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1. INTRODUCTION

In denominational schools, religious education and collective worship are inspected under Section 23 of the 1996 Schools Inspection Act, by an inspector or team of inspectors commissioned by the appropriate authority (usually the governing body).

The governing body of Simon Marks Jewish Primary School chose to be inspected according to the “*Pikuach*—Advancing Jewish Education” framework. *Pikuach* is managed by the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The purpose of *Pikuach* inspections is to report on:

- the educational standards achieved in Jewish Studies at the school
- the quality of Jewish education provided by the school
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school
- arrangements for collective worship at the school

A glossary of Hebrew terms used appears at the end of this report.

1.1 Basic information about the school

Name of school	Simon Marks Jewish Primary School
Type of school	primary
Status of school	voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	mixed
Number on roll	134
Headteacher	Laurie Rosenberg
Head of Jewish Studies	<i>vacancy</i>
Address of school	75 Cazenove Road, London N16 6PD
Telephone number	020 8806 6048
Fax number	020 8442 4722
Chair of the governing body	Jo-Ann Myers
Name of religious adviser	Rabbi H Gluck (informal adviser to the school)
Name and address of foundation body	Scopus Jewish Educational Trust Balfour House, 741 High Road London N12 0BQ
Local education authority	Hackney (Learning Trust)
Unique reference number	100275

Reporting inspector	Angela Gluck Wood
Team inspector	Rabbi Geoffrey Shisler
Date of inspection	8 – 12 November 2004; 24 – 28 Cheshvan 5765
Date of Ofsted inspection	10 – 13 November 2003
Date of previous Pikuach inspection	2 – 6 November 1998; 13 – 17 Cheshvan 5759

Intake of pupils and the area served by the school

- 1.1.1 The school is located in Stoke Newington but a relatively small number of pupils live in the immediate vicinity. The school has no specific catchment area and families are drawn to the school from an exceptionally wide orbit. Families' social and economic circumstances span the full range. Pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school is average on the whole but wide-ranging. The proportion of pupils with a first language other than English is higher than average and the majority of these pupils are *Ivrit* speakers.
- 1.1.2 While not being formally affiliated with any synagogue or synagogue organisation, the school adopts a modern orthodox approach to Jewish education and practice, with a Zionist perspective. The school is supported by the Simon Marks Jewish Primary School Trust, the Scopus Educational Trust being the foundation body.
- 1.1.3 For the purposes of admission, the governing body recognises as Jewish those children who have a Jewish parent. There is also a very small number of non-Jewish pupils on roll. Pupils come from Ashkenazi and Sefardi (including Adeni) backgrounds and a significant number of pupils are of Israeli parentage. Amongst the school's families, there is a wide spectrum of Jewish observance. For some, the school is the major, or only, formal contact with the Jewish community. To date, all Year 6 pupils who apply to a Jewish secondary school gain entry.

1.2 School data and indicators

Number of full- and part-time Jewish Studies teachers

Full-time equivalent of Jewish Studies teachers:	1.5
Number of full-time Jewish Studies teachers:	0
Number of part-time Jewish Studies teachers:	4

There is currently so subject leader for Jewish Studies at the school.

Pupil-teacher ratio and class sizes in Jewish Studies

Pupil-teacher ratio in Jewish Studies:	67:1
Average class size in Jewish Studies:	15

Total teaching time per week in Jewish Studies

(Jewish Studies is integrated in the whole Foundation Stage curriculum.)

Key Stage 1	2.25 hours
Key Stage 2	3.0 hours

Destination of Year 6 pupils in 2004

Destination of pupils	Number of girls	Number of boys	Total pupils
JFS	6	1	7
King Solomon High School	-	2	2
Hasmonean High School	-	2	2
Non-Jewish maintained schools	1	1	2
Non-Jewish independent schools	3	2	5

1.3 Record of inspection evidence

- 1.3.1 This *Pikuach* inspection took place from 24th to 28th Cheshvan 5765 (from 8th to 12th November 2004), that is, about one month after the festival of *Sukkot* and about one month before the festival of *Hanukah*.
- 1.3.2 The reporting inspector spent 3.5 days at the school spread over 5 days. The team inspector spent 3 days at the school, spread over 4 days.
- 1.3.3 The inspectors observed twelve lessons, one of which was an *Ivrit* lesson and two of which were extended periods on local field trips of Jewish importance. They also made brief observations of classes during the 'Technology Day' that took place during the inspection. They were present during *tefillah* on a total of nine occasions: five of these were assemblies for Reception to Year 6 pupils (one of which included *havdalah* and two of which included *kabbalat Shabbat*); two were in the Nursery, where *tefillah* and teaching are integrated; and two were *birkat hamazon* after lunch. They observed and interacted with the pupils during outside play at lunchtime and mid-morning on two days. The Jewish extra-curricular dance club was also observed briefly.
- 1.3.4 They scrutinised the Jewish Studies written work (to date in the current school year) of the Key Stage 1 pupils and of a sample of pupils in each year at Key Stage 2. They also examined teachers' short- and medium-term plans, and other planning and policy documents that the school made available before and during the inspection.
- 1.3.5 The reporting inspector had discussions with the headteacher before and during the inspection period; and also, on separate occasions, with the chair of the governing body and the chair of the trustees, respectively. The team inspector had a discussion with the headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspectors also had short informal discussions with Jewish Studies staff.

- 1.3.6 Before the inspection, a meeting was held for parents to express their views of the Jewish education at the school; 16 parents attended this meeting. A pre-inspection questionnaire was also sent to the parents or carers in each of the school's 80 households: 36 were completed, representing a 45% return. The results of this questionnaire appears in the appendix to this report. During the inspection, particular attention was paid to examining the aspects of Jewish education highlighted by parents at the meeting or on the questionnaire.
- 1.3.7 The reporting inspector interviewed, on separate occasions, a group of Year 5 pupils and a group of Year 6 pupils on their experiences of Jewish Studies and their perceptions of the Jewish character of the school. Inspectors also had many brief, informal conversations with pupils, both inside and outside of lessons, on Jewish education at the school.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Main Findings

- 2.1.1 The school is welcoming and warm, with a lively and joyous atmosphere, and pupils feel supported and cared for. The school's Jewish ethos is clear and strong, and through it pupils come to have pride in their heritage and an assurance in their identity. Much of the Jewish knowledge and understanding that the pupils acquire at the school comes from their experience of its Jewish life, not only from Jewish Studies lessons. The headteacher and the governing body, with the firm support of the trustees, are far-sighted in their plans to develop the school and it is undergoing a process of change in order to improve aspects of its Jewish education. Parents and pupils are appreciative of these enhancements and of the greater sense of partnership with the school that they now experience.
- 2.1.2 Achievement and progress in Jewish Studies are satisfactory but very variable across the age range. Some children may enter the school with little prior knowledge or experience of the Jewish tradition. In the Foundation Stage, pupils make rapid and secure progress and reach a remarkably high level in their knowledge and understanding. At Key Stage 1, pupils do not progress satisfactorily to a higher level. At Key Stage 2, achievement and progress are satisfactory. Key Stage 2 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the *Torah*. They can adequately explain Jewish practices and the reasons for them, as well as the basis for certain Jewish values. The school needs to address these inconsistencies in pupils' achievement and progress and raise the overall standard.
- 2.1.3 In the Foundation Stage, children display great curiosity, wonder and excitement in the Jewish dimension of the curriculum. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are respectful and conscientious. When given

opportunities to collaborate with one another, to undertake investigations or to express themselves creatively, they respond with maturity.

- 2.1.4 The degree of *derech erez* evident throughout the school is one of its most notable and praiseworthy features. Relationships between members of the school community are characterised by respect, sensitivity, warmth and good will. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils speak highly of the school as a 'family'.
- 2.1.5 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is very good in the school as a whole. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect on human experience and on the Jewish dimension of their lives. The school does much to foster pupils' moral sense and to promote charitable action in the Jewish community and the wider society. A number of cultural events, including extracurricular activities and relationships with Jewish schools in other countries, enhance the pupils' understanding of the world.
- 2.1.6 The school complies with the legal requirement for collective worship, through *tefillah* every day. Pupils know by heart the traditional prayers that are recited, some of which are sung, and there is a high level of participation. Assemblies for 5–11 year olds also appropriately include opportunities for private reflection, which the pupils take seriously. In the Nursery, some prayers are expressed through movement and dance, sometimes with musical accompaniment. At all ages, pupils learn to recite the appropriate blessings before and after eating.
- 2.1.7 There is an appropriate allocation of time to Jewish Studies for all age groups. The curriculum has been redesigned to meet the needs of the pupils and to prepare them for Jewish life in the 21st century. Its aims are clear and well founded but they do not provide specific guidance for teachers in planning lessons.
- 2.1.8 Teaching in Jewish Studies is satisfactory or better but there are significant variations in teaching for pupils in the various age groups. The teaching seen in the Foundation Stage was good or very good; the Key Stage 1 lessons observed involved both satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching; and teaching at Key Stage 2 was satisfactory, while some lessons contained good features. Teachers have good subject knowledge but most lessons are not planned well enough with learning objectives in mind. In some cases, the pupils' interests are not engaged and opportunities are not taken for them to develop higher skills. Most teaching does not provide enough challenge and support for pupils across the attainment range. There are, however, examples of good teaching in Jewish Studies on which the school can draw in raising the overall quality of teaching.

- 2.1.9 Assessment is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 and poor at Key Stage 1. Pupils are not given any indication of what they might do to improve and reports to parents are not constructive enough. The tasks that teachers give pupils and which they assess are too limited in scope. When teachers plan teaching and learning, they do not use knowledge of what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- 2.1.10 Staffing costs are high. The quantity and quality of the available learning resources are unsatisfactory. The school does not have a subject leader to coordinate Jewish Studies, to implement the new curriculum, to evaluate learning and to monitor teaching. There are plans to appoint a Jewish Studies specialist to carry out these responsibilities and play a wider role in whole-school and family-oriented education.
- 2.1.11 Since the previous *Pikuach* inspection, a complete review of the curriculum for Jewish Studies has been carried out and there has been an extremely great improvement in the communication with parents.
- 2.1.12 The school has the dynamism, ability and determination to build on its strengths and to provide a more effective and even richer programme of Jewish education for the pupils.

2.2 Key Issues for Action

The governing body and headteacher should:

- 2.2.1 review the staffing arrangements for Jewish Studies, in the interests of improving efficiency and effectiveness
- 2.2.2 establish systems for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the assessment of pupils' achievement and progress
- 2.2.3 enhance and extend the range of teaching styles so as to develop pupils' learning skills and provide greater challenge and support, as appropriate
- 2.2.4 improve assessment procedures so that pupils understand how to improve and teachers use the information from assessment in their teaching
- 2.2.5 build on the foundations laid in the broad curriculum outline so that it becomes a more precise and practical document that can be used when planning teaching and learning
- 2.2.6 provide opportunities for professional development and allocate funds for learning resources

3. STANDARDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

3.1 Achievement and progress in Jewish Studies

- 3.1.1 Achievement and progress, as measured against the standards that the school sets for itself, are satisfactory but vary substantially across the age range. While levels of achievement and progress are lower than in the previous *Pikuach* inspection, as measured against the school's expectations, it should be noted that in the intervening period these expectations have been raised and have changed in nature.
- 3.1.2 Much of the Jewish knowledge and understanding that the pupils have acquired derives not only from formal Jewish Studies lessons but also from their experience of the Jewish life of the school. These are mainly aspects of Jewish practice, such as *tefillah*, *kabbalat Shabbat* and the celebrations of *chagim*.
- 3.1.3 Some children may enter the school with little prior knowledge or experience of the Jewish tradition. However, in the Foundation Stage, pupils make rapid and secure progress and reach a remarkably high level in their knowledge and understanding of Judaism. Within only a few months of their arrival, they are able to recognise *Ivrit* letters. By the Reception year, they have grasped right-left directionality and have good awareness of male-female and singular-plural forms in *Ivrit*. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children use spontaneously, appropriately and accurately a range of terms to describe relationships and values, as well as Jewish practices, particularly those connected with *Shabbat*, *chagim* and *tefillah*. This peppering of their English speech with *Ivrit* is a comfortable characteristic of their language. They are able to recite *Ivrit* blessings associated with specific ritual actions correctly and confidently. They can describe and explain features of *tefillah* and *Shabbat* observance, and recount Jewish stories they have learned.
- 3.1.4 At Key Stage 1, there is a broad maintenance of pupils' achievement from the Foundation Stage but pupils do not progress satisfactorily to a higher level. Pupils have good skills in reading and writing *Ivrit* but do not always understand the *Ivrit* they are reading in Jewish Studies. In some aspects of Jewish Studies, their attainment is neither appropriate for their age nor matches the school's expectations. This is apparent, for example, in their recounting of biblical stories and their recall of the features of a synagogue and a *Torah* scroll. Pupils' abilities to reason and to build on ideas need to be developed in Jewish Studies.
- 3.1.5 At Key Stage 2, achievement and progress are satisfactory. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the key events and ideas in the *Torah* and an adequate appreciation of its narrative thread. Their knowledge of other periods of Jewish history is sketchy. Their ability to explain Jewish practices and their underlying reasons are satisfactory. By

the end of the key stage, pupils understand the concept of *middot* and can explain how the *middot* they have studied are derived from Jewish texts and experiences. They are aware of the distinction between text and commentary but blur this distinction when approaching specific texts. In one lesson observed, pupils showed that they were capable of building on one another's ideas through discussion and of sustaining a thematic enquiry over several weeks. Throughout the key stage, most pupils lack confidence in their use of *Ivrit* in Jewish Studies and in their own powers of interpretation.

- 3.1.6 The school needs to address the causes for these inconsistencies in pupils' achievement and ensure that the progress they make in their early years at the school is sustained throughout.

3.2 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response to Jewish Studies

- 3.2.1 In Jewish Studies lessons, pupils are respectful of the teacher, concentrate hard and carry out tasks diligently, within the guidelines they are set. Most are keen to succeed and many have an interest in the subject matter for its own sake. When interviewed about their experience of Jewish Studies, pupils expressed an appreciation of the wide range of knowledge with which they are presented.

- 3.2.2 In the Foundation Stage, children display great curiosity, wonder and excitement in the Jewish dimension of the curriculum. In the majority of lessons at Key Stages 1 and 2, however, pupils are not given openings to collaborate with one another, to undertake investigations, to engage in an open-ended exploration of beliefs and values, or to express themselves creatively. Yet when they are given such opportunities, they respond with maturity. For example, in one Key Stage 2 lesson observed, pupils generated enormous energy as they cooperated productively on an activity to identify, refine and apply Jewish concepts to a practical question of living.

- 3.2.3 In interviews, pupils conveyed the need for a wider range of learning possibilities, including debates and discussions, and much more extensive channels for the creative expression of their ideas, such as through the visual and performing arts. It was clear from observing pupils in assemblies and in some lessons that they respond vibrantly and vigorously when such opportunities are provided for them. The interviews also revealed pupils' ability and confidence in framing questions, evaluating evidence and drawing conclusions, communicating their commitments, and seeking answers from the Jewish tradition. The development of such patterns of thought is fundamental to the school's vision of education and it has begun the task of making them more central to the learning process across the curriculum.

- 3.2.4 The degree of *derech erez* evident throughout the school is one of its most notable and praiseworthy features. Relationships between members of the school community are characterised by respect, sensitivity, warmth and good will. Pupils respond joyfully and with alacrity to requests for help, no matter how big or how small, and they often seek out ways in which they can be supportive of others. Several instances were seen of pupils volunteering to take responsibility or assuming a leadership role, within a limited context. The School Council generated the sense of the school as a vivid community and was empowered to make decisions for the benefit of the whole school.
- 3.2.5 Pupils value the school highly and readily speak of it as a 'family'. Their behaviour is invariably good at all ages: they move and interact with a concern for the safety and well-being of others and they handle resources with care. They provide good role models for each another and there were instances when, in resolving difficulties and differences between themselves, they were heard to refer to Jewish values by their *Ivrit* terms. In interviews, they expressed a desire for further extracurricular activities on Jewish themes. This drawing from the Jewish tradition as a source of understanding and affirming values is in keeping with the school's aims of providing a seamless Jewish experience, although it is at a relatively early stage of development.
- 3.2.6 Pupils are aware that many staff members and a small number of children are not Jewish; likewise, that the members of the school community come from diverse backgrounds and endorse Jewish practices to varying extents. In interviews, while accepting the complexity of this situation, pupils expressed appreciation of all members of the school family and their presence as an enrichment of everyone's lives. Older pupils also conveyed the idea that such diversity at the school mirrors the wider world and prepares them for life in an open society. At work and at play, pupils interact thoughtfully and appreciatively, regardless of their family background and the extent of their connection with the Jewish heritage.
- 3.2.7 Older pupils have begun to crystallise their thoughts about their responsibilities as Jews in society and are seeking avenues for additional charitable initiatives.

3.3 Collective worship

- 3.3.1 The school fulfils the legal requirement to provide collective worship by holding a daily assembly during which there is *tefillah*. This requirement is also met when pupils are on field trips. On Mondays the programme includes *havdalah* and, on Fridays, *kabbalat Shabbat*. While there is no written policy for collective worship, members of the school understand its purposes and procedures are well established. Assemblies

undoubtedly contribute considerably towards the strong Jewish ethos of the school.

- 3.3.2 Assemblies have a positive, welcoming atmosphere. Pupils participate with great involvement and singing is well modulated. In the assemblies observed, only Key Stage 2 pupils had *siddurim* and they did not refer to them, as they know by heart the traditional prayers that are recited, some of which are sung to lively tunes. Thought should be given to the use of the *siddur* and to ways of engaging the younger pupils more actively in *tefillah*.
- 3.3.3 The headteacher, who leads most assemblies for 5–11 year olds, creates a climate in which pupils' spirituality can be expressed, and he both models and encourages talk about God. Assemblies also appropriately include opportunities for private reflection, which the pupils take seriously, sometimes offering to share the subject of their thoughts. On occasions, a specific focus is suggested to the pupils, such as the significance of Armistice Day on 11th November.
- 3.3.4 Nursery children participate in *tefillah* several times a week and some prayers are expressed through movement and dance, sometimes with musical accompaniment. Through the use of a purpose-built, child-sized *bimah*, the *tefillah* mirrors that in a synagogue. A boy is chosen for the role of *shaliach tzibur* and the children enact a congregation.
- 3.3.5 In *havdalah* and *kabbalat Shabbat*, a family atmosphere is created, with pupils chosen, in turn from week to week, to rehearse parental roles. *Kabbalat Shabbat* includes candle lighting, *kiddush* and an appropriate repertoire of *Shabbat* songs; this includes musical accompaniment at Key Stage 1. The 'family' shares *challah* with all present. For some children, these rituals are an effective introduction to *Shabbat* practices; for others, they are an experience that resonates with, and affirms in the life of the school, their observance of *Shabbat* at home.
- 3.3.6 From Nursery to Year 6, pupils recite the relevant blessings before eating, including the *brachah* on washing their hands before eating bread. At the end of lunch each day, pupils recite parts of *birkat hamazon*, increasing the extent as they progress through the school.
- 3.3.7 The school provides a published *siddur* for each child from Year 2 upwards. This involves a *Chagigat Siddur*, in which parents are invited to participate in presenting a *siddur* to their own child. Likewise there is a *Chagigat Chumash* for Year 3 pupils: during the inspection, they were in the process of memorising speeches that they would deliver to parents and guests. A beautiful, handmade and personalised *siddur* for each of the Nursery children was in preparation at the time of the inspection. Each one is illustrated with photographs of the individual child

performing the various ritual actions that accompany the prayers and blessings in the child's *siddur*.

4. QUALITY OF JEWISH EDUCATION

4.1 Quality and range of the curriculum

- 4.1.1 There is an appropriate allocation of time to Jewish Studies for all age groups. In redesigning the curriculum to focus on desirable learning outcomes, the school has acted on the recommendation of the previous *Pikuach* inspection.
- 4.1.2 The three attainment targets (learning about Judaism; learning from Judaism; the experience of Judaism) are well conceived in terms of presenting Judaism as vibrant and relevant to today's life, and they acknowledge the breadth of the pupils' Jewish backgrounds. The overarching philosophy of the curriculum is well defined but some elements of the identified content are overly ambitious; in particular, the work of modern Jewish philosophers (identified for study at Key Stage 2) whose thoughts and language levels are extremely demanding.
- 4.1.3 Teachers cannot glean from this curriculum what or how to teach and it is not possible to achieve the 'learning from Judaism' attainment target unless the parameters of the 'learning about Judaism' attainment target are succinctly defined. In effect, teachers they are left entirely to their own devices in the process of medium- and short-term planning.
- 4.1.4 The curriculum rightly emphasizes the importance of Jewish texts yet it does not indicate which texts are to be explored. In effect, textual studies are very slight and seldom amount to more than a reference to a verse from the *parashah* being studied.
- 4.1.5 Another key curricular strand is *middot*. Pupils at Key Stage 2 use booklets, which were produced in house before the curriculum was redesigned, on issues such as Jewish responsibility, conservation and animal welfare. In view of the lack of guidance on the implementation of the curriculum, the extent to which these materials meet the aims of the curriculum is not clear.
- 4.1.6 For practice to match vision, a detailed and supportive scheme of work is required. It should stipulate the intended learning outcomes and how the strands are to be weighted and organised, and it should provide guidance on teaching methods and the most appropriate resources.

4.2 Teaching

- 4.2.1 Teaching in Jewish Studies is satisfactory but there are significant variations in teaching for pupils in the various age groups. The teaching seen in the Foundation Stage was good or very good; the Key Stage 1 lessons observed involved both satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching; and teaching at Key Stage 2 was satisfactory, while some lessons contained good features. The overall quality of teaching in Jewish Studies is unchanged since the last *Pikuach* inspection.
- 4.2.2 The Jewish Studies teachers have good subject knowledge and almost all are native speakers of *Ivrit*. In all the lessons observed, teachers demanded high standards of behaviour of the pupils and they organised classrooms efficiently. In most cases, time was managed well but in some instances lessons either dragged or were rushed towards the end. All lessons began with a clear statement by the teacher of the subject matter of the lesson but in only one case did the teacher articulate the learning objectives for the benefit of the pupils. A suitable amount of homework is set and it follows the lesson appropriately but the range of subject matter and of activities is too narrow. On the whole, the teaching is not providing adequate challenge and support for pupils across the attainment range.
- 4.2.3 The unsatisfactory teaching that was observed is characterised by three or more of the following factors. Teachers do not plan lessons with the pupils' prior attainment or aptitudes in mind, and this results in insufficient support for some pupils and insufficient challenge for most pupils. Learning objectives are too narrowly focused on factual recall and too little on depth of understanding or the joy of exploration. Teaching does not encourage pupils to take responsibility, to show initiative or to pose questions, and opportunities for learning through pair or group work are not given. The questions posed of the pupils are entirely closed, eliciting very limited responses. The presentation of material by the teacher is unduly lengthy: it does not engage the pupils' interests or meet their learning needs. For example, in one of the field trips that was observed, pupils were required to be passive for most of the time, their curiosity was not fostered and opportunities for their personal development were not taken.
- 4.2.4 Where teaching is good or very good, the teacher's presentation engages the pupils and draws on Jewish beliefs and values with relevance to the pupils' lives. The lesson is conducted at a brisk pace, activities are varied and suitably pitched, and there are high expectations of the pupils' learning, beyond the simple acquisition of facts. The teacher knows the pupils well, has a good rapport with individuals and with the class as a whole, and creates appropriate learning groups that maximise the pupils' potential for achievement. The pupils' interests are maintained throughout so that they are highly motivated to make progress. One Key

Stage 2 lesson began with the teacher articulating the skills that the pupils would be developing and embodied the principle of learning through discovery. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is further enhanced by the involvement of a music specialist, who provides effective musical accompaniment for prayers and songs. In the very best lessons at the school, teaching meets the school's aims of cultivating "imagination, curiosity, creativity".

- 4.2.5 The school needs to address the variability in teaching with the aim of raising all teaching to the level of the best, so that the pupils benefit from consistently good quality. The school has examples of good practice, both in Jewish Studies and in other subjects, on which to draw as models for teaching, in addition to offering staff opportunities for mentoring and specific courses.

4.3 Assessment

- 4.3.1 In the Foundation Stage, the assessment of pupils' progress in the Jewish aspects of the curriculum is appropriately integrated with the assessment of their development according to the learning goals for this stage. In the Nursery, good examples were seen of the formative assessment of learning through the interactions between the teacher and a child or children, in which they were engaged in reflecting orally on what they had learned.
- 4.3.2 Assessment is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 and poor at Key Stage 1. At both key stages, pupils' written work is marked on a regular basis and records are kept of the tasks that have been undertaken. At Key Stage 2, there are frequently brief and encouraging comments but they are not always legible to the pupils. At neither key stage, are pupils given any indication of their achievement, any progress they are making or any sense of what they might do to improve. Likewise, comments on reports to parents are not sufficiently constructive to enable parents to support and promote their children's learning. The extent to which ancillary staff can support individuals and small groups of pupils effectively is limited.
- 4.3.3 The tasks that teachers assess in Jewish Studies are almost entirely short term and limited in scope and, as such, reflect the learning objectives of current teaching plans. Teachers do not assess or record the skills that pupils have developed or need to focus on.
- 4.3.4 There has been a decline in the procedures for assessment in Jewish Studies since the last *Pikuach* inspection. This period is marked by considerable development in assessment in the National Curriculum, the aims of which the school is currently addressing. There is thus a disparity between assessment in Jewish Studies and the direction in which other curriculum areas at the school are moving. This lends additional weight to the need for the school to improve assessment

policy and practice in Jewish Studies. Professional development should especially focus on procedures for formative assessment and the use of the information about individual pupils' achievement when planning further opportunities for learning.

4.4 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 4.4.1 Almost all the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire believe that the life of the school gives their child a good understanding of Jewish values. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents praised the current headteacher's role in affirming and embodying important Jewish values.
- 4.4.2 All members of staff are committed to the Jewish ethos of the school and are totally supportive and encouraging of it, to the extent that even in physical education (PE) lessons, games might be played in which *Ivrit* nouns and numbers are used. The music curriculum appropriately includes a repertoire of Israeli and other Jewish material, as does the school choir. During the 'Technology Day' that took place during the inspection, the Year 2 class was designing and making puppets based on the 'Peter and the Wolf' story and the teacher ingeniously engaged the pupils in adapting the story to a *Hanukah* theme.
- 4.4.3 All members of the school community regularly use *Ivrit* greetings. Staff who are native speakers of *Ivrit* regularly use the language in their practical and professional communications, within earshot of the pupils. This provides pupils with additional exposure to *Ivrit* and is an indication of the value placed on the language at the school.
- 4.4.4 Staff have good working relationships and are cooperative and mutually supportive. They model the behaviour that they expect of pupils.
- 4.4.5 Given the school's admissions policy and the wide range of Jewish practice amongst the pupils' families, there are discussions amongst parents of the most appropriate level of Jewish observance that might be encouraged in pupils' homes. What is not in question, however, is the importance of instilling in the pupils an appreciation of the beauty and wisdom of the Jewish heritage and of cultivating a strong Jewish identity. The school is indeed pervaded by a very strong awareness of Jewish culture and commitment. There is a great emphasis on *middot*, both in lessons and in the general conduct of pupils. The school supports a number of Jewish and non-Jewish charities and in 2003–2004 raised about £2000. The school choir performs at communal events and in Jewish residential homes, which Year 4 pupils also visit.
- 4.4.6 A school council, comprised of representatives from each class, provides pupils with a model of democracy and communal responsibility in action. As a result of its deliberations in 2003–2004, the headteacher and

staff endorsed and acted upon various suggestions made by pupils. These ranged from an anonymous 'feelings box' to the addition of blow heaters in a cold part of the building.

4.4.7 Visits are regularly made to local synagogues and a *kasher* butcher, and extracurricular activities include Habonim and an Israeli dance club. Year 6 pupils have a residential experience outside London, where the emphasis is on living together, while cross-school exchanges have been arranged to enhance pupils' multicultural education. There are growing links between the school and schools in Israel and other countries. These varied cultural experiences and opportunities both flow from and enhance the school's Jewish ethos.

4.5 Equality of opportunity

4.5.1 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. For pupils who need additional support in Jewish Studies, there is sufficient provision to enable them to participate in lessons but inadequate provision for them to benefit fully from Jewish Studies.

4.5.2 Within the requirements of *halachah*, boys and girls play distinctive but equally valid roles in *tefillah*, including *kabbalat Shabbat*. Young children are sometimes permitted to perform opposite-gender roles, for educational purposes.

4.5.3 Parents of the very small number of non-Jewish children at the school have not chosen to withdraw them from either Jewish Studies or *tefillah*, nor sought alternative arrangements for religious education and collective worship.

4.5.4 The school values its diversity and it seizes many opportunities to celebrate the distinctive qualities of the pupils' various religious and cultural backgrounds.

4.6 Support, guidance and welfare

4.6.1 The school provides a safe environment, within a very secure site, and the degree of supervision is high. On the field trips during the inspection, there was a very good adult-pupil ratio and careful attention was paid to safety.

4.6.2 'Where children come first' is not merely a slogan: the pupils' well-being is central to the school's life. Staff at the school have a good rapport with the pupils and know each of them well as individuals. Relationships are strengthened through the daily 'circle time'. Pupils know that if they are unwell or troubled, there are many caring adults at the school to whom they can turn for help.

- 4.6.3 The school is conscientious in ensuring that the level of observance that pupils practise at home is not compromised at school. The food provided on site and on field trips is *kasher* and the school uniform for boys includes *kippah* and *tzitzit*.
- 4.6.4 An outside mentor is involved in addressing any pupil's learning difficulties. Each term targets are set for each pupil. As Jewish education develops at the school, it should consider including specific targets related to Jewish subjects.
- 4.6.5 The headteacher meets Year 6 pupils and their parents to provide relevant information on primary-secondary transfer and to discuss the options available. The majority of pupils proceed to a Jewish secondary school.

4.7 Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

- 4.7.1 Special requirements in Jewish Studies fall within the remit of the school's special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). Individual education plans (IEPs) do not include particular provision for Jewish Studies. Pupils who receive additional support in Jewish Studies are those who receive additional support in other subjects. However, special support is given to pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2 and have not previously studied Jewish subjects formally. The school should consider whether there are other circumstances in which pupils may need additional support in Jewish Studies.
- 4.7.2 Learning assistants play a full role in the life of the school and pupils are served well by the number available, as well as by the small class sizes. They support pupils both in class and out of class, as appropriate.
- 4.7.3 In Jewish Studies classes, there is some differentiation in the type of oral questions that are posed of pupils and in the teacher's expectations of pupils. There is also some differentiation in the written materials, such as the weekly sheet on the *parshat ha'shavua*, which is designed to cater for pupils of differing levels of attainment. However, there are insufficient learning materials and approaches to meet pupils' wide-ranging learning needs.
- 4.7.4 The school has a close relationship with Norwood, whose social workers provide assistance and guidance to families where necessary. The school also calls upon Jewish Care and Binoh, as appropriate.

4.8 Partnership with parents and the Jewish community

- 4.8.1 Parents are extremely satisfied with the improvement in communication from the school in recent years and with the way in which they have been drawn into a closer partnership with the school concerning their children's Jewish education. They are especially appreciative of the openness of the headteacher and his supportive approach to parents.
- 4.8.2 Although a very large majority of parents feel that it would be easy to approach the school with any questions or concerns they might have regarding their child's Jewish education, they feel that their child's Jewish Studies teacher should be present on open evenings when they meet the class teacher. The school should improve the arrangements for parents to consult Jewish Studies staff so that it is the school that takes the initiative for opening dialogue with parents on Jewish education.
- 4.8.3 The weekly newsletter not only informs parents about events in the life of the school, it also conveys information and ideas on broader Jewish matters. As such, it is greatly valued as a regular and reliable form of family education. Likewise, when studying the *parshat ha'shavua*, pupils are given a worksheet for homework that they are encouraged to share with their parents. While some parents express dissatisfaction with the fact that the teaching of the *parshat ha'shavua* is not always synchronised with the Jewish calendar, parents expressed satisfaction with the fact that the worksheet served as a springboard for them to discuss the *Torah* with their children.
- 4.8.4 Parents' gifts of their time to the school, in relation to Jewish education, range from support for reading in *Ivrit* to accompanying pupils on educational visits, such as on the visit to a local synagogue that was observed. During the inspection, one parent was taking photographs to create a display during 'Jewish Food for Thought', a forthcoming school event featuring discussions and presentations by notable figures in the Jewish community.
- 4.8.5 The active Parent Teacher Association (PTA), which has parent representatives from each class, organises fundraising functions and events for pupils. Parents also take responsibility for the security and reception of the school, according to a well-organised rota. The governing body's 'parents and community group' has the objective of further raising the school's profile in the community.
- 4.8.6 The school has an informal relationship with Rabbi Gluck, who is considered 'the school rabbi' and is available for consultations. He addresses pupils at special assemblies, for example, before *chagim* and at the *chagigat Siddur* and *chagigat Chumash* ceremonies. The school has also developed good links with local Jewish establishments, such as synagogues and the *kasher* butcher, both of which were visited for

educational purposes during the inspection, and with a local Jewish Care residence for the elderly.

5. MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL AND THEIR IMPACT ON JEWISH EDUCATION

5.1 Management

- 5.1.1 The school benefits from the dynamic leadership of the headteacher who is a particularly strong presence in school life and who presents a bold and lively model of inclusive and future-oriented education. Parents, governors, trustees, staff and older pupils speak of his infectious enthusiasm, the warmth that he generates and the new life that has been breathed into Jewish education at the school during the period of his headship.
- 5.1.2 The vision for Jewish education is clear and strong, and is shared by the headteacher and the governing body: amongst its assets is the chair, who is a highly experienced and esteemed Jewish educator. She and other governors give generously of their time and energy for the benefit of the school, with the aim of improving provision, enhancing the quality of education and raising pupils' levels of achievement. The governing body is committed to proceeding by consensus with the parents and to involving them actively in the decision-making process. Meetings of the governing body now begin with a *devar Torah*, which symbolises the value of Jewish tradition at the heart of its deliberations. The chair of the trustees, who is a member of the governing body, brings additional and valuable experience to the school's governance: professional expertise in financial procedures, a commitment to forge a new vision for Jewish education and passionate advocacy for the school.
- 5.1.3 The role that the trustees play in supporting the school is highly beneficial. Notably they, along with others within their network, are tireless in their efforts to secure funding for the Jewish Studies, *Ivrit* and music posts. This commitment and dedication derive from their confidence in the school's future and also from a sense of necessity, because insufficient funds are raised through voluntary parental levies.
- 5.1.4 The staffing levels in Jewish subjects at the school are exceptionally high. In view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and progress in Jewish Studies, the subject is a financially inefficient element of the school's provision.
- 5.1.5 The school has lacked subject leadership in Jewish Studies for about two years and this has coincided with a period in which a new framework for the Jewish Studies curriculum has been introduced. The success of such a process requires translation of the aims and broad outline of the curriculum into concrete requirements and suggestions for improved

practice. Yet the realisation of this goal has been hampered by the absence of a subject coordinator who can drive the vision forward in practical ways. This requires precise articulation of learning objectives in medium- and short-term planning, and more rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching. The implementation of the curriculum has not been effected. The monitoring of teaching and of the evaluation of pupils' achievement and progress are poor.

5.1.6 The headteacher and the governing body have identified the need to create a post for a Jewish educator, who would not only have responsibilities for the development and implementation of the curriculum and the raising of standards in Jewish Studies but also play a wider role in whole-school and family-oriented Jewish education. This accords well with the aims of an integrated approach to Jewish development that the school is adopting. This enlightened decision is fully endorsed by the trustees who have allocated funding for this appointment.

5.1.7 The quality of leadership in Jewish education has improved significantly since the last *Pikuach* inspection but the management of Jewish Studies, especially in monitoring and evaluation, remains weak. The leaders and governors of the school have already taken decisive and determined steps to effect many changes in the school. The enormous strengths in the school's leadership and governance can empower it to take the necessary action to translate its vision for Jewish education into practice at every level. The headteacher and the governing body should thoroughly review the staffing arrangements for Jewish education and establish rigorous monitoring procedures, in the interests of financial efficiency and the provision of more effective Jewish Studies for the pupils.

5.2 Staffing, resources for learning and accommodation

5.2.1 There are sufficient teachers for Jewish Studies and, given the small size of the classes, Jewish Studies is generously staffed. Most Jewish Studies teachers also teach *Ivrit* and each is assigned to one of the three learning stages. Jewish Studies and *Ivrit* teachers meet regularly to plan their teaching. The music specialist, a native speaker of *Ivrit*, works closely with the Jewish Studies-*Ivrit* team. This cooperation between staff members on short-term plans is highly beneficial but there is inadequate provision for medium- and long-term planning so as to ensure continuity and progression across the three stages. There is also insufficient briefing of support staff on short- and medium-term plans.

5.2.2 Jewish Studies teachers have the requisite subject knowledge. Some have attended courses at the Agency for Jewish Education but there is no planned programme of professional development; the school must meet this need.

- 5.2.3 There is a dedicated room for *Ivrit* teaching at Key Stage 1: as this is sometimes used for Jewish Studies, there are some relevant materials displayed. In the Nursery, there is a dedicated area for *tefillah*, Jewish story-telling and *Ivrit*, with a specially made child-sized *bimah*. The school library and resource area has been refurbished to a high standard. There is a well-appointed computer suite and computers are also available to pupils in the library.
- 5.2.4 The library is poorly stocked with books of Jewish interest, either for reference or loan. The range of learning resources for Jewish Studies in the Nursery is adequate: they include some imaginative materials that are designed and created by staff to match children's aptitudes. Overall, resources for Jewish Studies at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are poor in both quantity and quality. Teachers rely heavily on booklets and work sheets produced in house, some of which are not of a high standard. Pupils have access to an *Ivrit* word-processing package but otherwise there is no software available to them on Jewish subjects. The school needs to address these deficiencies in learning resources for Jewish Studies.
- 5.2.5 There is a *sukkah*, beautifully decorated with hand-painted murals, in which a family *sukkah* party is held each year. Display on Jewish subjects is very good, especially in the Nursery, the *Ivrit* teaching rooms and the circulation areas of the school. Many of these are *Ivrit*-based or include *Ivrit* labelling, and also feature pictures of *Shabbat* and festival celebrations. As the pupils are constantly surrounded by these displays, the ideas they depict act as an excellent reinforcement of their learning in Jewish Studies and contribute significantly to the school's Jewish ethos.

PARENTS' PRE-INSPECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

80 questionnaires were sent to parents and 36 were returned,
representing a 45% return

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

expressed as percentages of the responses

As the figures have been rounded to whole numbers, they do not total 100 in every line.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	I feel that the school encourages families to play an active part in the school's Jewish life.	47	39	8	6	0
2.	I would find it easy to approach the school with any questions or problems about my child's Jewish education.	35	54	0	8	3
3.	The school encourages high standards in Jewish Studies/ Limudei Kodesh.	22	50	19	8	0
4.	My child is progressing in Hebrew skills e.g. speaking, reading and writing.	33	47	8	11	0
5.	I am satisfied with the amount and range of work in Jewish Studies/Limudei Kodesh that my child has to do at home.	12	52	21	9	6
6.	My child enjoys Jewish Studies/Limudei Kodesh.	17	47	22	8	6
7.	My child enjoys collective worship/Tefillah at school.	37	31	23	6	3
8.	The life of the school gives my child a good understanding of Jewish values.	31	61	6	3	0
9.	The school provides a good range of Jewish extracurricular activities, visits and special events.	19	50	14	14	3
10.	The school has helpful links with the wider Jewish community.	17	33	44	6	0

GLOSSARY OF HEBREW TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

bimah	prayer table/stand
brachah	blessing
Chagigat Chumash	ceremony at which children receive a <i>chumash</i>
Chagigat Siddur	ceremony at which children receive a <i>siddur</i>
chagim	festivals
challah	special bread for <i>Shabbat</i> and <i>chagim</i>
Chumash	volume containing the <i>Torah</i> , with commentaries
derech erez	respect and consideration for others
devar Torah	short talk about an aspect of <i>Torah</i>
halachah	Jewish law
Hanukah	winter festival of lights
havdalah	ritual to mark the end of <i>Shabbat</i> (Saturday evening); in Jewish schools, often performed on Monday mornings
Ivrit	Hebrew
kabbalat Shabbat	<i>Shabbat</i> welcoming ceremony, performed in Fridays
kiddush	words and ritual (with grape juice) to sanctify <i>Shabbat</i>
kasher (kosher)	fit or proper; most commonly applying to food
kippah	skull cap
middot	Jewish values and personal qualities
parashah	portion (of the <i>Torah</i>)
parashat ha'shavua	weekly <i>Torah</i> portion
Pikuach	inspection; framework for inspecting Jewish education
Shabbat	Sabbath
shaliach tzibbur	prayer leader
siddur	prayer book (plural: <i>siddurim</i>)
sukkah	temporary dwelling/ structure as part of <i>Sukkot</i>
Sukkot	(plural of <i>sukkah</i>) autumn festival
tefillah	prayer
Torah	first five books of the Jewish Bible
tzitzit	fringes on garment corners – a reminder of the commandments