

Wolfson Hillel Primary School

Inspection report

Local authority	Enfield
Inspected under the auspices of	Pikuach
Inspection dates	5-6 February 2013
Lead inspector	Jeffrey Leader

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	445
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair	Mr Howard Cohen
Headteacher	Ms Kirsten Jowett
Principal	Rabbi Y Fine
Date of previous school inspection	9-10 January 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jeffrey Leader Lead Inspector

Rev Michael Binstock Team Inspector

This inspection was carried out by 2 inspectors. They visited 15 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' written work, teachers' lesson plans, the Jewish Studies Curriculum, the school's Jewish Studies Self-Evaluation document and development plan.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- The progress pupils make in Jewish Studies.
- The quality of teaching in Jewish Studies.
- Leadership and Management in Jewish Studies.

Information about the school

Originally opened in 1992, Wolfson Hillel is a two-form entry voluntary aided Jewish nursery and primary school with a pupil roll of 445. It is a United Synagogue school situated in the Borough of Enfield and operates under the *halachic* authority of the Chief Rabbi. The majority of its pupils come from the surrounding Jewish community.

The school aims to help its pupils develop their Jewish identity by 'fostering opportunities for them to engage in Jewish learning, traditions and culture.' Pupils have many opportunities to learn about their religion and much of this is done experientially.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
The achievement of pupils in their Jewish education	2
The quality of teaching and assessment	3

The extent to which the Jewish Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the duty to fulfill the daily act of collective worship	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of Jewish Education, including through partnerships	2

Overall effectiveness: the quality of Jewish education provided in the school

Grade: 2

Wolfson Hillel is a good school in relation to its Jewish Studies provision. Its pupils achieve well and make good progress in their Jewish learning including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Hebrew reading was an issue during the previous inspection and although more support in this area has been provided, standards in reading are still variable. The school's Jewish Studies curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with a good understanding of their Jewish heritage. The application of the curriculum however, does not always explore topics at a significant depth and consequently Jewish Studies is sometimes viewed by pupils as repetitive. Teaching requires improvement. There are some outstanding practitioners especially in the younger years but there are also a number of new and inexperienced teachers whose skills need to be developed. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils raise money for a range of Jewish and non-Jewish charitable causes. The school choir has sung at a number of high profile events including the *Chanukah* celebration in Trafalgar Square. Leadership of Jewish Studies is good. The Head of Jewish Studies spends time monitoring and supporting new staff. The new headteacher is highly supportive of the school's Jewish ethos and plays a significant role in developing the skills of inexperienced Jewish Studies teachers. The governing body provides great support for Wolfson Hillel's Jewish Studies programme. The vast majority of parents feel that the school encourages high standards in Jewish Studies and that the life of the school gives their children a good understanding of Jewish values.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of teaching among the new and inexperienced teachers.
- Support the continuing development of the LK department by utilising the skills and talents of the wider senior leadership team by introducing a more rigorous system of teacher development.
- Ensure that the curriculum is fully implemented in a manner that avoids unnecessary repetition and explores each Jewish topic in a deeper and more relevant way.
- Improve still further the standard of Hebrew reading.

Achievement of pupils at the school

Grade: 2

A key issue in the previous *Pikuach* report dated April 2008 was to ensure that a good Hebrew Reading standard is achieved by all pupils by arranging appropriate support for them and utilising effective Hebrew reading resources. The school has since provided more support for pupils, but evidence indicates that standards are still variable and not in line with the school's expectations. The school is aware of this and is committed to raising the standards of Hebrew reading and writing as a priority.

Evidence gained from observing lessons and testing groups of pupils from Years 3 and 6, reveal that standards achieved in other areas of the Jewish Studies curriculum are good and mostly in line with the school's expectations. It was particularly encouraging to note that pupils in both year groups were able to answer a variety of questions on topics such as *Shabbat*, *kashrut* and the Jewish year. For example, Year 3 pupils were able to recite all the *parshiot* (portions) of the *Torah* in order and Year 6 pupils were able to recall much of the information they had previously learned about *Succot* and *Chanukah*.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are given support through tasks aimed at meeting those needs, team teaching and Teaching Assistant intervention. Teachers dedicate a proportion of their support towards ensuring that pupils have additional Hebrew reading opportunities at their level.

Quality of teaching and learning in the school

Grade: 3

Although teaching needs to improve in some areas, it is important to note that many members of the Jewish Studies staff are recent appointments and are relatively inexperienced. Consequently, it is right to assume that they would need to improve their practice. The school is very aware of this and weekly in-service training sessions have been set up to support them in their professional development. All the new and recent appointees have the potential to develop into effective practitioners.

Inspectors saw also many examples of outstanding teaching where teachers generated high levels of enthusiasm for participation in and a commitment to learning. In these lessons teachers promoted pupils' high levels of confidence when tackling learning tasks and for their part, pupils displayed excellent and enthusiastic attitudes to learning. In outstanding lessons, pupils acquire Jewish knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills exceptionally well. Teaching is particularly good in the Early Years/ Foundation Stage classes and in Key Stage 1.

The systems used to track the progress made by individual pupils are sound. The main focus for assessing pupils' progress in Jewish Studies has been in the areas of Hebrew reading, writing and the Jewish calendar. A new tracking system has been introduced by the school

which allows Jewish Studies teachers to monitor their pupils' progress in a more rigorous and comprehensive way.

Marking is good and comments made by teachers in their pupils' workbooks are generally helpful and informative for example, one teacher wrote: 'A phenomenal piece of work. You have included some outstanding points on how to light a *Chanukiah. Kol Hakavod* (Well done).

Planning for lessons is mainly good and contains clear learning objectives. Objectives are important as they allow the teacher to revisit them with the class at the end of the lesson to check whether or not they have been achieved and that pupils understand what they have been taught.

Quality of leadership in and management and governance of the school.

Grade: 2

Members of the leadership team support new teaching staff by monitoring and observing them in class. Observation forms, introduced by the headteacher and used by the school, cover the range of what a teacher is expected to do in the classroom including planning, using a range of teaching strategies, meeting the learning needs of all pupils and assessing progress. Teachers are then graded across these headings from 'outstanding' to 'inadequate.' Assessment of teaching ability is based on government teaching standards.

The school has developed a system of teacher support where Jewish Studies teachers during non-contact time are available to help and support their colleagues in the classroom.

The Head of Jewish Studies is supported very effectively by the headteacher who has taken a very active interest in the development of Jewish Studies. She has set up training sessions every Monday for new Jewish Studies teachers to improve and develop their latent skills. Although this has impinged a little on Jewish Studies teaching time, it is the correct decision, as the success of any learning programme ultimately depends upon the quality of those who deliver it.

The Jewish Studies Department has a 1 year and 3 year development plan. Inspectors recommend a stronger focus on the 1 year plan.

The Governing Body of Wolfson Hillel is enormously supportive of the school's Jewish ethos and study programme. The Principal visits the school twice weekly and has formal meetings with the headteacher and the Head of Jewish Studies. The Chair of Governors has been in post for many years and provides not only excellent support to the Jewish Studies Department, but also a link between the achievements of the past and the aspirations for the future.

Much is made of the integration of Jewish and secular studies through effective cross-curricular links. The school needs to expand these links beyond the classroom and make use of the skills of the wider school leadership team in helping to develop Jewish Studies teaching and teachers.

Quality of the Jewish curriculum

Grade 2

The school's Jewish Studies curriculum aims to transmit Jewish values, knowledge and skills, to ensure that graduates of the school are well equipped and motivated to continue their studies and their Jewish way of life. It is hoped that this will be achieved through the study of five modules:

- Hebrew Reading
- Jewish Way of Life
- The Jewish Year
- *Tefillah*
- *Torah*

The quality of the Jewish Studies curriculum is good. It is suitably broad and balanced and reflects the school's orthodox, Zionist ethos. The five core strands are Hebrew reading, Jewish Year, *Chumash*, Jewish Way of Life and *Tefillah* (Prayer). *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) is taught as a Modern Foreign Language. The integration with the National Curriculum features very strongly and this is particularly evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the 'Jewish Way of Life' curriculum and the teaching of music. Year 4 for example, studied modern heroes such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela and compared them with Jewish heroes of ancient times.

Whilst the excellent written documentation contains clear progression for all subjects from the Foundation Stage through to Year 6, this is not fully implemented. As a result, lessons sometimes become repetitive, because the topics are not always taught in more depth to reflect pupils' abilities as they advance from year to year. In conversation with pupil members of the School Council a number, especially those in Key Stage 2, complained about the repetitive nature of the curriculum in terms of its application. The following comment is typical: 'They tell us the same thing when we already know.' Pupils enjoy the practical side of Jewish learning, for example, making posters and engaging in project work. Less popular is Hebrew reading.

The school aims to improve Hebrew reading and writing standards by means of the '*Aleph Champ*' Hebrew reading system which will be introduced immediately after half-term.

The *Chumash* curriculum is produced by the JCP (Jewish Curriculum Partnership) and there is close collaboration between the school and the JCP. This curriculum is introduced at the end of Year 2 with the *Chumash* Readiness Programme. Textual studies commence in Year 3. Two or three lessons per week are devoted to *Chumash* studies.

Most other subjects are taught weekly but adjustments are made to take account of forthcoming festivals which are then given prominence. The teaching of *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) is taught as a modern foreign language.

The school offers a variety of extra-curricular activities and informal learning initiatives to reinforce Jewish learning. Examples include a *laining* club, choir and an annual *Shabbaton*.

The school uses a Managed (Virtual) Learning Environment (MLE) where pupils have a user name and password so that they can log on at school and at home to access resources for and from their lessons. The MLE is organised in a similar way to the curriculum, so that each pupil has access to a virtual classroom for each of their subjects including Jewish Studies. Teachers use the MLE to reinforce their teaching and it can provide a way of extending learning.

Quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Grade 1

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. A highlight of the inspection was the opportunity to observe the ceremony of *Chagigat Chumash* (Celebration of *Chumash*) for Year 3 pupils before an invited audience of parents and family members. The pupils performed beautifully and their singing and presentations were very moving. The event provided the pupils with a superb opportunity for their spiritual development and admirably reflected the Jewish religious ethos of the school.

The school facilitates extensive *tzedaka* activities which raise substantial amounts for the local community and other charitable projects both Jewish and non-Jewish.

The school's choir was chosen to perform at the Trafalgar Square *Chanukah* event. It has performed also at the House of Commons and for the Board of Deputies. For *Mitzvah Day*, the choir sang for the elderly.

The school completely fulfils its statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship through daily *tefillot* (prayer) and *bensching* (Grace after meals).

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enter the school with little Jewish knowledge or skills and it is to the credit of the Early Years Jewish Studies staff that they make good progress in a short space of time.

Children's welfare is a priority and they receive sensitive and caring support. Children fully understand daily routines, behave well and build good relationships with adults and with other children.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wolfson Hillel Primary 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. The inspectors received 165 completed questionnaires.

Wolfson Hillel was a pioneer of Jewish Family Education, where parents and their children come together to learn a Jewish theme or topic. The school still runs programmes for parents either for themselves or together with their children. The rationale for Jewish Family Education is that by studying together, children will see that their parents place a certain

amount of importance on Jewish learning and this it is hoped, will motivate them to learn.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its Jewish education provision. The vast majority feel that the school encourages high standards in Jewish Studies and that the life of the school gives their children a good understanding of Jewish values.

Glossary

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.
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.