

PIKUACH INSPECTION REPORT

HASMONEAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORTING INSPECTOR: RABBI M ROBERG

TEAM INSPECTOR: RABBI M LEBRECHT

DATE OF INSPECTION

14 – 16 JUNE, 2004

INSPECTION UNDER SECTION 23 OF THE EDUCATION (SCHOOL) ACT

1. INTRODUCTION

The inspection was carried out under Section 23 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996. Its purpose was to report on:

- the educational standards achieved in Limmudei Kodesh in the school
- the quality of Jewish education provided
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school
- the arrangements for collective worship

1.1 Basic information about the school

Name of School:	Hasmonean Primary School
Type of School:	Mixed Primary
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Principal:	Rabbi M Ginsbury
Headteacher:	Mrs J Rodin
Head of Limmudei Kodesh:	Mrs B Zaiden
Address of School:	8 – 10 Shirehall Lane, Hendon London NW4 2PD
Telephone:	0208 202 7704
Fax:	0208 202 1605
Chair of Governors:	Mr John Samson
Local Education Authority:	Barnet
Dfee School Number:	302/3516
Reporting Inspector:	Rabbi M Roberg
Team Inspector:	Rabbi M Lebrecht
Date of Inspection:	June 14 – 16, 2004
Date of Previous Inspection:	June 22 – 25, 1998

Intake of pupils and the area served by the school

The school was founded in 1944 by the late Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld as part of the Jewish Secondary Schools Movement in the tradition of *Torah im Derech Eretz*.

In 1995, the school was granted Voluntary Aided Status. Most of the pupils come from families where orthodox Jewish tradition is observed. Limmudei Kodesh accounts for almost 40% of the curriculum time.

Most pupils come from the local Jewish communities of Golders Green, Hendon, Hampstead and Finchley, while others come from further away – Edgware, Bushey, Southgate and Wembley.

The recent appointment of a dynamic Principal has been widely welcomed. He takes an active interest in all aspects of the Limmudei Kodesh department, and his guidance is greatly valued by all concerned.

Extra curricular Limmudei Kodesh for the Juniors, in the form of additional lessons after school, and on Sunday mornings, further enhance the level of Jewish knowledge of the pupils.

1.1 School data and indicators

Number of pupils:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Reception	15	7	22
1	16	14	30
2	19	11	30
3	20	10	30
4	14	12	26
5	14	16	30
6	19	13	32
Total	117	83	200

Religious affiliation

Orthodox Jewish

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Number of pupils with statements of SEN:	4
Number of pupils on SEN register for Limmudei Kodesh:	29
Number of pupils with IEPs for Limmudei Kodesh:	23
Number of pupils attracting Section 11 funding	4

Free School Meals

Number of pupils eligible for free school meals:	N/A
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Teachers and Classes

Full-time Limmudei Kodesh teachers:	1
Part-time Limmudei Kodesh teachers	8
Full-time equivalent Limmudei Kodesh teachers:	5.1
Pupil to teacher ratio in Limmudei Kodesh	30
Average class size for Limmudei Kodesh	22
Number of Limmudei Kodesh SEN support assistants	3

Total Limmudei Kodesh teaching time per week

Reception	6 hours thirty minutes
Key Stage 1:	6 hours thirty minutes
Key Stage 2: Years 3 – 5	8 hours twenty minutes
Year 6	10 hours fifty minutes

Destination of 2003 leavers:

Hasmonean High School	28
Beis Yaakov	1
JFS	1
City of London	1
Unknown (statemented)	1

1.2 Record of the evidence base of the Inspection:

Lessons observed:

Reception	KS1	KS2	Total
3	6	16	25

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over the course of three days, concurrent with the OFSTED inspection. In addition to the 25 lessons, six *davening* sessions were observed, at *Shacharis* and at *Mincha*. Observations were also made during *bensching* and at a whole-school Assembly. Moreover, pupils' behaviour was observed in the playground, in the dining-hall and around the school in general. A representative sample of pupils from Years 1 – 6 was tested on a wide range of Limmudei Kodesh subjects, taken from the school's curriculum.

Discussions were held with the Principal, the Headteacher, the Chair and Vice-Chairman of Governors, the Head of Kodesh, the OFSTED inspectors, and with some teachers, pupils and parents.

Policy documents, the Limmudei Kodesh curriculum, the teachers' lesson plans and records of assessment, samples of end-of-year reports, and resource material were carefully scrutinized before and during the inspection. In addition, samples of pupils' written work and some of their portfolios were examined, and note was taken of the range of pupils' work on display in the corridors and classrooms.

An analysis was compiled of the responses of fifty-six parents who completed the questionnaire sent out in advance of the inspection.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Main Findings

- 2.1.1 The Hasmonean Primary School offers a first-class Jewish education for its pupils in a warm and caring environment. The standards achieved by the pupils are high when measured against the school's expectations. In the vast majority of the lessons, the progress of pupils is good or very good.
- 2.1.2 The curriculum is now much more comprehensive than at the time of the last inspection. It is broad and balanced, and strongly emphasises the teaching of skills. The delivery of the curriculum is now more effective because of well-prepared differentiated work.
- 2.1.3 The quality of teaching is impressive, and represents a major strength of the school. None of the lessons observed was less than satisfactory, and 80% were good or better. Teachers are well qualified and are fully committed to their pupils.
- 2.1.4 The school complies with the statutory requirements to provide a daily act of worship for all pupils. The standard of *davening* and *bensching* is generally very good. Many of the pupils display *Kavonoh* and enthusiasm during *Tefilla* and *Birchas Hamozon*.
- 2.1.5 The school provides many opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils, and the staff serve as excellent role models. A wide range of extra curricular activities enhances the character training of the pupils. The behaviour of pupils during the inspection was very good with many examples of helpfulness and politeness towards the visitors.
- 2.1.6 Assessment procedures for Limmudei Kodesh are good. The introduction of SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) in the Kodesh curriculum for *Chumash* vocabulary and Hebrew grammar has brought them in line with the National Curriculum. Monitoring and recording of progress is effective in all areas.
- 2.1.7 The quality of information provided to parents is good. Parents are informed of their child's progress through Open Evenings, Information Evenings, homework diaries, and end-of-year reports, which are of a high calibre. The monthly *Ovos U'bonim* learning sessions, whereby parents learn with their children at school, further enhances the Home-School partnership.
- 2.1.8 The management of the Kodesh department is another of the major strengths of the school. The Headteacher and Head of Kodesh collaborate in complete harmony and provide dynamic leadership. At present, the Head of Kodesh is the only full-time member on the Limmudei Kodesh staff.
- 2.1.9 The school has taken note and acted upon all but one of the Key Issues of the previous inspection report. Accordingly there have now been significant improvements in many areas. The Governors, Headteacher and Head of

Kodesh are to be warmly congratulated for those improvements, and for continually striving for excellence in the Kodesh department.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

There are no Key Issues, but the governors should note the various points made in the body of the report.

3 STANDARDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

3.1 Achievements and Progress in Jewish Studies

- 3.1.1 The standards achieved by pupils are high when measured against the school's expectations. The vast majority of pupils make good progress as they advance from year to year.
- 3.1.2 The school puts a strong emphasis on the teaching of Hebrew reading and on gaining textual skills. These skills are developed throughout the pupils' years at the school. The evidence, based on lesson observation and a representative testing of pupils, indicates that, by the end of KS1, almost all pupils are able to read accurately and to translate several chapters of *Chumash*. During KS2, most achieve complete fluency in reading and their knowledge and understanding of texts is good. This marks a welcome improvement since the last inspection.
- 3.1.3. The development of the Kodesh curriculum includes SATs in Hebrew grammar and in *Chumash* vocabulary. As a result, the progress of pupils, particularly in these two areas, can be easily assessed. This also marks a gratifying improvement since the last inspection. The school is rightly careful not to extend the use of SATs into other areas of the curriculum, since this could reduce Limmudei Kodesh to a technical subject, instead of a source for the spiritual development of the pupils. The stress put on the teaching of *Dikduk* (Hebrew grammar) – traditionally a difficult subject at primary school level – has helped the pupils to tackle texts with confidence as they progress through the school.
- 3.1.4 The study of *Chumash* forms the core of the Limmudei Kodesh curriculum. It is taught in the traditional manner using rote learning, and teachers use a variety of strategies to ensure that this method does not become monotonous. Emphasis is put not only on translation but on a thorough comprehension of the texts. At KS2, the study of *Rashi* is introduced gradually, also with a

stress on comprehension as well as translation. The evidence shows that progress in both *Chumash* and *Rashi* is generally of a high standard. Whereas in the previous inspection it was noted that at KS1, progress was less than satisfactory in one third of the lessons observed, on this occasion, the progress was satisfactory in all lessons, and indeed in over 70% of the lessons it was good or very good. Similarly, at KS2 progress was good in over 70% of the lessons observed, as opposed to only one third at the previous inspection six years ago.

- 3.1.5 General Jewish Knowledge (GK) covers a wide range of topics including Jewish History, *Dinim*, the weekly *Sedra*, *Biurei Tefilla* (explanation on the prayers) and the Festivals. The school has introduced a workbook covering many topics of GK for each year from Year 3 – 6. This has helped raise the standards of general knowledge significantly. Also each pupil at KS2 has his/her own portfolio which incorporates GK. The teaching of topics from the *Sedra* is left to the discretion of the teacher at KS2. It would be important to use a grid formula to ensure that new topics are introduced each year. The pupils show a very good understanding of selections of *Tefilla* which they study at depth at KS2. This is also applicable at KS1, where pupils learn the meaning of the early morning *Brochos* in the *Siddur*.
- 3.1.6 At KS2, whilst the boys learn *Mishna*, the girls learn extra *Dinim*, known as “Girls’ *Dinim*.” The lessons observed in both these subjects showed that the pupils are motivated and are making pleasing progress.
- 3.1.7 In the limited time available for Jewish History, which is taught from Year 2 onwards, sections from *Nach* are studied without any text. Worksheets are distributed, which pupils usually complete for homework. By the end of Year 5, pupils will have reached the period of the early Kings. Because of the shortage of time available to cover Jewish History, and because it is mainly taught orally, it is not surprising that pupils’ knowledge when tested in this subject was only fair. In Year 6, the subject is not studied throughout the year, but in the final term there is a project on the Jews in England during the Twentieth Century. An expert on the topic has been invited to co-ordinate the project.
- 3.1.8 Since the last inspection, extra *Limmudei Kodesh* has been introduced for boys and girls, for an hour after school once a week and also on Sunday mornings. The subjects taught are *Mishna* (Years 3 – 4) and *Gemora* (Years 5 – 6) for boys, and extra *Dinim* for girls. These are voluntary lessons; approximately half the boys attend, but only a few of the girls. Although not formally inspected, it was noted that in a boys’ after school *Mishna* class, the learning was enthusiastic and the boys appeared well motivated at the end of a very hot day.

3.2 Pupils’ attitudes, behaviour and response to Jewish Studies

- 3.2.1 Pupils’ attitudes, behaviour and response to *Limmudei Kodesh* are a major strength of the school. All the lessons observed were conducted in an orderly manner and pupils display considerable interest and motivation. Most pupils

concentrate well throughout the lesson; however, a small number of pupils who are of a lower attainment level find this difficult.

- 3.2.2 Discussion with pupils, in the playground and during testing, reveal that they all have very positive attitudes towards Jewish Studies at the school. They clearly enjoy their Limmudei Kodesh lessons, and show a feeling of pride in their school. This was also evident by their enthusiastic responses when being tested by the inspectors in various subjects. Overall, the response of pupils is at least sound in all the lessons observed, and in most of them it is good.
- 3.2.3 Both in and out of the classroom, pupils show *Derech Eretz* towards their teachers and towards one another. It was noted that pupils arrive to their lessons punctually and settle down quickly to their tasks. The school's stress on good *middos* during lessons and assemblies has a positive effect on developing the *Derech Eretz* of the pupils.
- 3.2.4 The behaviour of pupils in the corridors, in the dining hall and in the playground is good. They eat their packed lunches tidily and there is no evidence of any wastage or litter on the floor. In the playground, specific areas are designated for the different age groups, and this helps generate a calm atmosphere, with no evidence of any rowdiness or fighting during the breaks.

3.3 Collective Worship (*davening*)

- 3.3.1 The school fully complies with the statutory requirements for collective worship through its assemblies, *Tefilla* (*davening*), *Birchas Hamozon*, and the reciting of the appropriate *Brochos*.
- 3.3.2 All pupils *daven Shacharis* in their classrooms at the beginning of the morning session, with the exception of Year 6 pupils, who are expected to have *davened* before coming to school. During this half-hour period, these pupils have an extra *Shiur* based on the weekly *Sedra*. *Mincha* is *davened* by pupils in Years 3 – 6 during their afternoon Kodesh lesson.
- 3.3.3 Towards the end of Reception class, a *Siddur* party is held during the Summer term to which the parents are invited. Each child is presented with a *Siddur* which will be used throughout their years at school. Good behaviour during *davening* at KS1 is reinforced by honouring “*Davening champs*” at the weekly Kodesh assembly.
- 3.3.4 The curriculum for *Tefilla* shows continuity and progression as further *Tefillos* are added each year. In Year 5, the pupils are already *davening* a large proportion of the regular *Shacharis* service.
- 3.3.5 During the inspection, it was noted that the teachers are fully in control of the proceedings and that the pupils participate well with much chanting, but without any shouting. As the pupils progress up the school, there is less chanting and more prayers are said quietly. The teachers intersperse the

davening with short explanations or short questions on the subject matter. In general, all the pupils *daven* very well and with much *Kavonoh* (concentration). The same applies to *Birchas Hamozon*, which is well supervised and orderly. The Headteacher or one of the Deputy Heads lead the *Birchas Hamozon* which is recited with much fervour and due *Kavonoh*. This marks a great improvement since the last inspection, which was critical of several aspects of *Tefilla* and *Birchas Hamozon*.

4. QUALITY OF JEWISH EDUCATION

4.1 Quality and Range of the Curriculum

- 4.1.1 The curriculum for Limmudei Kodesh has a central place in the school's overall curriculum, and almost 40% of the timetable is devoted to it. It well reflects the aims and ethos of the school to instil into its pupils a firm foundation which will prepare them for a life of fully committed Torah observance. It is, moreover, well balanced and appropriate to the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils. It displays breadth across a wide range of Limmudei Kodesh subjects, ranging from basic Hebrew reading in Reception to the learning of *Mishna* by pupils from Year 4 and upwards. In addition, the development of good *middos* forms an integral part of the Kodesh curriculum.
- 4.1.2 Pupils in the Reception class are expected to master basic Hebrew reading skills by the end of the year, so that at the beginning of Year 1 they are ready to progress to *Siddur* reading. Reading practice is continued throughout KS1 and KS2. The testing of pupils throughout the school shows that they are able to read accurately by the end of KS1, and most pupils can read fluently by KS2.
- 4.1.3 Much emphasis is placed on teaching skills rather than merely imparting knowledge. Thus, only selected *Sedros* from the *Chumash* are studied each year. The school's aim is to encourage the pupils to be able to master translation unaided, as far as possible. In order to achieve this goal, vocabulary lists of some fifty words have been drawn up for each of the Years 1 – 6, chosen from the most common words from the subject matter of the particular *Sedros* studied in that year. Already in the final term of Reception, some key *Chumash* words are taught to prepare the children for the *Sedra B'reishis* which they begin in Year 1.
- 4.1.4. *Dikduk* is also taught throughout the school, starting with simple prefixes in Year 1, and progressing gradually through further prefixes and suffixes, to singular and plural forms, masculine and feminine, present, past and future tenses, and pronouns.
- 4.1.5 Annual assessment tests have been devised for all pupils from Years 3 to 6, testing their technical skills, in both vocabulary and grammar. The results of these SATs are recorded, and a clear assessment of each pupil's achievement and ability is obtained.

- 4.1.6 Boys begin to study *Mishna* in Year 4, when they are introduced to three *Perokim* of *Berochos*; in year 5, they study *Sukkoh* which is completed in Year 6, when they also learn two chapters of *Bovo Metzio*, which gives them an insight into some of the laws of acquisition and possession, and the obligation to return a lost article (or animal) to its rightful owner.
- 4.1.7 In place of *Mishna*, the girls have extra *Dinim* lessons on topics which are relevant to them. Accordingly, they study practical *Kashrus*, highlights of the *Machzor*, *Megillas Esther*, *Megillas Rus*, selections from *Pirkei Avos* and “The Jewish Girl.”
- 4.1.8 Extra-curricular Limmudei Kodesh takes place once a week for each class in the Juniors after school, and also on Sunday mornings. In this time, additional *Mishna* in Years 3 – 4, and *Gemora* in Years 5 – 6, are studied. At present, these classes are voluntary, and evidence shows that those who attend make very good progress and thoroughly enjoy the experience. Girls also have the possibility of after school lessons, but so far it is not as popular as with the boys and only a few attend.
- 4.1.9 An element of Limmudei Kodesh homework is included in the school’s Homework Policy document. This is strictly adhered to, and parents are asked to co-operate to ensure that homework is completed as required. A comment on homework is also included in the end-of-year reports.
- 4.1.10 The school organises two annual Shabbatonim where pupils from Years 5 – 6 are exposed to an enriching Shabbos atmosphere. One is held at school, and the other in the Normandie Hotel in Bournemouth. In addition, there is a long-standing tradition of an annual *Melava Malka* for Years 5 – 6, to which parents, teachers, PTA and governors are invited.
- 4.1.11 A further recent innovation to enhance the Limmudei Kodesh at the school has been the introduction of the *Ovos U’bonim* programme, whereby fathers/mothers come to school for an evening once a month to learn with their sons/daughters. This is proving very popular, and attracts some 60 – 70 parents and children.

4.2 Teaching

- 4.2.1 The Limmudei Kodesh staff of the Hasmonean Primary School are all well qualified to teach their subject and are totally committed to their pupils, to whom they serve as excellent role models. They spare no effort to prepare their lessons with clear learning objectives, and devise strategies to create enthusiasm for the subject. It was noted that many teachers were able to set differentiated tasks and challenging questions. In the majority of lessons, teachers’ expectations are high and they display good classroom management. Where teaching is good or better, the pace is brisk, and the pupils’ interest is maintained throughout. An inspection of the teachers’ record books and lesson plans indicate thorough preparation.

- 4.2.2 The quality of teaching overall is good, with all lessons being at least sound. Overall, 80% of lessons are good or very good, and 20% are satisfactory. At KS1 over 83% are good, and at KS2 over 81% are good or better.
- 4.2.3 During the course of class observation, the teachers offered praise and encouragement as appropriate, without the excessive use of incentives. The children work productively and teachers use good questioning techniques to stimulate continued interest in the topic. To ensure maximum progress, teachers allow time for revision and consolidation of work towards the end of the lesson.

4.3 Assessment

- 4.3.1 The quality of assessment of pupils' achievement in Limmudei Kodesh is good. The Limmudei Kodesh teacher has the responsibility of monitoring a file containing the records of work and progress of each pupil.
- 4.3.2 The introduction of SATs in Hebrew grammar and vocabulary has brought assessment procedures for Limmudei Kodesh in line with the National Curriculum in these two areas. Moreover, in all areas of the curriculum, there is effective monitoring and recording of progress. Teachers' assessment takes the form of written and oral tests, as well as by means of homework tasks and project work.
- 4.3.3 A random perusal of some end-of-year reports from Reception to Year 6 indicates meaningful and positive comments. They give extremely useful information to parents, indicating the child's strengths and weaknesses, and compare favourably to the *Chol* reports. Comments are made on a range of seven areas of Limmudei Kodesh at KS1, and eleven areas at KS2. In addition, there are comments on homework performance and "targets for improvement" at the end of each report.
- 4.3.4 Considerable improvements have been made to the assessment procedures since the last inspection.

4.4 Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

- 4.4.1 The school provides excellent opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. All the staff, both teaching and administrative, fully understand and support the ethos of the school, and teachers act as admirable role models for their pupils.
- 4.4.2 Children generally display a caring attitude towards one another and show respect for school property. They were found to be friendly, polite and helpful during the inspection. Their behaviour was good throughout, and the school was kept tidy with a notable absence of litter.

- 4.4.3 There are many attractive wall displays throughout the school, which reinforce the school's religious ethos. These are evident both in the classrooms as well as in the corridors, and often depict topical themes. Some of them are pupils' original work, either individual or the collaborative efforts of a class.
- 4.4.4 Assemblies and *Tefilla* further enhance the spiritual and moral emphasis of school life, and every opportunity is used to promote the desirable qualities of kindness, honesty and integrity. Furthermore, pupils are to be commended for their efforts in the collection of *Tzedoko* for a number of worthy causes.
- 4.4.5 The good behaviour of the pupils and their smart appearance reinforces their social and cultural development. It was gratifying to note that the boys are careful to wear a *kippa* and *Tzitzis* at all times.
- 4.4.6 A School Council, made up of representatives from each Year, meets weekly to discuss physical improvements for the pupils. This allows the children to develop their social skills and to show qualities of leadership as representatives of the school community.

4.5 Equality of Opportunity

- 4.5.1 All pupils have equal access to the Kodesh curriculum. However, based on the religious practice and ethos of the school, there are minor variations in the Limmudei Kodesh of the boys and the girls. From Year 4 onwards, the boys study *Mishna* whilst the girls have a well-designed programme of extra *Dinim* applicable to them.
- 4.5.2 Pupils with different cultural backgrounds, such as Sephardi or Israeli, are allowed to read Hebrew in accordance with their own practice. Furthermore, the teachers explain the origin of varying customs to give all children pride in their heritage.

4.6 Support, guidance and welfare

- 4.6.1 The school provides a safe and secure environment for all its pupils. There is no appointed counsellor in the school, but both parents and pupils feel comfortable to approach members of staff for guidance, advice and support whenever necessary. Outside agencies, working within the orthodox Jewish community, are called in to assist from time to time.
- 4.6.2 Appropriate information is available regarding secondary school transfer. The vast majority of pupils go to the Hasmonean High School.

4.7 Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- 4.7.1 There are currently 29 pupils on the SEN register for Limmudei Kodesh, and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) exist for most of these. At present, this

takes the form of adding comments to the general IEP, usually relating to guidance on Hebrew reading or writing only without addressing the pupil's Kodesh needs in detail. There are updated each term.

- 4.7.2 A part-time support teacher helps with reading in KS1, mostly with individual pupils but sometimes also with small groups. She is very committed to her work and performs a valuable service. However, in order to further enhance the learning of SEN pupils, the appointment of a part-time Limmudei Kodesh SENCO would be of tremendous benefit. In fact, this is the solitary area recommended at the last inspection which has not yet been achieved. Nonetheless, the school has made significant progress in its provision for SEN pupils since that time. Apart from the support teacher, there are two other classroom assistants to help the less able pupils with their Limmudei Kodesh.
- 4.7.3 The progress of pupils with special needs is carefully monitored by the Head of Kodesh, who informs and involves parents at every stage.
- 4.7.4 The Headteacher, who also serves as school SENCO, is very supportive of the Limmudei Kodesh teachers in providing them with in-service training in differentiation techniques. The Head of Kodesh has also organised INSET days to train teachers to maximise the potential of SEN pupils.
- 4.7.5 *Chumash* throughout the school is taught in two groups, graded by ability. The lower group generally has less than ten pupils which affords them an opportunity to advance at a rate appropriate to their ability and needs.
- 4.7.6 As yet, there is no formal provision for the gifted and talented pupil in Limmudei Kodesh. However, during the inspection it was noted that one teacher had prepared an extension worksheet for a very able pupil in her Year 5 class. It is hoped that in due course a pilot scheme can be introduced to serve the special needs of gifted pupils.

4.8 Partnership with Parents and the Jewish Community

- 4.8.1 The school maintains very good links with the parents and the community. The quality of information provided to parents is good. Weekly newsletters highlighting whole-school issues are very impressive. Parents are also kept abreast with their child's progress through Parents' Evenings, homework diaries, and end-of-year reports, which are of a high calibre. Parents can also discuss any matter of concern with the Head of Kodesh or members of the Limmudei Kodesh staff, whenever the need arises.
- 4.8.2 In recent years, an annual *Chumash* Information Evening has been instituted. This features an introduction to parents on how *Chumash* is taught at different levels in the school, similar to the consultation evenings for subjects on the National Curriculum. Moreover, over the past year an *Ovos U'bonim* programme has been set up. This exciting venture invites parents to come to school one evening each month to learn Limmudei Kodesh with their children. This scheme has aroused much enthusiasm on the part of both parents and

children. The Principal of the school usually gives a short address, and refreshments and small prizes are provided.

- 4.8.3 The school involves parents in a number of its activities. For example, some mothers come to school as volunteers to assist with Hebrew reading. Others help the school by going with the class to supervise outings. There is an active PTA, which raises funds for the benefit of pupils, although the money raised is not specifically for the needs of the Limmudei Kodesh department.
- 4.8.4 As part of its homework policy, the school asks parents to supervise their children and to test them or practise reading as necessary. An element of Limmudei Kodesh is incorporated into the daily homework. In fact, “to support my child in homework” is one of a list of requirements which parents sign as part of the Home-School Agreement.
- 4.8.5 Parental support for the school is exceptionally high, judging from the fifty-six questionnaires which were completed prior to the inspection. Although this represents under 30% of the parents, the high approval rate was also given by others who had not completed the questionnaire, but with whom the inspectors had informal discussions. Over 90% of the responses indicated that the school encouraged families to play an active part in the school’s Jewish life, and that the school encouraged high standards in Limmudei Kodesh; that their child enjoyed Limmudei Kodesh; that they felt it easy to approach the school about any problems with their child’s Jewish education; and that the life of the school “gives my child a good understanding of Jewish values”. Over 80% of the respondents were satisfied with the amount and range of Limmudei Kodesh set for homework; that their child enjoyed *Tefilla* at school; that the school provided a good range of Jewish extra-curricular activities, visits and special events; and that the school “has helpful links with the wider Jewish community”. On the question regarding their child’s progress in Hebrew skills, e.g. speaking, reading and writing, there was only a 73% agreement, but it is probable that some parents mistook this question to refer to Modern Hebrew. This is not taught at present but will be incorporated into the general school curriculum as from next year in Years 5 and 6.
- 4.8.6 The school has useful links with other schools, mainly inter-school sporting events and chess tournaments, and a boys’ and girls’ choir. The choir entertains residents of the local Old Age Homes. Due to the initiative of the Headteacher, there are two annual musical performances involving a number of orthodox Jewish primary schools, featuring separate boys’ and girls’ choirs which raise substantial sums for Jewish schools in the C.I.S.

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

5.1 Management

- 5.1.1 The successful management of the Limmudei Kodesh department is a major strength of the school, and forms the basis for the effective delivery of the Limmudei Kodesh curriculum. This is in no small measure due to the

outstanding leadership of the Head of Kodesh, who is also the Second Deputy Head of the School. She is not only a very gifted teacher who leads by example, but also possesses outstanding management skills. She is ably assisted by a very efficient Head of Infants' Kodesh, a veteran teacher who has been the backbone of the infants' department for over three decades. Another long-standing, very talented teacher, acts also as Rav of the School, and organises junior assemblies. He also helps to organise the two Shabbatonim, which take place annually. It is well known within the community how impressive and educational these events are, and how they add to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. He is also a member of the Senior Management Team, together with the Head of Kodesh.

- 5.1.2 The Head of Kodesh consults on a daily basis with the Headteacher, who is also an inspiration to, and an active force within, the Kodesh department. There exists a deep mutual respect and admiration between them. They both strive successfully, with the utmost energy and dedication, to fulfil the aims and objectives of the school.
- 5.1.3 Other senior members of the *Kodesh* staff have responsibilities in aspects of the curriculum. It would be helpful to review the management roles of the Kodesh teachers, and to provide them with a detailed job specification.
- 5.1.4 The recent appointment of a dynamic Principal has been welcomed by the community at large and by the school in particular. He is rabbi of a large local community, and has been involved in education for many years at various levels. His charismatic approach and sagacious advice and guidance have earned him the respect and admiration of parents, teachers and pupils alike.
- 5.1.5 The Governing Body is comprised mainly of parents, who spend considerable time on school affairs. The Chair of Governors and the Vice Chairman are particularly active. The Limmudei Kodesh committee meets regularly on a formal basis. The minutes of meetings indicate that they ensure the continued development of the department with in-depth debate and prompt action on every item of the Kodesh School Improvement Plan.

5.2. Staff, Resources for Learning and Accommodation

- 5.2.1 The Kodesh department comprises only one full-time teacher – the Head of Department – and eight part-time teachers, making a FTE of 5.1. However, two of the part-timers are almost full time, and several others teach the full morning. Since most of the Limmudei Kodesh is taught in the mornings, the system works efficiently, although it would be helpful to have more full-time teachers. All the Kodesh teachers are graduates of *Yeshivos* and Seminaries; four of them have obtained Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It is somewhat of an anomaly that none of them is employed by the local authority, but by the governors. Although pay and conditions are similar, it would seem reasonable that those holding posts of seniority at the school should have complete equality with their colleagues in the *Chol* department.

- 5.2.2 The Limmudei Kodesh teachers comprise a healthy combination of youth and experience. All display total dedication, a high degree of competence and a wonderful spirit of *Achdus*, which is one of the outstanding features of the school. Procedures for Performance Management interviews have been established, conducted by the Head of Kodesh, and, for the most senior staff, by the Headteacher. There are weekly staff meetings for all the Limmudei Kodesh teachers, and INSET takes place according to a well-planned schedule, sometimes specially for the Kodesh staff and at other times on whole-school issues. Also, opportunities for professional development are provided for all staff.
- 5.2.3 There has been considerable progress in improving the resources for learning since the last inspection. The number of books of Jewish interest in the library compares favourably with that in the *Chol* department. There is no separate librarian to advise children on Jewish books; this is the responsibility of the general librarian, who is herself Jewish, as is every teacher in the school.
- 5.2.4 All classrooms have Kodesh displays, some of which show pupils' original work. Most of them look attractive, but in a minority of cases, more updated and relevant material could be displayed. Some of the wall displays in the corridors, especially near the entrance, are especially effective, and promote the ethos of the school.
- 5.2.5 Accommodation provided for Limmudei Kodesh is generally good. Some Kodesh teachers of the small, streamed groups have their own designated classrooms which are satisfactory, although a little cramped. Even the support groups have their own rooms, so that no teaching has to take place in corridors any longer.
- 5.2.6 The building is well secured with a full-time security guard at the gate. Health and safety aspects of the school fully meet with the required standards.