their science work on the senses. When considering the *middah* of helping others, this is linked to work in history and the story of Florence Nightingale.

- The *Limudei Kodesh* curriculum is enhanced by an enrichment programme, entitled *Beyond the Curriculum* which encompasses, among other things, Israeli dance, matza baking sessions, speakers, outings and art workshops.
- The school is in the process of developing a Year 2 curriculum and is starting to plan for Key Stage 2, whilst also developing an eighth area for the EYFS relating to *Limudei Kodesh* content and skills.

## **The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because:**

- The school meets legal requirements for collective worship through daily *tefillah* and other opportunities to recite *brachot*. The majority take part with enthusiasm, singing and reciting the daily prayers and *brachot*, and learning about what they mean. Although they are encouraged to do so, not all of the boys wear *kippot* and *tzitzit* for these religious moments. However, the school has noted this as an area for development.
- Daily *tefillah* makes a good contribution to pupils' reading skills, as children follow and read the prayers. However, ongoing assessment practices could be strengthened.
- Outstanding spiritual development is very evident in the strong opportunities provided for pupils to reflect and empathise with others. Examples of this can be seen throughout the academic calendar, such as during the *Chanukah* play; on *Tu bi'Shvat* when children donated fruit to a local charity, during Forest School sessions when children talk about *Tikkun Olam* or during *Lunch and Learn* with the Religious Principal.
- Children learn about *tzedaka* which is built into school life. Even though they are still very young, they raise money for such charities such as Shelter, Gift, and Norwood.
- *Middot* are linked to the Behaviour Policy through weekly SEAL sessions, topics, *parshah* and weekly celebration certificates at *Kabbalat Shabbat*.
- Children enjoy learning about other cultures and beliefs as well as their own, and the school makes good use of the different backgrounds of the families when parents come in to talk about 'where I come from'.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish education is good because:**

- The school deserves praise for giving the children a first rate start to their Jewish journey in life.
- Leadership and Management of the *Limudei Kodesh* department is good. The headteacher and governors have laid strong foundations which have been built upon by the present acting headteacher and *Kodesh* coordinator. All the leadership team have a shared vision for the school and are committed to school improvement.
- The profile for *Limudei Kodesh* needs to be more clearly emphasised within the school's self-evaluation.
- There are effective professional development strategies for teachers, organised by the Head of *Limudei Kodesh* and the *Limudei Kodesh* educational consultant.
- Staff feel very well supported professionally, and induction procedures for new staff are well organised. These involve generic training in the skills of teaching as well as specific lesson observation. Monitoring of teaching practice through performance management strategies is strong.
- The Religious Principal gives impressive support to the school. He regularly visits the school in an advisory capacity and was instrumental in the setting up of the school. He speaks at key events, such as at an evening to welcome new parents, and his advice is sought by parents, staff and the children.
- The school has set in action *project inspiration* to further engage parents in their children's learning.
- The governing body carries out its duties very effectively and offers good support within the framework of being a 'critical friend' to school leaders and staff.

## **Views of parents and Carers:**

*Pikuach* invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Rimon School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. These were all very positive. The comments below encapsulate their delight:

*'My child feels a strong connection with her Jewish identity and heritage. She loves learning Ivrit and Kodesh. She enjoys Tefillah very much and says the Shema each night - she is inspired by her teachers and what she learns at school. I particularly love the way the Middah of the week is incorporated into Table Talk (which is sent home for each Shabbat) - which teaches the children the importance of the Parshah as well as the relevant Middah.'*

*'I think the School has done an excellent job of ensuring the children have a strong knowledge of Jewish festivals/Shabbat and general parshah each week. My child has a thirst for Jewish learning and enjoys her Kodesh and Ivrit. So much so, that she regularly discusses at home what she has learned at school.'*



*'The school does an excellent job of teaching our child Kodesh. She finds it stimulating at school and is keen to talk about it - and importantly practice it - at home. The school's religious ethos was an important reason for sending her to Rimon, and so far it is fulfilling what we'd hoped for.'*

*'Rimon has a wide range of Jewish studies and is very much involved with festivals and other extracurricular activities. This week we had a wonderful Purim party and our Rabbi, Rabbi Belovski gives amazing guidance and talks for which we are most grateful.'*

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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.