

KANTOR KING SOLOMON HIGH SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspected under the auspices of Pikuach	
Inspection dates	5 th and 6 th November 2018
Lead Inspector	Sandra Teacher

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of children	11-19
Gender of children	Mixed
Number on roll	1068
Appropriate authority	Redbridge Local Education Authority
Chair of Governors	Dr Richard Burack
Headteacher	Ms Hannele Reece
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Inspection team

Lead Inspector Sandra Teacher
Team Inspector Rabbi Jonathan Spector

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days. The inspectors visited classes from Years 7-13 for lessons and parts of lessons, and attended *Tefillot* (prayers) and school assemblies. Some of the lessons were observed jointly with school leaders. Inspectors held meetings with Governors, the Head Teacher, Deputy Head, Head of Jewish Studies/Ethos, and a wide range of other staff, parents and many students. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including students' written work, the Jewish Studies curriculum, assessment documents, and reporting and tracking documentation. The Senior Management team and Head of Jewish Studies played an active part in this inspection, attending meetings with inspectors and observing lessons.

The school took the decision not to include the provision of *Ivrit* (Modern Hebrew) within the *Pikuach* inspection process. However, the inspectors took account of the contribution that *Ivrit* makes to Jewish Studies education.

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 curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives.
- Quality of provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (*Tefillah*).

Information about the school

Kantor King Solomon High School is an average sized, voluntary aided, Orthodox Jewish comprehensive school based in Forest Road, Barking, London. It is a school committed to the Jewish values of learning, community and charity. It welcomes students from all faiths, and as a result has a carefully thought-out curriculum designed to ensure that all students can learn from their Jewish Studies. Jewish students make up approximately 35% of the cohort, with lower proportions in Years 9 and 12. Approximately 30% of students are Muslim, and there are a significant number of Hindu, Sikh and Christian students of European, Afro-Caribbean and English backgrounds. Around 40% of students speak English as an additional language, and around 30% of students are from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The school strives to:

- Offer a stimulating and enriching Jewish and academic educational experience, designed to empower each student to realise her/his potential.
- Nurture young citizens who want to make a better world. Inspire students to understand and appreciate faith and the empowering role it has in society.
- Motivate young citizens to take the next step in their faith journey.

The school motto is:

'If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?' (Ethics of the Fathers 1:14)

An Ofsted Section 5 inspection was carried out in 2015, and the school was judged to be good.

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Outcomes for pupils in their Jewish Education	2
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Jewish Education	2
Effectiveness of Leadership, Management, and Governance of Jewish Education	2
Effectiveness of the Jewish Studies/Education Curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives	2
Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship (tefillah)	2

Overall Effectiveness:

The quality of Jewish Learning provided in Kantor King Solomon is Good (Grade 2) because:-

- Social and cultural development is strong, diversity and difference are valued and celebrated, and the school is successful in creating a cohesive, inclusive community. Adults and students are very loyal and proud to be part of Kantor King Solomon. All feel respected and accepted.
- Achievement in Jewish education is good, especially taking into account the context of the school and that the majority of students are not of the Jewish faith. The new systems of tracking and recording that have been put in place show that most students make good progress.
- Teaching in religious education overall is good, and relationships are excellent. Teachers have high expectations, and plan and teach lessons that deepen students' knowledge and understanding.
- With consideration to the context of the school, its religious education curriculum has been thoughtfully planned and developed. It enables students to learn about, and celebrate major festivals and calendar events within the Jewish year, together with providing a good understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including the *Kehillah* community development programme, enhances the Jewish curriculum. The school benefits from being fully included in the local community, and being part of the Kantor King Solomon Campus.
- The school is successful at meeting its aims, and enables students to take their place as valuable citizens in both the Jewish world and the wider community.

It is not yet Outstanding because:-

- Learning opportunities do not always enable students with differing needs to be challenged to meet their full potential.
- The impact of the provision for Jewish Studies in the 6th Form is not clearly evaluated as to its effectiveness.
- Within the school leadership team, new initiatives have not yet had time to display their full impact, and the management of Jewish Studies does not include middle leaders. Governors are still developing their role.
- Teachers and students do not fully embrace 21st Century digital learning for the benefit of both teaching and learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide a greater emphasis on challenging the Jewish students to engage in Hebrew reading and textual skills at a higher level.
- Ensure that the work provided for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) matches their specific needs, so that they know what they are expected to learn and how to improve their work.
- Consider ways to monitor and evaluate the Jewish Studies programme in the 6th Form, so that the quality of their Jewish Studies education can be improved and developed.
- Develop the middle leadership of the Jewish Studies Department, and ensure governors take advantage of training opportunities.
- Enrich learning opportunities by making the best use of the latest technologies.

Outcomes for students in their Jewish education are Good (Grade 2) because:-

- Within the accreditation Judaism programme, GCSE and A-Level results in 2018 were strong, especially as both were in the first year of the new syllabus, and taking account of the context that the majority of students are not of the Jewish faith.
- In 2018, 6th Form students gained 83% A* to C in A-Level RS, although the number of students sitting the exam was small. During the inspection visit, it was difficult to ascertain outcomes for the remaining students in the 6th Form who are following a general Jewish Studies curriculum.
- The school is to be commended that every student in Key Stage 4 sits GCSE Religious Studies (RS), and 80% gained A* to C grades.
- The GCSE syllabus is spread over a period of three years, which enables students within years 9, 10 and 11 to study each area in depth. Students are stimulated in their discussions about justice and charity. High quality questioning from the teachers, for example: 'Does money make you happy, or just lead to greed?' elicited a good level of response from students who displayed strong moral values and were able to explain the Jewish point of view.
- Students also study Islam in Year 10, and inspectors were impressed with the Jewish teachers' competent knowledge of Islam. Having Muslim students in the class is a definite advantage.
- In Years 7 and 8, students engage with learning materials and participate well in lessons. For example, Year 8 students were fully conversant with the story of Jonah, and gave insights as to the motivations of the different characters in the story.
- Informal Jewish education contributes significantly to strong outcomes and brings to life many of the curriculum areas. Informal educators run experiential learning activities for each

Chag (festival) or special Jewish days, which allow students to live the Judaism they learn about in class. Students enjoyed their visit to Fairlop Waters to carry out the *mitzvah* (commandment) of *Tashlich* (the symbolic throwing away of one's sins in flowing water at the Jewish New Year)

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Jewish education is Good (Grade 2) because:-

- Much of the teaching observed in all phases is strong. This leads to high results in GCSE examinations and A-Levels. Teachers' personal knowledge and practice add an additional dimension to the learning, as they are able to share authentic Judaism to bring the material to life. The story of Jonah in Year 8 is linked to the concept of *Teshuvah* (asking forgiveness) and the young people were able to bring ideas from this ancient story into their modern lives.
- A-Level Religious Studies lessons explore ethical dilemmas regarding truth, eg 'Should you tell the truth even if you know it will upset and hurt someone?' The small A-Level classes allow students to receive individual attention, with excellent modelling of good answers and peer assessment. Students were able to draw on personal knowledge and experiences, and relate them to difficult ideas such as 'the concept of perfection is only true about G-d', which helped to develop their understanding as the lesson progressed. This was reflected in the students' responses to questions posed.
- The practical and experiential teaching brings out the best in the students. Year 7 students are learning the laws of *Shabbat* (the Sabbath). They watch a video; handle candlesticks, wine and a *becher* (wine cup). The non-Jewish students loved having an opportunity to taste *challah* (special bread for Sabbath and festivals) for the first time.
- Where teaching and learning are not as positive, it is because the material is not always suited to the particular needs of some students. Those with special educational needs and disabilities are often expected to do the same work as their peers, but it is not always appropriate. Some students are unclear about what they are expected to learn and, most importantly, how to improve their work. The new assessment process for the younger students, which is linked to the GCSE outcomes, is not always relevant 5 years in advance.
- Jewish students who learn *Ivrit* are not fluent Hebrew readers, and there are missed opportunities for both teachers and students to use the latest technologies to support the best learning.
- Displays are used well to reinforce learning. The location of the Jewish Studies corridor means that students have to walk past meaningful messages at least twice a day, on their way to the dining room.
- Teachers' general planning is mostly appropriate, with the strong Jewish ethos of the school embedded into all teaching. Inspectors were given planning sheets, worksheets and differentiated tasks during some of the lessons, but this is not always consistent.
- Teachers provide adequate time for practice to embed the students' Jewish knowledge, understanding and skills. Different methods of assessment are used, including self-assessment and peer marking.
- Within the informal sessions, the youthful members of staff display a real sensitivity to the class. Students comment on the warm and relaxed style of learning, and work collaboratively on tasks, respecting each others' views and input. Relationships are strong, born out of mutual respect. Tremendous sensitivity is displayed, especially when dealing with challenging topics. For example, the Chief Rabbi's guidance on LGBT issues is a helpful resource.
- Throughout observations, inspectors saw how thoroughly the students understand and uphold the values of the school. Behaviour is sound in lessons and around the school. The behaviour log shows a few incidents of challenging behaviour, but students were all clear that these incidents are immediately dealt with by adults. Students who attend the exclusion and learning zones say that they are helped to reflect on their behaviour.

- Lessons are matched to needs in some year groups where necessary, and teachers are aware of the different learning needs in the class. At times, students with special educational needs and the more able are not always clear as to how to improve their work and achieve next steps. On occasion, coaching comments were not clear or specific enough.
- Where used effectively, the green and blue assessment stickers are an effective tool to track progress and give the student next steps in his/her learning.
- Teachers care about the school and the students, and this is a reflection of the great passion and infectious enthusiasm of the Head of Ethos. Teachers show great loyalty towards the school. Many of them come from the local community and were previously students at the school. One teacher commented: "I'm proud to work here and be part of a school that is well-managed from Senior Level though to the office staff."

The effectiveness of Leadership, Management and Governance of Jewish Education is Good (Grade 2) because:-

- Since the last *Pikuach* inspection, the school has been subject to a number of leadership changes. However, since the current Head took over on a substantive basis in July 2018, the school has made strides to develop Jewish leadership by engaging more with local *Rabbonim* (rabbis) and the United Synagogue as well as changes made to the staffing structure to ensure greater investment and development in Jewish Studies and *Kehillah*.
- These changes have allowed for more teachers in Jewish Studies. They have increased the strategic ability of the Head of Ethos to work on further enhancing the provision for Jewish students, and the department's ability to facilitate non-Jewish students' understanding of the way the ethos of the school supports their own development.
- This allows the school to build on its strong academic outcomes at RS GCSE and A-Level, and increase the opportunities for Jewish students to become involved in a wider range of activities related to Judaism. These include, for example, prayer, celebration of festivals, Israel Club and opportunities for students in the upper school to be 'buddies' to younger and newer students
- Leadership is strong in the Jewish Studies Department, led by the Head of Jewish Studies/Ethos who inspires her colleagues. Her leadership is positive, supportive and collegiate. There appears to be a dynamic of *Achdut* (togetherness) amongst them, and a joint goal to which they are striving: to make the Jewish Studies experience for each child as positive and rewarding as possible. All leaders, with strong support from the Headteacher, focus on the child as a whole. They strive to inspire him/her in his/her Jewish journey through positive experiences and by acting as admirable role models. They have a passion for their work which students recognise, and which, in many cases, goes above and beyond expectations. The formal delegation of work, and the support from a group of middle managers, would promote the work of the department even further.
- The school has recruited a number of new governors who are supporting the school in prioritising the Jewish Studies Department and *Kehillah*. They have built strong links with Jewish Care, JLGB (Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade) and Aish. Small groups of students benefit from visits to places of Jewish interest, such as The Jewish Museum.
- 6th Formers meet Jewish leaders in the world of work and explore issues that may affect Jewish employees. The Ethos Committee spends time discussing issues that affect a school of this make-up, such as whether all the boys should wear *Kippot* (skull caps).
- However, governors would benefit from the latest governor training, to enable them to provide greater support and ask challenging questions of the school leadership team.

The effectiveness of the Jewish Studies curriculum based on the school's aims and objectives is Good (Grade 2) because:-

- The composition of the school community means that much thought was put into the curriculum, and the decision to teach Jewish Studies to students of all faiths has been given serious consideration.
- It allows Jewish students to study core Jewish beliefs, practice, history, ethics and teachings from the *Tenach* (Bible). It then builds in elements of comparative faith study to show how Jewish teachings and values have much in common with, and often lay the foundations for, other faiths. The school is now working to develop more challenge for the 'A-Team' (the higher attaining students) which will enable these Jewish students to improve their Hebrew reading skills and study the texts in greater depth.
- For students of other faiths, the study of key Jewish teachings helps them explore issues within their own faith through the understanding of the philosophy and beliefs of Judaism. This means that all students can study and explore potentially challenging topics, such as conscience, morals, beliefs and identity, in a safe environment where knowledge of others, allows understanding and respect.
- GCSE Religious Studies allows students to study the beliefs and ideas more commonly found in the school, with the study of Judaism and Islam facilitating the sharing of beliefs, ideas and practices, as well as history. Students learn key ethical and moral issues relating to everyday life from a Jewish perspective, which provides grounding in fundamental British values and leads to greater moral development. This moral development can be seen in the way students respond to tragic events: a group of Year 9 students raised money for a student with a terminal illness, and money was raised for the World Jewish Relief Indonesian appeal. It can also be seen in the proportion of students in the 6th Form who support the lower school by providing tuition, participating in the Buddying Scheme and coaching sports.
- The school takes every opportunity to advance students' knowledge and understanding at key relevant moments. Year 9 students, having visited AJEX (Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women), prepared a powerful presentation and installation based on Jewish soldiers who were killed in the World Wars. They displayed moving empathy for the victims of the Pittsburgh disaster, and wrote thoughtful and reflective messages on the leaves of the Tree of Life which is on display in the Jewish Studies Corridor.
- Inspectors had the opportunity to meet with school leaders of other disciplines. These staff members embrace the ethos of the school and act as excellent role models for their students. They were able to give numerous examples of how the teaching within their subject contributes to Jewish learning. Examples include: the study of Jewish authors in literature, the study of Jewish music, art and drama, learning about *Kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws) in food technology, the study of irrigation in the Negev Desert in geography, and Holocaust Studies within history. The art work deserves particular mention, and the use of Jewish themes such as *Mechitzah* (decorative partition between men and women's seating in orthodox synagogues) clearly delineates the high standards of work.
- The PE department often wins medals at the Maccabi sports events, and Kantor King Solomon students demonstrate sportsmanship when they play against the other Jewish schools.

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 Good (Grade 2) because:-

- The school has devised its own systems through assemblies, 'Thought for the Day', and a new weekly *Shacharit* (morning service) to help meet its requirement for collective worship. The Thought for the Day enables students to reflect on moral thoughts from the Ethics of the Fathers, and gives them a purposeful start to the day.
- The *Kehillah* Department provides spiritual and cultural experiences through activities at lunch time, and programmes connected to the *Chagim* (Jewish festivals). The Department facilitates the Duke of Edinburgh and Yoni Jesner Volunteering Awards, and the 6th Form Buddying Scheme. These programmes provide students with a strong sense of the importance of giving.
- The multi-cultural student body enables the school to engender respect for each others' religions and celebrates its diversity. This is a great strength of the school. Students told inspectors how they all felt respected, regardless of their different backgrounds.
- The trips to Israel and Poland are highlights for the students, and make a significant impact on their Jewish pride. Students spoke about it being their most positive Jewish experience.
- Leadership opportunities are offered through the school's *Haderech* Programme. Twenty-one students are currently participating in the NXT (an *Aish* programme), where students meet successful Jewish role models in professional life.
- Year 12 students attend an annual volunteering fair to explore opportunities provided by partners including Haven House Hospice, JAMI (Jewish mental health charity) and Arsenal Football Club. 35% of students take up volunteering opportunities.
- The school plays a central role in the local Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) commemorations, helping to run and prepare resources for the Borough's HMD ceremony. All students in Year 12 participate in and lead an inter-school Holocaust workshop, together with nine other local secondary schools.
- Local *Rabbonim* (rabbis) run a range of extra classes, both as part of the school's formal provision and as optional lunchtime sessions. These sessions expose the students to the local community *Rabbonim* who, in time, may encourage them to participate in the local synagogue. However, students' experiences would be more meaningful if this provision had a more coherent and systematic approach.
- The school keeps up with topical and current events. The *Kehillah* department marked the Pittsburgh tragedy by using the Lunchtime Club to give students an opportunity to write words of solidarity and support. One student wrote: "Everyone has the right to celebrate their religion. Love your neighbour. Be an upstander. Think before you speak." Inspectors also saw a moving Remembrance Day assembly.
- All students know by heart the school motto taken from the Ethics of the Fathers (see page 3) and have learnt to recite it in Spanish in Spanish lessons.

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at Kantor King Solomon High School to complete an online questionnaire about their views of the school. 50 parents responded. The majority of comments were positive and celebrated the work of the school. The few negative comments were regarding the need for the more Jewish knowledgeable students to have further opportunities for greater challenge. The comments below encapsulate their views:

The way all religions are brought into the lessons are amazing. My child attends this school due to its strong Jewish ethos but embraces all other religions and beliefs.

The School has adapted well to significant change over the last few years, retains a strong Jewish ethos and enables students to experience transformative moments, including a recent trip to Poland for my son."

96% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child is taught well in Jewish Studies.

92% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the school to another parent.



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.