

Lubavitch Ruth Lunzer Girls Primary School

Inspection report

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| LEA | Hackney |
| Inspected under the auspices of | Pikuach |
| Inspection dates | 4 – 5 November 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Rev Michael Binstock |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Girls |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 146 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs H Lew |
| Headteacher | Mrs F Sudak |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 -13 September 2006 |
| School address | 105 – 117 Stamford Hill London N16 5RP |
| Telephone number | 020 8800 0022 |
| Fax number | 020 8809 7324 |
| Email address | ekesselman@lubavitch.hackney.sch.uk |

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two Pikuach inspectors. The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's provision for Jewish Education. They observed ten lessons, three davening sessions, held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They also scrutinised the school's documentation, a sample of pupils' written work and 31 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team looked in detail at how well pupils achieve, how well assessment informs future planning of work for different groups of pupils, and the impact of the school's actions to bring about improvement.

Information about the school

Lubavitch Ruth Lunzer Girls Primary School was established in 1959 and achieved voluntary aided status in 2004. The school occupies a large modern building in the heart of the strictly orthodox community of North London in the London Borough of Hackney. The premises are the headquarters of the Lubavitch Foundation in the United Kingdom.

There are 146 pupils on roll including a nursery attached to the school. There is also a larger independently run nursery on the premises. Approximately 75% of the pupils are affiliated to the Lubavitch Chasidic movement and the remainder are from other Jewish communities. Most pupils live locally, although some come from other parts of London as well as from Bournemouth, Luton and Oxford. The school is the only Orthodox Jewish voluntary aided primary school in the area and is therefore attracting an increasing number of children with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The quality of Jewish education at Lubavitch Ruth Lunzer Girls Primary school is good overall and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is outstanding. The school provides a warm, welcoming and supportive environment that is enjoyed by all staff, pupils and parents. There are good partnerships with others which promote learning and well-being and enhance the pupils' personal development. The vision of the Head of *Kodesh* is to produce knowledgeable pupils, imbued with *yiras Shomayim* and *middos tovos*, and to enable them to access Torah learning. The staff and governors work hard to make this vision becomes a reality.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress. This is due to the outstanding quality of provision that ensures that they learn well both socially and academically in a safe and secure learning environment. In Key Stages 1 and 2, good teaching ensures that pupils' rate of learning and progress are at least good and in many cases outstanding. As a result, the standards attained by pupils in Year 6 are outstanding. There is a high level of care, guidance and support and this enables pupils to achieve well from their different starting points. There is no notable variation in the achievement and progress of different groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Pupils' behaviour, both in class and around school is good overall and mostly outstanding. This makes a good contribution to their learning. Pupils are keen to come to school and like the wide range of activities on offer, which illustrates the positive effect the school's provision has on pupils' learning. Stimulating and innovative activities, for example, sending *mishlo'ach monos* to pupils in an Israeli school, provide pupils with opportunities to make a positive contribution in both the local and the wider Jewish community. Through these activities and their lessons, pupils develop a good understanding of those from other communities and backgrounds.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good with some significant strengths, which particularly impact on pupils' personal development. The Head of *Kodesh* is dedicated to the task of enabling all pupils to achieve high standards. This is shared by all staff and supported by effective systems for monitoring pupils' progress. Senior leaders and governors have an accurate picture of the school's performance and take positive action to address weaknesses identified. This

concerted approach has resulted in very good rates of progress and standards being maintained. As a result, the school has consolidated its performance and has demonstrated its capacity to sustain improvement and build on its successes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that best practice becomes uniform throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of assessment procedures by:
 - producing level descriptors for all subjects in the *Kodesh* curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. All groups of pupils, including the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make very good progress. Effective organisation and careful assessments enable pupils to make very good progress. Much of the pupils' success in Hebrew reading and writing is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing these skills from a very early age.

The behaviour of pupils during lessons is mostly outstanding and they display eagerness to learn. In the best lessons there is real enthusiasm and pupils display a good range of learning skills. They show that they can work together well, take initiative and respond well to challenges. Pupils elected to the school council take their role seriously and their recommendations have led to improvements such as repainting of the classrooms. Where the teaching is less effective, pupils become less engaged, resulting in a deterioration of behaviour.

Another reason that pupils make very good progress overall and achieve well is because attendance is very high. The standards reached by pupils combined with their enthusiasm when working in teams, and their interest in learning, prepare them exceptionally well for their transition to the next stage of their Jewish education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 1 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 1 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress | 1 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning? | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe? | 1 |
| How well do pupils behave? | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 1 |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 1 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 1 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall and examples of outstanding practice were observed. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and are excellent role models. The majority of lessons move at a brisk pace and, as a result, most pupils stay engaged with the variety of interesting tasks set for them. In a Key Stage 2 *middos* lesson on the topic of 'friends', the constant praise and encouragement offered by the teacher, combined with a number of carefully planned activities that challenged each pupil, resulted in the whole class of highly motivated pupils making excellent progress. In the minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, planned outcomes are not precise enough and tasks are not always well matched to individual pupils' abilities.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and give feedback. Pupils are aware of their targets and know what they need to do to improve. The progress of individuals is carefully tracked and regularly reviewed.

The *Kodesh* curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. It is appropriately broad and balanced and admirably reflects the religious ethos and values of the school. Approximately 50% of the school day is devoted to *Limmudei Kodesh*, which reflects the school's aim to provide quality and depth in religious education. The previous Pikuach inspection report noted the very good integration with the *chol* curriculum. Since then, this has been further developed.

Support staff including those from external agencies work in partnership with the school and make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers identify and refer pupils for additional support as appropriate. Discussion with pupils revealed how they recognise and appreciate the care shown to them thus demonstrating how well the school responds to the individual needs of all pupils. Pastoral care is outstanding and pupils know to whom they should turn in the event of a problem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The good leadership and management that drive forward the provision for Jewish education is characterised by many strengths. Not least is the outstanding level of commitment and dedication of the senior leaders who inspire and support all members of the *Kodesh* staff. As a result, all teachers give of their best. Due to the *achdus* of all staff including the *chol* teachers, tremendous support has been given during this current period whilst the Head of *Kodesh* is on maternity leave.

The determination and drive to improve the school is successful because it is shared by all involved in decision-making, including staff, governors and pupils. The school sets itself challenging targets and continuously strives to achieve them. The deputy headteacher is currently running a training course in the school for *Kodesh* teachers. As a result, most pupils make outstanding progress as they advance from year to year. Staff and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All members of staff feel very well supported and are highly committed to the school. Their high expectations of where they want their pupils to be by the end of each year demonstrate good capacity for continuing improvement.

The school succeeds in its commitment to inclusivity. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity so that they improve in their academic performance and personal development. The school has good links with outside agencies and is fully committed to working in partnership with parents. This is reflected in the very high degree of satisfaction, confidence and support that parents have in the school.

The school's strategy to promote community cohesion within the local and wider Jewish community admirably reflects the philosophy for which Lubavitch is known and respected throughout the Jewish world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | Not inspected |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion through the Jewish Studies curriculum | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision for Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The excellent leadership and management oversee a programme of learning in a secure and warm atmosphere. The high level of teaching in each class shows the dedication of teachers and their understanding of children's needs. Every lesson observed was graded as outstanding. The teaching of Hebrew reading has priority and begins with letter recognition in the Nursery, progressing through the early years until fluency is achieved. This provides a sound basis for future learning in all areas of the *Kodesh* curriculum.

Assessment is ongoing in accordance with the six areas of development. Pupils enjoy their *Kodesh* learning, and behaviour is excellent throughout the early years. Children feel confident and safe, enabling them to develop to the best of their ability.

Equality of opportunity is evident in each class; work is differentiated allowing each child to achieve. Health issues are stressed in accordance with Jewish practice, for example eating healthily and the washing of hands at various times during the day. Independence is encouraged at every level. Pupils willingly participate in activities, share opportunities with others and learn to make choices.

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |

Views of parents and carers

Pikuach invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lubavitch Ruth Lunzer Girls Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children. In total, there are 80 families registered at the school.

The inspection team received 31 completed questionnaires and most were positive. For example, all but one agreed or strongly agreed that the school encourages high standards in Jewish Studies. A large majority agreed or strongly agreed that the school encourages families to play an active part in the school's Jewish life and that they would find it easy to approach the school with any questions or problems about their children's Jewish education.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Pikuach inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

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| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |

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Sign off
Lead inspector/HMI

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