

ETZ CHAIM JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority	Barnet
Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach	
Inspection dates	6-7 March 2018
Lead Inspector	Richard Felsenstein

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Free School
Age range of children	3-11
Gender of children	Mixed
Number on roll	213
Appropriate authority	Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Adam Dawson
Headteacher	Yvonne Baron
Address	20 Daws Lane, Mill Hill, London NW7 4SL
Telephone number	020 8906 2983
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School website	http://www.etzchaim-primaryschool.org.uk

Inspection team

Lead Inspector	Richard Felsenstein
Team Inspector	Laurie Rosenberg
Shadow Inspector	Ruth Wilkinson

Introduction

The inspection was carried out over two days by two inspectors and a shadow inspector. The inspectors visited eight classes from Nursery to Year 6 to observe lessons and parts of lessons. They attended *Tefillah* (prayers) and *Birkat Hamazon* (Grace after Meals). All lessons were observed jointly with senior school leaders.

Inspectors held meetings with the school's Principal, the Headteacher, an Assistant Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Jewish Studies link governors, the School Kodesh Improvement Partner (SKIP), other members of staff and many pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the Jewish Studies Self Evaluation Form (SEF), the School and Jewish Studies Improvement Plans, pupils' written work, the Jewish Studies curriculum, assessment documents, and reporting and tracking documentation.

The inspectors looked in detail at the following:

- Outcomes for students in their Jewish education.
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish Education.
- Effectiveness of Leadership, Management and Governance of Jewish Education.
- Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives.
- Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*Tefillah*).

Information about the school

- Etz Chaim Jewish Primary School is a one form entry primary school with a nursery. It caters for children between the ages of 3-11 years old (Nursery to Year 6 inclusive), serving the local community in Mill Hill, North London. The school is committed to the practice of Modern Orthodox Judaism. The school opened in September 2011 and was one of the first new Free Schools that year. For its first two years, the school was located in temporary accommodation. It moved to its permanent site in September 2013.
- There are currently 213 pupils of mixed gender on roll, including nursery children: 115 boys and 98 girls. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average (0.47%), as is the proportion of children from ethnic minority groups (6.6%) and the proportion who speak English as an additional language (6.57%). The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) is below average (6.6%).
- On entry, pupils have mixed levels of attainment across the Seven Areas of Learning (standards set in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for the learning development and care of children from birth to 5 years old).

- Jewish Studies plays a central role and is integrated into all aspects of the school's life.
- 14 children (6.57%) speak English as an additional language, and a small number speak Hebrew as an additional language.
- There are five children in receipt of pupil premium (2.35%).
- The school aims to develop within the pupils a positive commitment to, and passion for, both Judaism and British Values. Jewish ethos and values permeate all aspects of school life and the learning within it. Every child, whether or not they are of the Jewish faith, learns about the ethics and morals associated with Judaism.
- Etz Chaim wants its pupils to leave the school understanding how they can make a positive contribution to their community and the wider world.

Inspection Judgements

Overall Effectiveness	1
Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish Education	1
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Jewish Education	1
Effectiveness of Leadership, Management, and Governance of Jewish Education	1
Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education Curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives	1
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (<i>Tefillah</i>)	1

Overall Effectiveness:

The quality of Jewish Learning provided in Etz Chaim is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- Jewish values are firmly embedded in the school.
- The school's distinctive Jewish character has a high profile. This was evident as soon as inspectors walked into the school for the first time when outstanding displays made an immediate impact.
- Teaching is outstanding and together with a rich, Jewish curriculum, contributes to outstanding learning and achievement.
- Pupils and groups of pupils have outstanding Jewish educational experiences at school which ensure that they are well equipped for the next stage of their Jewish education.
- Many pupils were interviewed by inspectors and the positive impact of their experiences at Etz Chaim came through in all the meetings that took place, during lesson observations, and when interviewing the pupils and talking to them informally.
- The school consistently reflects the highest expectations of staff and the highest aspirations for pupils.
- Best practice is spread effectively in a drive for continuous improvement.
- The quality of leadership and management of Jewish Education is outstanding, and leaders, including governors, have a thorough understanding of the school's Jewish educational performance.
- The school's thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables them to thrive in a supportive and highly cohesive learning community. This is evident in both the formal and informal aspects of life at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the Jewish Studies tracking system.
- Continue to develop the leadership skills of Jewish Studies teachers to enable them to take on positions of responsibility within the Jewish Studies Department at the school.

Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish education is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- Taking account of their starting points, the proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress in their Jewish education is high in relation to their potential.
- Pupils at Etz Chaim make rapid and sustained progress across the Jewish curriculum and learn exceptionally well.
- Attainment and progress in Jewish Studies is measured objectively, based on a clear framework outlining the school's expectations in all areas of achievement across all age groups. These are further broken down to provide more detailed guidance for teachers to be able to deliver lessons to ensure there is progression throughout the school. Teachers use these to support their termly assessments in their mark books. This information is discussed at Pupil Progress Meetings with parents in order to inform the next steps.
- In order to help measure outcomes in Hebrew reading, teachers complete pupil progress

trackers and assessment grids each term. There is one to one intervention and support from their teacher for pupils struggling with reading. Formative assessment grids are used on a weekly basis in Reception to monitor Hebrew reading.

- Jewish Education has a very high and respected profile within the school, and learning activities provide fully for the needs of all learners. Etz Chaim has a fully integrated curriculum, and all groups of pupils are assigned differentiated tasks. These are tasks set to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of ability, enabling them to achieve and succeed and then be challenged further.
- In all the lessons observed, and in meetings inspectors held with pupils, the pupils were able to articulate their Jewish knowledge and skills in an age appropriate way. For example, in a meeting held with Class Ambassadors, a Reception child was fully able to articulate the way in which the charities that the school supports are chosen.
- Pupils become very enthusiastic learners who actively participate in Jewish Studies lessons.
- Pupils are confident and display excellent Jewish knowledge and understanding appropriate to their age and ability.
- Pupils make and exceed expected progress through diligent systematic and regular monitoring of teaching and learning, with regular progress meetings held between Jewish Studies teachers, secular staff and the Senior Leadership Team. In each term, pupils identified as 'most able' are provided with actions and interventions to provide additional challenge. Those with special learning needs are provided with tasks that cater for their range of abilities, and the philosophy and school policy of 'Continuous Provision' (whereby 'jobs' are given to pupils to complete in lessons) enables them to be autonomous in their learning.
- Tracking of pupils' progress in Jewish education is becoming firmly embedded in the school, enabling children from Foundation Stage to be monitored as they progress through the school, identifying key areas where pupils are working towards, working at and working at greater depth. Tracking is informative, enabling interventions and actions to be implemented and monitored. One child in Year 6 praised his Jewish Studies teacher for giving him 'very good feedback' in his marking.
- The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is a skilled practitioner, and works with teachers and other adults to ensure that all pupils with additional needs are identified, and actions and interventions provided for them. From initial home visits to establish a baseline for entrants to the Nursery, through to leavers at Year 6, the use of RouteMap, a computer based assessment programme from Barnet, provides a dynamic portrait of pupils in the school and enables a range of bespoke and general provision as required, which is monitored through termly meetings. The SENCO also provides up to date information in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions, enabling the school teachers and other adults to be kept informed of the latest educational developments and statutory changes.
- Pupils are articulate and keen advocates of Jewish education. They are proud of their school, and eager to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and expertise. They are well prepared for the next phase in their education and will leave the school as confident and competent Jewish and British citizens.
- The implementation of a 'Youth Service' in Years 5 and 6 encourages pupils to be able to conduct services in school or their own synagogue, as well as ensuring they understand the structure and content of the regular service and can find their way around the *Siddur* (Jewish prayer book). Pupils are keen to display their knowledge and skills beyond the school, and are planning to conduct a *Seder* (Passover meal) in Clore Manor, a local Jewish residential

home for older people.

- The Jewish Studies Curriculum Framework is crafted through clear and precise targets, identifying essential skills and knowledge, and substantiated by termly maps and more detailed expectations of individual areas of learning and experiences. The Jewish Studies Curriculum is a working tool that enables class teachers, Teaching Assistants (TAs), Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Jewish Studies teachers to work collaboratively to provide outstanding educational opportunities for the pupils. The seamless integration of the secular curriculum with the Jewish curriculum means that pupils are provided with exciting opportunities to explore Jewish themes through a wide range of subject skills. For example, the forthcoming 70th Anniversary celebration of Israel's Independence is being explored through the production of an art installation using recycled materials and looking at how the history of Israel has been depicted through time.
- There is a clear and detailed framework and curriculum in Jewish education that sets targets and objectives in a holistic framework, but provides greater detail in termly curriculum maps. At the end of each term, the Jewish Studies teachers feedback on the objectives, outlining actions and impact on the pupils. These objectives are directly related to the Etz Chaim Graduate's document. The integration between Jewish education and the secular curriculum gives pupils a very positive view of their Jewish studies.
- There is a relentless drive for excellence that contributes to pupils working at greater depth, as evidenced in tracking documentation. The drive for excellence is shared with parents and pupils at termly consultation meetings, to ensure that there are 'no surprises'. Pupils want to succeed, and there is ample evidence of this in their enthusiasm for learning, and in comments from both pupils and parents which demonstrate that the children want to please their teachers and their parents, and how this, in turn, impacts on their successful outcomes.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because: -

- Much of the teaching in all key stages and in most subjects of the Jewish curriculum is outstanding, and never less than consistently good. As a result, almost all pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disabilities and the more able, are making rapid and sustained progress.
- Etz Chaim uses a thematic, integrated day approach to learning in which pupils have opportunities to apply what they have learned independently, leading to a greater depth of understanding. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on *Pesach* (Passover), the pupils were working at different tables on a range of tasks, with one theme allocated per table. Some pupils were making their own *Haggadah* (book of the Passover story), another group was drawing a building in Egypt (showing links with Design and Technology) and some were designing a *Kiddush* cup (a cup into which wine is poured). Snacks of fruit were available in the classroom for the pupils to make a *bracha* (blessing) before eating it. On the snack table were two pictures of fruit, one of fruit from the ground, and the other fruit from a tree, requiring the pupil to decide which *bracha* they should make. They would then press the appropriate 'talking tin' which would say the *bracha* to which the child would answer "Amen".
- Lesson planning is excellent; the pupils clearly know what to do and what is expected of them. Tasks are set to meet the needs of different ability levels, and appropriate levels of challenge are given.
- In all the lessons observed, there were learning objectives set out on the Interactive White Board and on the different tables in the classroom where pupils were working. Work was

clearly set for the different ability levels. There was usually a Jewish Studies teacher and a Teaching Assistant in the classroom. Sometimes a secular teacher is also present, reflecting the school's integrated approach. Pupils get opportunities to work on the different aspects of learning as they move around the room. There are always 'challenge tasks' for the more able pupils, and inspectors established how well the pupils understand the expectations of the teachers in relation to the range of tasks on offer.

- Jewish Studies in the Foundation Stage is integrated into all areas of learning and supports the all-round development of the children.
- In all the lessons visited, teachers demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of the Jewish subjects they teach, shown by the positive impact on pupils' learning. In one Year 5 lesson, a learning objective for a couple of groups of pupils included 'Understanding the meaning of *Halachma Anya*' (a paragraph in the *Haggadah* written in Aramaic/Hebrew). One group was creating mind maps on iPads. Another group was reading *Halachma Anya* in Hebrew, timing themselves to see how much they could read, and showing impressive levels of challenge. These activities demonstrated excellent lesson planning and effective tasks for the different ability ranges. A pupil commented: "It was a really fun activity and I have learned so much." Another said: "Although we learned about *Pesach* last year, we are learning new things this year," thus showing clear progress over time. All the pupils knew exactly what was expected of them.
- In the same Year 5 lesson, other activities included a *Pesach* one-minute reading challenge to review the words learnt, a Design and Technology project, and writing out a passage from the *Haggadah* on a laptop in the Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) area of the room. One pupil said: "I'm really enjoying creating something using our own designs on computer." The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the tasks was excellent.
- Teachers' general planning was very effective in each lesson observed. In a Year 4 *Chumash* (text-based lesson on one of the *Torah* portions of the week), very good Hebrew reading was heard by the inspector. Each pupil was given tasks to complete with additional challenge questions. The pupils knew how to use the displays of Hebrew words on the wall to help them understand and translate the *passuk* (verse) being taught. One pupil said to the inspector: "I look at the words on the wall if I need to find out what a word means." A number of books were scrutinised and found to be well marked following the school's marking policy. This provided evidence of progress and the fact that the pupils had completed a great deal of written work this academic year. The pupils were able to explain clearly and articulately to inspectors how the school's marking policy works. During this lesson, when the *passuk* involving *Yitzchak* (Isaac) was being discussed, one pupil made an amazing comment. He asked: "Are we circling the Hebrew word *Yitzchak* because it's his name, or because the circle is showing laughter – also relevant to *Yitzchak*?"
- Teachers provide adequate time for practice to embed the pupils' Jewish knowledge, understanding and skills.
- In a Jewish Studies lesson in the Nursery, children were settled on the carpet area and enthusiastically took part in morning *tefillot* (prayers) prior to the lesson. Children were encouraged to have a moment of silence before reciting the *Shema* (core Jewish prayer) and the teacher was skilful in ensuring that all children were actively involved in the prayers. The use of *tefillot* in settling the children prior to more learning was effective, and ensured that the teacher had their full attention. The main content of the lesson was to introduce Moses, and the Biblical story of the basket and the Nile. The teacher used drama and some clever props. The teacher demonstrated an outstanding knowledge of the Early Year's Framework, and together with the secular teacher, had prepared a range of 'jobs' for the

children to complete, both inside the classroom and using the outdoor space. The teacher and the other adults set high expectations of challenge, and the Jewish Studies teacher demonstrated a passion for the learning backed up with excellent knowledge.

- Weekly Hebrew reading homework is sent home for children from Reception to Year 6. In addition, a weekly learning activity is sent home for each class, often linked to the *Parsha* (weekly portion read from the *Torah*). These are examples of work set in order to develop home/school links and ensure progression for the pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised books from most classes observed, in addition to taking in a selection of exercise books in Years 2 and 6. Books were very well marked, demonstrated excellent progress over time and showed that the school's marking and feedback policy is being consistently and regularly followed and applied. Marking strategies in line with the policy include both summative (measuring children's achievements after teaching and learning has taken place, e.g. assessments) and formative (ongoing understanding of progress that is being made).

The effectiveness of Leadership, Management and Governance of Jewish Education is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because: -

- There is a dynamic and creative vision for Jewish education in which staff, governors and pupils strive consistently for excellence. There is consistency of vision throughout the whole school community. Governors, senior leaders, teachers, assistants, pupils and parents are all able to articulate the school's vision for Jewish education.
- The school is led by an excellent Headteacher who has a clear vision and an excellent understanding of the needs of the whole school community. Extremely high standards of leadership have been set, and the Headteacher, working with governors and the senior leadership team, has driven the school forward and encouraged members of staff to grow and develop in their professional skills.
- The Jewish Studies Department is currently led by the Headteacher and an Assistant Headteacher, because no appointment was made when the vacant post of Head of Jewish Studies was advertised. This was a positive decision taken by senior leaders, who decided that the Headteacher and Assistant Head would lead and oversee the teaching and learning aspect of Jewish Studies, and the SKIP (School Kodesh Improvement Partner) would advise and be 'hands-on' in terms of overseeing and developing the curriculum. Inspectors feel that the current structure provides excellent leadership and management of Jewish Studies, which is reflected in the outstanding work of the Department.
- The Headteacher and Assistant Head model excellent practice in the management and leadership of Jewish Studies, and work successfully to monitor, improve and support teaching, encouraging the enthusiasm of staff and challenging their efforts and skills to good effect.
- Leaders, including governors, have a thorough understanding of the school's Jewish educational performance and distinctiveness based on effective and insightful self-evaluation. Inspectors met with the Chair of Governors and the Jewish Studies link governors who clearly articulated the school's vision as being all-embracing, inclusive, firmly embedded in each aspect of the Jewish Studies curriculum, with an integrated curriculum bringing together the Jewish and secular aspects of the school. Governors discussed the Modern Orthodox Zionist ethos which plays a central part in the overall vision of Etz Chaim. Governors have an excellent in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and development areas.
- Leaders, including governors, focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning, and provide focused professional development for all Jewish Studies teaching staff, especially those who are untrained and newly qualified and at an early stage of their career. There are currently three Jewish Studies teachers going through teacher training, and by the end of the

academic year, all Jewish Studies teachers will be qualified. Leaders continue to provide professional development for new colleagues, in addition to more established teachers. This is a great strength of the Department.

- The Assistant Head chairs weekly meetings of the Jewish Studies Department, and produces an agenda and minutes resulting in many ideas that facilitate forward planning and take the Department forward.
- The Headteacher and Assistant Head have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development in all aspects of the school's Jewish Studies. This is reflected clearly in the Jewish Studies Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and improvement plan. Self evaluation leads directly and convincingly to effective strategies for improvement in Jewish education, and maintains a strong focus on meeting the needs of all learners. The most recent Jewish Studies Self Evaluation Summary Report was produced in February 2018, and inspectors found it to be a thorough and accurate reflection of where the school is at this moment in time. The SEF measured progress using the five *Pikuach* judgements and evidence from the previous *Pikuach* report.
- Governors systematically challenge senior leaders, so that effective deployment of staff and resources secure excellent outcomes for the pupils in their Jewish Studies. Governors have robust systems of 'challenge' in place which are used to inform the main governors' meetings, as well as the sub-committees. The Chair of Governors meets the Headteacher fortnightly and speaks on the phone to her most days. Governors and the SKIP systematically challenge senior leaders in terms of the curriculum and plans for curriculum development, in order to deliver excellence and ensure that Jewish education is always moving forward.
- Highly effective systems are in place to track and monitor pupil progress. Leaders focus on improving teaching and learning, resulting in teaching that is generally outstanding, and never less than consistently good. Teaching and Learning is monitored and evaluated at least termly, including 'book looks', pupil progress data meetings with teachers, the use of tracking grids, talking to pupils and learning walks (where senior leaders visit lessons and/or walk around the building to get an overview of teaching and learning).

The effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because: -

- The Jewish curriculum enhances the Jewish ethos of the school. There are five areas of the curriculum: *Tefillah*, *Torah* (*Parsha* in Key Stage 2 and *Mishna* in Year 6), Hebrew Language, Jewish Way of Life and the Jewish Year. The school is in partnership with the Jewish Curriculum Project (JCP) for the development of the curriculum.
- The SKIP supports the school with ongoing advice and guidance in relation to Jewish Studies curriculum development and reviewing the curriculum.
- The school's Jewish Studies curriculum, formal and informal, provides memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning and wider personal development and well-being. This is illustrated by the Year 5 *Shabbaton* (Sabbath celebration) and a Year 4 visit to Clore Manor. Other such experiences include a SEED (adult and family Jewish education provider) Friday night dinner, visiting care homes on *Sukkot* (Festival of Tabernacles), and visits to Mill Hill Synagogue and other schools. In addition, the curriculum provides opportunities for visits from rabbis, opportunities for pupils to share Jewish learning with other schools and inviting schools to Etz Chaim for special assemblies on *chagim* (Festivals) such as a *Blowing of the Shofar* (ram's horn) assembly on *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish New Year) and a *Chanukah* (Festival of Lights) assembly.
- The school's Jewish Studies curriculum has overall breadth, depth and balance, and is customised to meet the varying needs of individuals and groups. There are medium term plans which cover the key knowledge and skills for each curriculum area, and link effectively with secular planning.
- Inspectors observed a range of resources being used in lessons to support the topic under

discussion. There was widespread use of iPads and laptop computers, which the pupils were adept at using.

- The school's 'Continuous Provision Policy' is the continuous access to a range of learning tasks across the school day which develop pupils' independent and collaborative skills and consolidate previous learning. This provision has varying levels of challenge with clear success criteria to enable all pupils to access quality learning.
- Cross-curricular provision is mainly outstanding, and never less than consistently good. There are many cross-curricular links between Jewish and secular subjects and within the Jewish Studies curriculum. For example, Design and Technology was much in evidence in a Year 1 lesson where *Kiddush* cups were being designed and in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were designing pillows. In lessons where the subject of *Pesach* was being taught, there were literacy skills used in the range of tasks associated with producing a *Haggadah* or a mind map.
- There are curriculum maps outlining plans for *chagim* and other areas of the curriculum. Before a *chag* (Festival) takes place, a staff meeting session will be held where the plan for the *chag* is reviewed, and all members of staff are fully prepared for the event. This is another excellent example of cross-curricular provision.
- All groups of pupils benefit from a highly coherent and relevant curriculum which promotes outstanding outcomes in developing their study skills in pursuit of Jewish knowledge, belief and identity.
- The parental partnership is an important part of the curriculum provision. *Chagim* (festivals) Parents' Packs are provided to encourage parents to engage in their children's learning. Feedback is invited from parents to assist future development in this area.
- Parents come into school for a range of programmes organised by SEED. These include *Purim* and *Chanukah* Programmes, a Family Friday Night Dinner and Hebrew reading courses. These activities help parents understand what their children are being taught and enable them to participate fully in their children's education. This is an important part of the school's informal curriculum provision.

The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*Tefillah*) is Outstanding (GRADE 1) because:-

- Pupils are safe, happy and feel cared for by their peers, teachers and other adults in the school. They are deeply concerned about their responsibility to others. A group of Year 6 pupils organised themselves into a *Tzedakah Tzevet* (Charity Group). They identified a number of charities and organised assemblies to enable all children to vote for their favourite charities. This level of sophistication was driven by a need to 'help people not as fortunate as us'.
- Pupils stated that everyone cares for everyone else and are 'always there for each other'. The school is aware of the sensitivities of children being able to share worries, and there are worry boxes around the school. Pupils interviewed were unanimous that there was no bullying, and when there are arguments, the Headteacher and other adults will help them to resolve their differences.
- Pupils are actively engaged with the daily act of collective worship including *tefillot* (prayers) and are especially encouraged to use silent prayer time to say "Please" and "Thank you" to *Hashem* (God). Pupils were proud to state that the school is about 'our generation and we feel confident in our religion'. A pupil in Year 5 stated that she felt that being spiritual was "...being close to *Hashem* and connected to Him". A girl in Year 6 stated: "In every person there is a bit of God, we have a *neshama* (soul)", and she was able to talk about the soul being our conscience. A Year 2 pupil was keen not only to talk about his visit to the *Kotel* (Western Wall) in Jerusalem, but also to tell the inspector that prayer "makes him happy." He was keen to explain that the *Yigdal* (Exalted) prayer contains Judaism's Thirteen Principles of Faith.

- In every classroom and around the school are posters displaying IALAC, 'I am Loveable and Capable', from which were derived the five key rules that every pupil spoken to was aware of and keen to talk about. These rules are more than words, and the pupils' favourite was being 'gentle and kind'. These regulations give the school a moral imperative that is clearly understood and enacted on by pupils.
- Pupils were unfailingly polite, warm, friendly, open and completely at ease with inspectors in both one to one conversations and in small groups. In a meeting with the Class Ambassadors, representing children from the Nursery through to Year 6, the pupils displayed a real understanding of the importance of democracy. Ambassadors, having consulted their peers, and in one of their termly meetings with the Headteacher, wanted more outdoor play resources. These were obtained and have made a tangible difference to the children's play experiences.
- Around the school, skilfully produced displays are used to showcase children's work, but with an interactive purpose. On one display, individual passport sized pictures of every child, dressed in colours of red, white and blue, were constructed into a decoupage of the Union Jack. On another display panel dedicated to the 'Wow Factor', teachers, parents and children can send in a message relating to something special the child has achieved out of school. For example, one was from a parent showing *nachat* (pride) that their daughter had given a *D'var Torah* (text-based talk about a subject) in synagogue.
- Pupils have a wide range of cultural interchanges with a local state aided primary school, involving reciprocal visits. They are thus aware of other faith groups and become knowledgeable about the similarities and differences between the main faiths. Pupils watch television programmes such as *Newsround* to provide themselves with a global understanding of world issues, and they are encouraged to discuss their responses to the news.
- Core values of the school are explicit, understood and can be articulated by the pupils. For example, they understand and can describe what it means to be kind and gentle to "all our teachers and friends". Pupils also described the Heads-Up initiative whereby they could openly discuss issues around friendship, providing them with the tools, for example, to be able to withstand bullying.
- *Tefillot* (prayers) are punctuated by moments of directed silence that reinforce the consistent school-wide message of pupils having the time to thank and ask *Hashem* for something. These moments of silence contribute not only to the sanctity of the *tefillah* session, but also ensure that pupils begin to understand the value of prayer. For example, in one session the teacher asked the pupils to think in their heads a private moment that would help them to recite and make value of the *Amidah* (standing silent prayer).
- In discussion with Foundation and Reception secular teachers, one of the teachers, who recently joined the school, expressed how the children were able to 'live what they have learned' from their Jewish Studies.
- The pupils have a rich and varied exposure to a range of other cultures and traditions. The school organises reciprocal visits with other local non-faith schools, and Year 4 pupils are engaged with the *Tzedek* twinning project with a school in Ghana. The school is also working with the Three Faiths Forum. Links between the secular and Jewish Studies curriculum were exemplified by taking one of the *mitzvot* (commandments) from the 'Mitzvah Tree' on a homelessness project, whereby children 'slept' in the playground in their own sleeping bags to experience the reality of being homeless. They also learned to help the homeless by giving *tzedakah* (charity).
- The school is clearly driven by a set of *middot* (ethics) that are demonstrated in outstanding good manners. Children greet adults and one another cheerfully and enjoy these interactions.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at **Etz Chaim** to complete an online survey questionnaire about their views of the school. The comments below encapsulate their views:

“Jewish Studies teacher is excellent and child enjoys lessons.”

“The children are all exceptionally happy at school and there is a wonderful, inclusive feel at Etz Chaim. We are exceptionally sad to leave at the end of this academic year – my child has loved their time at school.”

“My children love Etz Chaim and learning about their Judaism. They are very enthusiastic and excited to show us everything they have learnt at home.”

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 pupil's 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.