

INTRODUCTION

1. The inspection was carried out under Section 23 of the 1996 Schools Inspection Act to report on:
 - the education standards achieved in Jewish Studies in the school;
 - the quality of Jewish education provided;
 - the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in the school;
 - arrangements for collective worship.

Basic Information about the school

Name of School	Hasmonean High School
Type of School	Secondary Comprehensive
Status	Voluntary Aided Specialist School – Business & Enterprise
Age range of Pupils	11-18 Boys and Girls
Headteacher	Rabbi D. Radomsky
Address of School	Holden Hill Road, NW4 1NA 2-4 Page Street, NW4 2EU
Telephone Boys' Site	0208 203 1411
Fax Boys' Site	0208 202 4526
Telephone Girls' Site	0208 203 4294
Fax Girls' Site	0208 202 4527
Heads of Jewish Studies	Rabbi C. Baddiel (Girls years 7-13) Rabbi B. Katz (Boys years 7-11) Rabbi D. Meyer (Boys' Sixth Form)
Chair of Governors	B. Conway
Name of Foundation Body	Jewish Secondary Schools Movement
Local Education Authority	Barnet
School Number	302/101366
Reporting Inspector	D. Felsenstein
Team Inspectors	Mrs. L. Harstein Rabbi G. L. Shisler Mrs. S. Teacher
Date of Inspection	6-9 and 12 September 2004 20-23 and 26 Ellul 5764
Date of Previous Inspection	January 1999

1.1 Basic Information

- 1) The Hasmonean High School is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. Founded in 1944 by the late Rabbi Dr. Solomon Schonfeld zt"l, the school is now a community of 1100 pupils. The pupils come in the main from north-west London and almost all have attended Jewish primary schools (in the 2004 year 7 intake, only 4/141 pupils come from non-Jewish schools). All pupils come from orthodox families, and as the school's Ethos Statement makes clear, "The ethos of the school is based unambiguously on the principles of Orthodox Judaism. It is the School's aim to educate boys and girls to conduct themselves in strict adherence to the Orthodox Jewish lifestyle throughout their lives."

- 2) The *Halachic* authority of the school remains with the three Elector *Rabbanim* of the Jewish Secondary Schools movement, who also appoint the trustees. These trustees appoint the Foundation governors who constitute the majority of the governing body. There are also local authority, staff, and parent governors.
- 3) The governors appoint a Governors' Jewish Studies Committee which meets termly and receives reports from the three heads of *Limmudei Kodesh*.

1.2 School Data and Indicators

Number of full-time pupils 2003-2004

Year	Boys	Girls	Totals
7	84	83	167
8	76	72	148
9	73	95	168
10	99	88	187
11	72	91	163
12	61	64	125
13	61	59	120
Totals	526	552	1078

Proportion of Jewish pupils	100%
Number of pupils with statements of special education needs	26
Number of pupils eligible for free school meals	51
Full-time equivalent of <i>Limmudei Kodesh</i> teachers	32.75
Number of part-time <i>Limmudei Kodesh</i> teachers	85
Number of full-time <i>Limmudei Kodesh</i> teachers	17
Pupil-teacher ratio in <i>Limmudei Kodesh</i>	32.98:1

Total *Limmudei Kodesh* time per week per Key Stage

Key Stage	Boys	Girls
Key Stage 3	45.6 hours	23.2 hours
Key Stage 4	27.3 hours	11.5 hours
Key Stage 5	37.0 hours	17.1 hours
Whole School	109.9 hours	51.8 hours

Examination Results Summer 2004

GCSE	No. of Entries	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U	%A*-A	%A*-C	%A*-G
Biblical Hebrew	87	12	28	23	18	2	3	1	0	0	46	93	100
Religious Studies	97	32	36	17	5	1	2	0	1	3	70	93	97

A Level	No. of Entries	A	B	C	D	E	N	U	% Pass
Biblical Hebrew		18	11	2	3	1	1	0	100
Religious Studies		44	33	10	1				100

Destination of Pupils Leaving Summer 2004

Girls	Seminaries	88%
Boys	<i>Yeshivot</i>	97%

1.3 Record of Evidence

Four inspectors were involved in the inspection for a total of 12.5 days. This coincided with the OFSTED inspection.

Number of lessons observed

Key Stage	Boys	Girls	Totals
3	16	12	28
4	7	2	9
5	9	9	18
Totals	32	23	55

Apart from attendance at lessons, the inspectors attended assemblies, *davened Mincha* with the pupils, and visited *Shiurim* and Sunday school. Lunches were observed on both sites, playgrounds were visited during breaks and informal activities attended. Several discussions were held with the Senior Management Team together and with its members individually, and with appropriate members of staff and with governors. A meeting was held to obtain the views of parents, attended by 40 of them. In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to parents, and 206 replies were received.

A representative group of pupils was interviewed, and pupils spoken to in class, during lunch and breaks and around the school.

The inspection took place during the first week of a new year. This meant that there was little or no work in exercise books, although some books were examined from the previous school year.

2. Summary

2.1 Main Findings

2.1.1 Hasmonean High School provides a stimulating and caring environment for both boys and girls. It remains true to its founding aims and succeeds in sending almost all of its alumni to *Yeshivot* and seminaries, regardless of the route by which they have progressed through the school. No inspector witnessed any incident in or out of the classroom which caused any concern, and all were impressed with the atmosphere of the school.

2.1.2 The quality of the *Limmudei Kodesh* provided is good, reflecting the success of more recent curricular changes and improvements in the presentation of lessons. Oral work and such written work that was available for inspection during the first week of a new

year, are of a good standard, although a clear and informative marking policy, as outlined in the staff handbook, and the enforcement of the homework policy would enhance the quality of work. Pupils participate well in class and their response to lessons is positive. The standard of pupils' skills is variable and care needs to be taken to reinforce the skills, particularly in reading, of pupils entering the school in year 7.

- 2.1.3 No lesson inspected was below average and several were good or very good. The best lessons were those that used a variety of activities. Totally or largely oral lessons, however charismatic the teacher, usually led to some unrest during the last ten minutes of the lessons. Teaching in both boys' and girls' sixth forms is especially good and the *Chavruta* approach has a good impact both on the personal development of the pupils and on their ability to think for themselves.
- 2.1.4 The curriculum is comprehensive, and careful thought has gone into its recent developments. There is still a willingness to consider changes and further developments, which is a great strength. The *Kodesh* curriculum now gives unity to all *Kodesh* activities. Furthermore, the curriculum is devised to take account of the differing needs of pupils, but care must be taken to provide a broader curriculum for the needs of the most able girls.
- 2.1.5 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent. Examples were observed of older pupils caring for younger ones, and the atmosphere on both sites is happy and relaxed. The practice of *Middot* is evidenced in many ways, including the respect shown by teachers to pupils and the courtesy shown to inspectors by the pupils. The school is involved in caring activities, whilst its work for *Tzedakah* is outstanding. The whole *Hashkafah* of the school provides an environment which stimulates both teachers and pupils.
- 2.1.6 Provision for the Special Education Needs (SEN) of pupils in *Kodesh* on the boys' site is progressing. Its organisation is being developed and the appointment of a full-time support teacher for *Kodesh* is an important enhancement of SEN provision. There is also progress on the girls' site but the provision is still patchy and is not yet meeting the needs of all the girls. Insofar as statemented pupils who need individual support are not yet all receiving it, the school does not fulfil the statutory requirements of the Special Needs Code of Practice.
- 2.1.7 The statutory requirement for an act of daily worship is discharged in several ways including voluntary *Shacharit* services daily (including one for *Sephardi* boys), daily *Mincha* on both sites, assemblies for the girls, and rotating year services for the boys.
- 2.1.8 The school has a very committed and involved Governing Body, which works through a *Kodesh* Committee. The leadership provided by the headteacher and his senior management team to the provision of *Kodesh* is impressive. There is a strong *Ruach* of mutual co-operation and respect, which permeates down throughout the *Kodesh* staff. The headteacher has brought an understanding and a professionalism, which is motivating his able Heads of *Kodesh* to carry out important developments. These include in-service training provision, which might, with advantage, include sessions on the greater use of visual aids. The head is well supported by his first deputy and the quality of *Kodesh* leadership bodes well for the future.

2.1.9 The school provides good general information to the parents as well as a very good *Daf Hashavuah*. In spite of this and of the opportunities for meetings that exist for them, there appear to be adverse feelings among a minority of parents about the quality of *Kodesh* offered by the school. This was apparent at the meeting of parents, in the questionnaire returns from parents and in some written communications. There seems to be some dissatisfaction with the quality of work and teaching in the “lower sets” and Sunday morning lessons. There is great competition to be in the “top sets.” In fact, very good work was seen in all sets, and pupils from all sets are doing well in the sixth form and all are able to proceed to seminaries and *Yeshivot*. There already have been important developments on Sunday morning, and the introduction of an element of choice together with staffing adjustments, have brought about significant improvements.

A great effort needs to be made in the school to understand the reasons for what are often misconceptions. For example, a third of the replies to the questionnaire criticised the provision of informal education. In fact, the provision is particularly good. The school needs to review the opportunities provided for parents, even before their children arrive at the school, to understand the different routes through the school in *Kodesh*, all of which arrive at the same end, and to help them to relate these to the particular needs of their own children. It may be that this will involve the provision of extra time for individual parents to come into the school.

2.1.10 Resourcing of materials and teaching aids is no better than satisfactory, although the provision of teaching staff is good (almost inevitably there is a considerable turn-over of staff on the girls’ site). The department has some visual aid resources and on the rare occasion that they were seen in use in lessons, an extra dimension was added to them.

2.2 Key Issues for Action

- Governors, together with the headteacher and staff, should develop strategies to publicise the different routes offered by the curriculum to meet the individual needs of pupils. All routes lead to the overall achievement of the school’s aims and objectives for all pupils as evidenced in its examination results, and in the destination of almost all alumni to *Yeshivot* and seminaries.
- Continue the development of Special Educational Needs as specified in the 1999 Report, with special reference to the needs of the girls’ school, and of boys and girls with statements of Special Educational Needs.
- Develop urgently the use of visual aids, including Information and Communication Technology and the effective use of the white board. This should be included in the school’s in-service programme.

3. STANDARDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

3.1 Achievement and progress in Jewish Education

- 3.1.1. Fifty-five lessons were observed on both the boys' and girls' sites, covering all key stages, and pupils of all attainments. Pupils' achievement was at least satisfactory, and in nearly 60% of lessons observed, was good or very good as measured by the school's own aims and objectives.
- 3.1.2. Achievement was particularly good in oral work and there were some very good responses to questions from the teacher and good questions to the teacher from pupils. This was particularly true in *Gemara* lessons in the higher sets, where there was often good dialogue. In the lower *Gemara* sets, where a subject such as *Eruv Tavshilin* was taught thematically with the help of visual aids and the active participation of the pupils, impressive progress was made. The use of visual aids and differential work is appropriate for pupils of all ages and attainment, and enhance the understanding of pupils. Questions should be differentiated in their difficulty and then directed to the appropriate pupils.
- 3.1.3. As the inspection took place during the first week of a new academic year, it was often difficult to make a fair judgement on the quality of written work. Exercise books were new and usually empty. Judgements had to be made, therefore, from last year's books that were examined when selected pupils were interviewed on both sites. The written work was at least satisfactory, but the marking too often consisted of ticks or one word comments which gave no indication to the pupil of what was necessary to improve the work. Both quality and progress would both be significantly enhanced were the guidelines outlined in the Staff Handbook adhered to. Homework was often not marked.
- 3.1.4. Progress was also difficult to judge from the lessons for the same reason. Most lessons started with a brief revision of the previous one, had there already been one. From this revision, from the response of the pupils during the lessons and from any recapitulation at the end, it was possible to make some judgements in four-fifths of the lessons observed. Of these, progress was judged good or very good in about 55%, whilst in none of them was it deemed less than satisfactory.
- 3.1.5. In *Chumash* and *Nach* the achievement of the girls was usually good or very good and only was it once less than satisfactory. Texts with *Rashi* commentary were approached in an analytical way, encouraging the girls to become independent learners. In the lessons observed, the response and participation of the girls was very positive.
- 3.1.6. Achievement and progress was most evident in both sixth forms. A great deal of thought and planning has gone into the development of the sixth form programmes and the results are evident in the high standards of attainment and commitment shown by the students. It is impossible to know from which set the students have come, and the number proceeding to Seminaries is high, whilst almost the whole cohort of boys proceeds to *Yeshivot*.
- 3.1.7. It was noted in both boys' and girls' lessons, and not always in the lowest sets, that there are deficiencies in some basic skills, particularly in that of fluent Hebrew reading. Strategies should be developed and generally applied, to improve reading fluency as appropriate, and particularly in year seven. It was noted that cards of *Tehillim* were available in the girls' school for reading practice, but were only seen

used very occasionally. Pupils with special needs would particularly benefit from such strategies.

- 3.1.8 Public Examination results in Biblical Hebrew and Religious Studies continue to impress. The results are tabulated in the introduction and indicate the commitment and hard work of both teachers and pupils.
- 3.1.9. Concern was expressed by some parents about the standards experienced on Sunday mornings. An inspection was made of the work of the boys' site. The school has already taken steps to meet the concerns. The morning has been slightly shortened; staffing has been adjusted to improve quality, whilst the *Avot U'Banim* and the options available for one of the three lessons are proving popular. Lessons of all types were visited which were seen to start on time, were orderly and the quality of teaching, as elsewhere during the inspection, was generally good. Pupils praised the choices available and some interesting work was seen, using computers and other visual aids. The challenge, as in all aspects of the work of the school, is to maintain and improve on the standards seen during the inspection.

3.2 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response to Jewish Studies

- 3.2.1 Pupils' attitudes behaviour and response to Jewish Studies are of a very good standard
- 3.2.2. The boys and girls have a very positive attitude to their learning in Jewish studies. During assemblies and *Tefillot* the pupils show respect and participate fully at all times. During lessons the pupils were seen to be interested and concentrating, often working together well and productively
- 3.2.3. During the extra curricula activities observed there was a great sense of enjoyment, concentration and interest shown. When voluntary lessons were offered in the evenings on the subject of *Tefilla*, 30-35 girls applied to participate.
- 3.2.4 The analytical approach to teaching Jewish Studies has resulted in the pupils developing an excellent ability to think deeply, to question their teachers, to effectively evaluate evidence and to offer explanations. For example, questions by pupils on issues such as euthanasia were carefully taken up by the teacher and discussed. On a few occasions pupils were heard comparing aspects of Jewish law to secular British law. Consequently, many pupils are able to communicate orally their ideas and thoughts clearly. Where pupils find difficulty in communicating ideas, teachers often patiently encourage and help them to express themselves.
- 3.2.5 The school has a comprehensive Behaviour Management and Discipline Policy and a clear view of standard of behaviour required. The head teacher monitors this policy and its implementation. Over the period of the inspection of the two sites by four inspectors, behaviour was considered to be very good. There were no incidents on the boys' site, in Jewish studies lessons, in the school building or in the school grounds which gave any cause for concern. On the girls' site behaviour was exemplary, even during an unscheduled evacuation of the building.
- 3.2.6 On both sites instances of *Derech Eretz* were seen in dealings with adults and with one another. Older pupils helped new pupils to find their way around the school and answered questions about the timetable from new pupils, both politely and helpfully. Doors were held open for adults and inspectors were willingly shown to classrooms with a smile. Older pupils were seen guiding and protecting the new year 7 intake, and

all the pupils moved safely and calmly about their business. The older pupils are very good role models for the younger pupils.

- 3.2.7 In 55% of lessons observed pupil response to the curriculum was good or better. Although pupil response to lessons was never less than satisfactory, lessons were seen where pupil participation could have been improved.
- 3.2.8 The school's curriculum is designed to assist pupils to develop their ability to use Jewish values and teachings in every aspect of their daily life and to be proud of their heritage. This is a strength of the school. The boys and girls use the Jewish values and teachings that are taught in the school in the wider community, showing a great sensitivity to others and the needs of the wider community. For example, Kisharon pupils take part in lessons during the week. The school is a resource for charities and communities. The pupils go to hospitals to visit the sick or to blow *Shofar*. They visit old age homes to *Daven* and to *Lein* and they help run synagogue youth groups and many other organisations. Many pupils are involved in other *Chesed* activities such as travelling to Russia to learn *Torah* with Russian Jewish pupils. The pupils collect very large sums of money for *Tzedakah*. Last year alone they raised over £80,000.

3.3.1 Collective Worship: *Tephillah*

- 3.3.1. The school discharges its statutory obligation to provide a daily act of worship for all its pupils.
- 3.3.2 There are daily *Shacharit* services for boys (including one for *Sephardim*), and separate ones for the sixth form boys at the Jacobovits Centre. There are assemblies for girls, and rotating year services for the boys. All pupils *daven Mincha* daily.
- 3.3.3 Two girls' assemblies were observed, *Mincha* services on both sites were attended daily, and on one occasion, an inspector *davened* with the sixth form boys. On all these occasions, the *Ruach* was very good and the attention and participation of the pupils was impressive.
- 3.3.4. The discussion paper, mentioned in the previous Pikuach report, to bring about improvements for *Hamotzei* and *Birchat Hamazon* on the boys' site, does not seem to have resulted in any changes in what actually transpires, although there is now a member of the *Kodesh* department present each day on the boys' site. There should be a clear policy on what boys are expected to do, properly enforced.

4. QUALITY OF JEWISH EDUCATION

4.1 Quality and range of the Curriculum

- 4.1.1 There are various programmes running concurrently in the JS department. **On the boys' site**, years 7-11 are divided into four ability groups, where the aim is to provide each boy with a curriculum that is appropriate for him. Most students in the sixth form follow their J.S. programme at the *Beis Hamedrash*, while a specially devised alternative course is run for those who do not attend there. It is clear that an enormous amount of time and effort has been expended on constructing the curriculum and, in

view of the fact that the school achieves its aim of sending the majority of its pupils on to *Yeshiva* and Seminary, – (approximately 98% of all pupils went last year), – it is evident that the curriculum is appropriate for the purpose for which it has been designed.

- 4.1.2 In the boys' school the programme includes *Chumash, Nach, Mishnah, Gemara, Halacha*, and History. Biblical Hebrew and Religious Studies at G.C.S.E. and 'A' level are also offered. The same *Masechta* (tractate) is studied throughout the school, each group at its appropriate level, and this year the *Masechta* being undertaken is *Beitsa*. Comprehensive and clear guidelines have been produced outlining the language skills, study skills and areas of comprehension that teachers are expected to aim to achieve in each class and subject, and much guidance has been produced for all teachers on the strategies they might employ to achieve those aims. There is, similarly, a syllabus for each festival which sets out exactly what each teacher is expected to cover in each year. This is a very commendable effort to ensure that fresh material about each respective festival is taught each year. It is suggested that more thought is given to justifying why a particular topic should be taught in any given year. For example, why should the *Kriat Hatorah* for *Rosh Hashanah* be taught in year 9 rather than year 10? This is a broad and balanced curriculum that is constantly being re-examined and improved.
- 4.1.3 As well as JS lessons during the day there are also JS lessons that take place before and after school. Year 7 has nine lessons, and years 8, 9 and 10 have eight, per week. In year 11 there are 5, which are always period 1 which follows on immediately from the morning *Shiur* and so provide a 'quality' time slot for JS in the year that pupils are sitting their GCSE's. In years 7-11 all boys in all JS groups have the opportunity to attend a Morning *Shiur*, Monday to Friday. These are compulsory for boys in the J1, J2, and J3 sets, but voluntary for those in J4, although some do attend. There are also 2 evening *Shiurim*, and 3 lessons on Sunday. The Sunday programme for years 7, 8 and 9 has recently been revised and is now run as the '*Liboh Chofetz*' programme. Essentially this means that boys have four options to choose from, in one of their three lessons, *Gemoroh Bekius*, Jewish History, *Ta'amei HaMitzvos*, and *Tephillah* through Art. This is proving very successful and some beautiful scribal art work done by boys during this time is on display in the school.
- 4.1.4 Most lessons in the 6th Form take place in the '*Beis Hamedrash*.' Students have the equivalent of a Morning *Shiur*, plus 10 lessons per week. This is undoubtedly the 'jewel in the crown' of the JS studies undertaken at the Hasmonean, and is highly impressive. This programme illustrates how well the entire JS curriculum 'works' since, no matter which stream a boy was in during his earlier school career, he can join this programme which will provide him with a very good grounding for *Yeshiva*. And the proof that this works so supremely well is the ever-increasing desire of *Rashei Yeshiva* to accept pupils from the Hasmonean. The school is to be congratulated on this innovative and exciting programme.
- 4.1.5 The small percentage of boys who elect not to join the *Beis Hamedrash* programme have an equally well-planned curriculum which takes place at the school. It is noteworthy that most of the boys who attend this programme also go on to *Yeshiva*. On Thursday evenings, the 6th Form has a joint 2 hour '*Mishmar*' programme. Pizza

and chips are served at 5.30 and this is followed by a choice of *Shiurim* including *Minchas Chinuch* (in Yiddish!), *Gemara*, and contemporary *Halachic* issues.

- 4.1.6 **On the girls' site** the Jewish Studies curriculum is divided into four core subjects; *Chumash*, *Nach*, *Dinim* and Jewish History. Pupils also have the opportunity to take GCSE's and 'A' levels in Biblical Hebrew and Religious Studies. The girls are divided into four levels of ability, each group following a similar scheme of work at its appropriate level. In year 7 there are nine J.S. lessons per week, in years 8-10 there are eight, and in year 11 there are five. In year 12 there are 7 lessons and year 13 there are 5. The curriculum is thoroughly planned with much guidance given to teachers regarding what they should teach, including vocabulary that the pupils should know at different stages. This is a curriculum that has considerable depth, and the most able pupils leave the school well-prepared to enter seminaries, which most of them do. However it is not as broad as it could be, and it is likely that able pupils are not always stretched as far as they should be.
- 4.1.7 In September 2002 a new Sixth Form Study Programme was implemented. Instead of the continuous study of one particular *Sedra* different modules of *Chumash* are taught. There are twelve topics and each is taught over a 3-4 week period. Once a week, after school, there is also the opportunity for girls to learn with alumni who have returned from Seminaries. This has proved popular and most successful. Heads of Seminaries are happy to accept girls from the Hasmonean.
- 4.1.8 The Informal Curriculum is entitled 'Learning to Love, Learning to Live.' A full-time department co-ordinator has been appointed on the boys' site as well as two part-time informal educators on the girls' site, and the opportunities available to pupils are now very wide. Many programmes are organised for different year groups that take place during lunchtimes or the school day itself, as well as extra-curricular activities that take place out of school. These include residential weekends, day trips, and visits abroad. Special activities are organised for *Yom Hashoa*, *Yom Hazikaron* and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* which are very well attended and opportunities are provided for fathers to come to school on Sunday mornings to learn with their sons in a programme called '*Avot Ubanim*.' Similar opportunities are extended to mothers to learn with their daughters, though on a less regular basis. A school walking tour has been run by the school for very many years, and this continues to be highly successful. The boys go for four days at the end of the winter term and the girls in the spring. The school also aims to take every boy and girl away for a special residential Shabbat at some time during their school career.

4.2 Teaching

- 4.2.1 The Jewish Studies teachers at Hasmonean have a secure knowledge of their subject and a clear commitment both to Jewish Studies, and to fulfilling the aims of the school by ensuring that the majority of pupils go on to further Jewish study. Lessons plans have clear learning objectives, but are not always matched to the differing needs of the wide ability range within some classes. In particular, the targets laid down in the Individual Education Plans of the Special Needs pupils are not included in these plans and there is limited support from special needs assistants.

- 4.2.2 The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was never less than satisfactory with a high proportion of both good and very good lessons observed. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, and the school is developing its In Service training with positive results. Staff are working hard both to improve their professional qualifications and their pedagogical skills. They value the development of their teaching skills which included for example, video – conferencing from Bar Ilan university on the teaching of *Chumash* and *Gemara*.
- 4.2.3 Where teaching is good or very good, the pace is brisk, and pupils are involved and interested. Clear targets are set at the beginning of lessons, and a variety of activities and teaching styles are used. An example of this was seen where the pupils learnt about *Eruv Tavshillin* with the aid of eggs and *Matzot*. The significance was clearly explained and the *Mitzvah* demonstrated practically.
- 4.2.4 Particularly noteworthy is the high level of teaching to the eldest pupils, where they work with a *Chavruta*. Pupils engage in independent learning and research and their discussions involve the use of critical debate and analysis.
- 4.2.5 Features of less successful teaching revolve around limited pupil participation, where pupils often sit inactive and are not involved in the learning. Tasks do not match the differing abilities, resources mainly consist of worksheets and there is limited use of visual aids or technological equipment to enhance the learning. This limits the quality of the teaching and the learning.
- 4.2.6 Homework is set on a regular basis and usually follows on from the learning in the lesson. However, often it is not rigorously marked or monitored to have the best intended effect.

4.3 Assessment

- 4.3.1 As the inspection took place during the first week of a new academic year, virtually no written work had yet been done, so there was very little opportunity for inspectors to scrutinise pupils' work. That which was seen was from the previous year's work, and in some cases it had been set and marked by teachers who were no longer in the school.
- 4.3.2 Some of the marking of pupils' books was not satisfactory, giving no guidance to the student of what was required in order to progress. A large number of books contained page after page of ticks, followed by a cursory one-word remark at the end. Other books asked for work to be completed or repeated, and usually this instruction was clearly not carried out and not followed through by the teacher. The Jewish Studies Department needs to implement the uniform marking policy of the school to ensure that pupils fully understand the standard of the work that they are achieving, and teachers must follow up the instructions they give to ascertain that every pupil in the class is working at his/her optimum level of ability. Procedures are clearly laid down by the staff handbook, and should be used by the LK department.
- 4.3.3 Educational targets are laid down and should be assessed, both in the records kept by teachers and when written work is marked.

4.3.4 The few reports to parents that were seen were of good quality and gave parents an informative view of pupils' progress.

4.4 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

4.4.1 An Orthodox Jewish ethos permeates every aspect of the school, and pupils are only accepted if they come from a family that is Orthodox in its practice. The majority of members of staff are Jewish, and those who are not are completely sympathetic to, and supportive of, the aims of the school.

4.4.2 Staff act as excellent role models for the pupils, and staff and pupils dress appropriately, in accordance with *Halacha*.

4.4.3 Under the auspices of the Informal Education Department various activities take place that are specifically aimed towards developing pupils' social awareness. Separate *Achdus* trips are arranged for boys and girls from year 7, where they are taken to Carmel College for an overnight stay where they can get to know one another in a social environment. On *Rosh Chodesh* a chosen year group *Davens* in the school hall with the pupils from the 6th form *Beis Hamedrash* programme. After the service and breakfast, sixth formers learn with the younger boys. *Shabbatonim* that are held for various year groups at different times of the year, and the walking tours help teach students how to live together in harmony.

4.4.4 Comprehensive programmes are taught under the heading of PSHE/Citizenship/Emunah where pupils are offered courses in Jewish medical ethics and contemporary ethics. These courses deal with issues such as dating, abortion, and euthanasia and are tackled from the Orthodox Jewish perspective.

4.4.5 On the girls' site musical productions are organised and performances have taken place in the wider community, especially for the elderly and infirm to enjoy. These activities help to impress on the pupils the responsibilities they owe to the wider community.

4.4.6 There have been trips abroad to Russia, where boys in the Lower Sixth have taught Torah to Russian children, and to Poland by the girls where they learn about the Holocaust.

4.4.7 The extraordinarily large sums of money raised in *Tsedakkah* collections are adequate testimony to the emphasis that the school places on this important *Mitzvah*.

4.4.8 There was very little work displayed around the school. This was undoubtedly reflective of the time of the academic year at which the inspection took place. There were still displays relating to last year's *Massechta* of Talmud and even to *Tisha B'Av*, which were clearly not appropriate.

4.5 Equality of opportunity

4.4.1 The school's approach to equal opportunities is still very much rooted in its religious ethos. In keeping with these principles, all pupils have equal opportunities to access what the school's *Halachic* authorities consider appropriate for boys and girls.

4.4.2 The school encourages pupil's personal religious traditions and both *Sephardi* and *Ashkenazi Minyanim* are regularly held. It also encourages pupils to retain their own pronunciation and is open to each person's personal *Hashkafa*, for example, in relationship to Zionist issues.

4.6 Support, guidance and welfare

4.6.1 The school's procedures of support, guidance and welfare are very good and enhance pupils' Jewish education and development.

4.6.2 Pastoral policies are based on orthodox Jewish values. All pupils spoken to feel very well supported by the school and are aware of the various routes they can take to gain help or guidance. Counsellors, sympathetic to Jewish beliefs and values, are available for both sites and members of staff are pursuing professional qualifications in counselling skills. Mentoring is available for a sustained time to support a range of individual students if it is needed. Monitoring of the progress of pupils requiring help is satisfactory.

4.6.3 There is a well planned induction programme for pupils and parents of year 7 pupils. Year 7 induction is supported by a 6th form "buddy" system and an *Achdut* residential programme to encourage relationships between good role models and the new pupils. This facilitates a well supported, secure transition from the feeder schools.

4.6.4 The school provides suitable guidance on various issues. Guidance is available through transition to tertiary education, from staff and external agencies. Pre-*Yeshiva* and seminary visits to Israel are arranged to help the pupils make informed choices for their gap year and a comprehensive programme is in place to facilitate an informed decision on other *Yeshivot* and seminaries available. Advice and guidance is also given to prospective parents regarding *Bat/Barmitzva* celebrations.

4.6.5 Outside speakers visit both sites to discuss topics pertaining to life issues such as free will, crisis, and dealing with missionaries. Year 13 boys and girls are provided with various courses relating to their adult lives. For example, they have talks on subjects as diverse as budgeting, Jewish dating and on parenting. Jewish Business Ethics is woven into their Business and Enterprise college programme. The members of staff are excellent role models. They provide discreet aid for vulnerable youngsters by providing food, clothes and grants.

4.6.6 The school provides a safe and secure environment. There is a monitored Internet policy to ensure the safety and security of pupils. There is also a designated person to mentor the most vulnerable members of the school. Health and safety policies are in place- and there is a comprehensive drugs policy. Support and guidance is a strength of the school

4.7 Provision for Pupils with Special Education Needs

4.7.1. The school accepts pupils across a wide ability range and has 26 pupils with a statement of Special Education Needs. The year groups are differentiated by ability. The school is not fulfilling the requirements of the code of practice of Special Education Needs as appropriate help is not being received by some statemented pupils in the classrooms.

- 4.7.2. Since the start of the school year of September 2004, **the boy's** site has had a new system in place to cater for boys with Special Education Needs in Jewish Studies. This system is well structured and professionally staffed. There is a member of staff to link the Jewish Studies staff with the secular Special Education Co-ordinator to ensure that the Jewish Studies staffs get all the relevant information they should have to help the boys. They now have a full-time member of staff who will be teaching these boys using a variety of resources including ICT. Care must be taken to ensure that rigorous monitoring of this new system occurs.
- 4.7.3. At the time of the inspection this new system had only been in place for a few days and therefore its effectiveness could not be judged. However, it was noted that in all the lessons observed, help in the classroom for statemented boys was provided only twice. On these occasions this provision clearly made a good contribution to the teacher's ability to progress these pupils at a suitable rate.
- 4.7.4. Some lesson plans and some teaching showed evidence of differentiated teaching. In the J3 and J4 groups this was done well but there was no focus on the most able in the J1 group. No teacher was seen to be using Individual Education Plans during their lesson.
- 4.7.5. Resources for Jewish Studies Special Education Needs are poor. There is a need to focus attention on this area.
- 4.7.6. There has been progress in the provision for **girls** with Special Education Needs in Jewish Studies since the last inspection, but the system in place is not comprehensive or rigorous.
- 4.7.7. There is no designated Jewish Studies Special Education Needs Coordinator. Special Needs is overseen by the head of Jewish Studies and monitored as frequently as his busy schedule allows. He encourages the staff to look at the pupils' secular Individual Education Plans but Jewish Studies are not written into the Individual Education Plans
- 4.7.8. There is now a teacher in place who is able to help those at the mild to moderate end of the Special Needs spectrum. She also effectively helps those who have been referred to her by the class teacher as needing extra help. However, she is only available two mornings a week for all of these girls. There is a need for a teacher with the expertise required to help the statemented girls and for the class teachers to be given In-Service Training in these areas.
- 4.7.9. If lesson plans are prepared well in advance, the teachers are able to get very good help and advice from the very willing secular Special Education Needs Coordinator. But during observation of lessons there was no evidence of this occurring nor were any Individual Education Plans seen in use. The teachers did not focus on these pupils in their lesson plans. Only once was a girl with a statement of Special Education Needs seen with a support teacher in a Jewish studies lesson.
- 4.7.10. Written work distributed in the lessons was not differentiated. The teachers used differentiated questions to help pupils but did not have the variety of relevant methods and resources required to assist the differentiated teaching of pupils at either end of the Special Needs spectrum. The school would benefit from having a differentiation policy to ensure the use of a variety of methods and consistency of approach
- 4.7.11. The heads of Jewish Studies are aware of the poor quantity of Jewish Studies resources available for pupils with Special Education Needs. The teachers are encouraged to share any good differentiated material they use or make. The head of

Jewish Studies is accumulating this material and other helpful material and it will be housed in the new Jewish Studies resource area. Attention needs to be paid to the use of ICT for pupils with Special Education Needs. No evidence of the use of ICT was seen for this purpose, nor were any ICT resources seen in the new resource area.

- 4.7.12. The Jewish Studies Department involves the parents and external agencies in decisions regarding these pupils and the support teacher has an effective ongoing communication system between parents and the school.

4.8 Partnership with parents and the Jewish Community

- 4.8.1 Parents were invited to give their views by completing a questionnaire and attending a meeting with the Pikuach team. 206 responses were received, representing approximately 20% of the parent body. 40 parents attended the parents' evening.
- 4.8.2 Most views expressed are positive. For example, 64% agree or strongly agree that the school encourages high standards in *Limmudei Kodesh*, and 70% that their children enjoy their studies. 73% feel that they could approach the school if they had a concern. Less positive views were expressed in three other important areas. Only 45% agree or strongly agree that the school encourages families to play an active part in the life of the school. From the evidence gained during the inspection, this view is justified. The school has some wonderful initiatives, such as the *Bnot Mitzva* celebrations; mother and daughter classes or Sunday morning davening and learning for fathers and sons. However, further ways of involving the parents could be explored.
- 4.8.3 Another area of dissatisfaction was concern about homework. As stated in the teaching section, this needs to be more rigorously monitored and checked.
- 4.8.4 Lastly, parents were disappointed with the range of extra – curricular activities. They are obviously not sufficiently informed. Inspectors found a wide range of stimulating activities, including 'Lunch and Learn,' *Shabbatonim*; residential trips both at home and abroad and exciting new initiatives being organised for Year 7.
- 4.8.5 Inspectors were pleased to discover that concerns that parents' expressed were often not justified. It therefore appears to be an important priority that the school develops strategies for educating the parents, even before their children start in Year 7. They require a greater understanding of the fact that the school is fulfilling its aims, and enabling almost all of its pupils to go on to further study in Jewish Education.
- 4.8.6 Parents are informed of their children's progress by means of open evenings and end of year reports. There is an 'Open Door' policy and concerns can be discussed by phone, letters and meetings. Of the representative samples of reports scrutinised, they give clear information about effort, achievement and attainment. However, comments relating to achievements within the Informal Education programme are more limited.
- 4.8.7 The regular newsletter is lively and informative. *Daf Hashavua*, makes excellent reading and is professionally produced.

4.8.8 The school has good links with many projects within the community. Most notable are the fund raising events and other *Middot* related to care within the *Kehilla*. The Headteacher has valuable links with Headteachers of other Jewish schools.

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

5.1 Management

5.1.1. The Governing Body, headteacher and the three heads of *Kodesh* work closely and harmoniously together, and meet regularly at meetings of the *Limmudei Kodesh* Committee of the Governing Body. Within the school, there are frequent meetings of the Senior Management Team attended by all three *Kodesh* heads. Development plans are now in place for the three sections of the department, and there is a clear vision of the direction in which the school is to move. This is resulting in significant improvements in the delivery of the *Kodesh* curriculum and in the standards of Jewish education.

5.1.2 The headteacher is at the apex of the management of the *Kodesh* department, and he inspires and motivates the three heads of *Kodesh*. One of these is in charge of the girls' site years 7-13; a second is in charge of the boys' site years 7-11, of the early morning and late afternoon classes, and of the Sunday morning provision for years 7-11; the third is in charge of the entire boys' sixth form arrangements, including all sixth form *Kodesh*. Two of these are also deputy headteachers. Each head of *Kodesh* has a deputy, whilst there is a head of informal education responsible to the head of the boys' sixth form.

5.1.3 The role description of the heads of *Kodesh* includes the important task of regular monitoring and evaluation. Whilst this has begun to take place within what is a relatively new management structure, this is an area that requires significant expansion. The use of staffing resources will be reviewed to see if it is possible to use it more efficiently for such needs as the support of statemented pupils.

5.1.4 The important changes in the management structure introduced since the last Pikuach inspection, the new spirit of co-operation it has engendered and the professionalism that has been introduced into the whole area of *Kodesh* in the school, are leading to important improvements in the training for, and the provision of, Jewish education throughout the school.

5.2 Staffing, Resources for Learning, and Accommodation

5.2.1 The department is well staffed with teachers who have the necessary subject expertise. Many of the male teachers are rabbis, and several men and women teachers have university or other qualifications. All participate in the school's In-Service-Training programme and some are attending courses outside school. There is a problem on the girls' site of staff turnover, but that does not detract from the commitment of all the teachers there.

- 5.2.2 There are a number of small class teaching sets in the department throughout the school, and whilst this brings advantages, a review of priorities might help to counter the understaffing for those pupils with special education needs, especially for those who are statemented.
- 5.2.3 There was insufficient time to inspect the Jewish Studies library provision in detail. The model on the girls' site, where there were *Sefarim* available to be borrowed for one lesson, and general books available for borrowing for a longer period, seems a good one. As resources become available, the department should develop its visual aids provision, to enhance the teaching and learning generally in the school. But it will be necessary to include the effective use of visual aids in the school's In-Service-Training programme.
- 5.2.4 The boys' accommodation is cramped and the corridors do not easily lend themselves to controlled movement. Dining arrangements are difficult and need careful supervision. The girls' site now has a beautiful new building, and when all the site works are completed, will be a very attractive section of the school. However, attention must be given to the establishment of firm rules for moving round the school, to ensure safety in the corridors and on staircases.
- 5.2.5 The security arrangements on both sites work very well and there are procedures in force for the safety of those within the sites. Access to both sites is well controlled.