

Brodetsky Primary School

Leeds LS17 7TN

Inspection report

LEA 383 - Leeds
Inspection dates 24th – 25th May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr J Gordon
Team inspector Mr J Leader

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	George Lyttleton Centre
School category	Voluntary Aided		Wentworth Avenue
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Leeds
			LS17 7TN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 293 0578
Number on roll	305	Fax number	0113 269 3176
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ian Coupland
Date of previous inspection	28 th February – 1 st March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Janet Simmons (Acting)

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Introduction

Description of the school

Brodetsky Primary School is a voluntary aided Orthodox Jewish mixed primary school for children at the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. Situated in the Alwoodley area of North Leeds, it draws most of its pupils from across the socio-economic spectrum of Jewish families living in neighbouring residential areas, though some come from further afield.

A range of belief, observance and knowledge of Judaism is represented in these families. The Governors' policy is to maintain the school's Orthodox Jewish ethos and religious character, pride in the Jewish heritage and a strong awareness of the centrality of Israel in Jewish life.

Hebrew and Jewish Studies are approximately 17% of total timetabled lesson time. In addition there are daily *Tefillah*, weekly *Kabbalat Shabbat* assemblies and seasonal festival celebrations.

The school no longer teaches Hebrew as a modern spoken language, placing the emphasis instead on the acquisition of Hebrew reading skills.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of provision for Jewish education

The inspectors concur with the school's view that the overall effectiveness of its provision is satisfactory in relation to its targets for Jewish religious studies (Limmudei Kodesh).

The school's main strengths lie in:

- the strong Jewish ethos evident throughout the school
- the commitment of all its staff and the support of local Rabbis and retired members of staff who step in at short notice to cover for teachers absent through sickness
- improved departmental setting of priorities and organisation of resources resulting from the efforts of the Acting Head of Department

The main weaknesses are:

- continuing staffing cover problems aggravated by absences through sickness
- absence of a formal definitive curriculum
- Insufficiently high standards of attainment at KS2, particularly in pupils recall of basic facts taught earlier on down the school

The school's capacity to improve is reflected in:

- devising a scheme for assessing pupils' performance in Hebrew reading with a range of performance benchmarks and level descriptors.
- devising a schedule of End of Year Targets for Limmudei Kodesh from the Reception class to Year 6.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

(i) As it has for the assessment of performance in Hebrew reading, the school needs to devise and implement a system of Attainment Targets for the other areas of its Jewish Studies provision. This should include attainment level descriptors and assessment instruments for:

- (a) recording and measuring children's performance
- (b) tracking the progress of individual pupils and whole classes as they move up the school.

(ii) The school still needs to:

- o up-date its whole-school curriculum statement to incorporate the existing policy with regard to Hebrew
- o write properly structured separate syllabuses for Jewish religious studies and Hebrew, showing in adequate detail for each year group:
 - (c) the topics, content, concepts and skills to be covered term by term
 - (d) the attainment targets to be reached at the end of each key stage or other appropriate point.

Some of the raw information already exists in other school documents such as the recent schedule of End of Year Targets. It now needs to be brought together in one place with appropriate and specific detail added to show the breadth and depth of knowledge to be taught.

(iii) Ensure that teachers' comments on children's written work regularly:

- (a) help them to understand where they have gone wrong
- (b) tell them what they have to do to correct or improve what they have done.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards of attainment in Jewish Studies by Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils are at least satisfactory, with evidence of much that is good.

At Key Stage 2, however, there are areas of concern. In the Year 5 and 6 lessons seen, there was evidence of poor or inaccurate retention of basic facts taught at an earlier stage in their Jewish Studies and in remembering the meaning of essential Hebrew vocabulary and phraseology associated with them.

A significant minority of parents responding to the Pikuach Parents' Questionnaire - mainly but not exclusively of Key Stage 2 pupils - expressed dissatisfaction with their children's lack of progress in acquiring Hebrew language skills, especially simple speaking and understanding.

Standards of Hebrew reading (in the sense of ability to decode words in both familiar and unseen texts) are generally good but not always matched by a corresponding understanding of the gist of what is being read. A significant minority of parents commented on this in their Questionnaire responses.

There was insufficient evidence for a secure judgement on how well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress in Hebrew and Jewish Studies. There is some evidence for parental dissatisfaction and the school's self-evaluation sees its SEN provision here as inadequate.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' Jewish spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well catered for. The daily acts of collective worship comply fully with the requirements of the relevant Education Acts. The response of most children to them is good and their involvement positive. The school also provides opportunities for children to be involved positively with and contribute to the wider community, both Jewish and general. Most pupils enjoy their Jewish education though evidence from parents suggests dissatisfaction among some pupils. In general children's attitudes, behaviour about the school are good and attendance is satisfactory.

A healthy lifestyle is encouraged by the school. A revised draft Sex and Relationship Education Policy document is currently being considered by Governors who will also be consulting parents. School lunches conform to the standards of the Healthy Eating Programme and the consumption of unsuitable confectionery and drinks in school is discouraged. School uniform ensures that children's clothing conforms to health and safety requirements as well as Jewish standards of modest dress.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Two of the five regular teachers were absent through sickness at the time of the inspection. No judgement can be made on the quality of their teaching. That of most other teaching staff seen, including replacement teachers, was good; none was less than sound. Apart from the assistants in the Foundation Stage classes, one part-time teaching assistant is assigned to the department, deployed only in Key Stage 1 classes. Their contributions were unobtrusively efficient and effective.

The context and content of most lessons seen in all year groups related to the theme of Shavuot. Most shared the same pattern and content irrespective of the age and stage of the pupils. There were no lessons dealing with the

Parashah of the week or the Chumash, though in two Key Stage 2 lessons on Shavuot one teacher introduced the story of Megillat Ruth. During the inspection only one lesson of Hebrew was taught; this was with a lower ability group of eleven Year 1 pupils.

Lesson planning was for the most part satisfactory, though only rarely providing evidence of differentiated tasks for less or more able pupils. The quality of half the lessons seen was good; that of the remainder was satisfactory. Good use was made of artefacts as teaching aids in most lessons.

Most pupils respond positively to their lessons, work with interest and make satisfactory progress. Teacher-generated worksheets provide the basis for most classroom tasks for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. In the lessons seen, these did not require children to use their reference/searching skills to find information in other books or resource material.

One single laptop has recently been assigned to the Acting Head of Department for training and teaching purposes. This has enabled the first of the department's recently installed Interactive White Boards to be fully operational. This was used effectively by the one teacher at present trained to use it. In one lesson seen Year 2 pupils were also given an opportunity to use it to drag visuals and captions together in a 'mix and match' exercise.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

The school no longer teaches Hebrew as a modern spoken language, placing the emphasis instead on the acquisition of Hebrew reading skills.

The formal curriculum as reflected in the schedule of End of Year targets is intended to provide "... a carefully planned progression of Hebrew and Jewish Studies..." covering:

- Hebrew Language
- Tefillah
- the Jewish year and its annual cycle of festivals and holy days
- Torah which includes study of the Chumash and the Weekly Parashah
- the Jewish way of life

With certain qualifications it does this satisfactorily. Apart from in the Foundation Stage, there was no evidence for the cross-curricular learning links between Jewish and secular subjects which were a feature of work at the time of the last Pikuach inspection. There is no evidence that children are taught about Jewish history between early biblical times and the setting up of the modern State of Israel or learn about the lives and achievements of significant Jews through the ages. Redressing this situation may require re-evaluation of

the balance of teaching time allocated to the different components of the Jewish Studies curriculum.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

The school has appropriate policies in place and effective arrangements for the supervision and safeguarding of children by both teaching and non-teaching staff throughout the school day. Security measures on the site conform to best practice.

The school has a policy for dealing with the concerns of parents, the majority of whom feel it is easy to approach the school with questions or problems concerning their children's Jewish education.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

The school's proposed management structure envisages a post of Head of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at senior management team level, possibly of deputy head status, but this cannot be implemented yet due to other unresolved personnel issues.

In the interim, leadership of the department is undertaken by an Acting Head of Department. Recent on-site training has enabled her to develop her leadership skills and management capacity further, especially in (a) lesson observation to monitor the effectiveness of colleagues' teaching and (b) IT skills needed to lead her team of teachers in the effective use of Interactive Whiteboards (IWB).

No job specification/description has yet been drawn up for the Head of Hebrew and Jewish Studies or the other teachers and assistants in the department. This does not facilitate the performance management review of these postholders.

Since the last inspection the school has adopted the *Tal Am* course for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Teachers make selective use of the materials and the suggested methodologies.

The range, quality and number of Jewish Studies reference books and enrichment material in the school library have not noticeably improved since the last inspection when provision was judged to be inadequate.

There is no specific School Development/Improvement Plan for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Jewish Studies is mentioned only incidentally in the section of the 2006 School Plan dealing with ICT training. Despite budgetary constraints, it would be useful for the school to plan ahead for new teaching and learning resources, within a notional allocation.

Relatively little progress has been made in the use of ICT in Jewish Studies and Hebrew teaching. Jewish Studies classes are not timetabled to use the school's multi-place networked computer room. The laptop computers for pupil use in each Jewish Studies classroom have yet to be supplied. The first of the department's IWBs is now in use; the others cannot function until suitable laptop computers are delivered and staff trained.

Grade: 3

