



Mathilda Marks-Kennedy

Jewish Primary School

Inspection report

LEA	Barnet
Inspection dates	3 rd and 4 th December 2007
Reporting inspector	Rabbi Dr Yodaiken

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	68 Hale Lane
School category	Voluntary Aided		London
Age range of pupils	3-11		NW7 3RT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8959 6089
Number on roll	220	Fax number	020 8906 2353
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body	Chair of governors	Mr David Gallick
Date of previous inspection	March 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Kushner

Introduction

Description of the school

The school was founded as an independent school in 1959, educating children from age three to eleven. In April 1998 it became part of the state maintained school system in the London Borough of Barnet. The school is part of the Scopus Foundation of schools and its ethos and characteristics are strongly Zionist. It is guided by the authority of the London Beth Din and the pupils of the school are *halachically* Jewish. The school is a one form entry school and is very oversubscribed. The majority of the pupils are from the Mill Hill community, many of whom are members of the local United Synagogue. The school aims to give its pupils "A love of *Limmudei Kodesh* and pride in the celebration of all *Chagim*. High moral values are stressed throughout".

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of its provision for Jewish education

The Jewish Studies Department of the Mathilda Marks-Kennedy Jewish Primary School is outstanding overall. The school admirably achieves its own aim “to enable each child to flourish and reach his or her potential in a caring and happy atmosphere, all in strict accordance with the Orthodox Jewish and Zionist ethos. The Headteacher, supported by the Honorary Principal and Senior Management Team have ensured that the school has made excellent progress since the last inspection.

Each child at the school counts and the needs of individual pupils are met, resulting in contented and happy pupils working within a safe and secure environment. The well-being of pupils is of primary consideration and the school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social, moral and spiritual awareness and values.

The curriculum is made up of four strands, three of which Hebrew Reading, *Parsha* and *Chagim* (the study of Jewish Festivals) are taught throughout the school and the fourth, *Chumash* with *Rashi*, is taught within Key Stage 2. It is now a broad and balanced curriculum and has been developed well since the last inspection. Particularly impressive is the comprehensive written curriculum for Year 1. This innovative presentation in Year 1 is based on the highly sophisticated QCA presentation of the national curriculum. This approach is not yet extended throughout the school. Standards in *Parsha* and *Chagim* are excellent and very good in *Chumash*. Standards in Hebrew Reading are very good for most pupils. However, systems are in place to ensure that all children can read with fluency and accuracy throughout the school.

Amongst the school's strengths are the leadership and management. The Headteacher provides excellent and dynamic leadership which inspires all around her. The sagacious advice of the Honorary Principal, coupled with his successful and popular initiatives at the school for parents and pupils, offers a very positive and unique backup to the Headteacher. Other major strengths include, the exemplary behaviour of pupils, the care and guidance offered to pupils by dedicated staff and the outstanding teaching throughout the school, which ensures excellent progress being made by pupils.

The school's Self Evaluation Form indicates that the school knows itself well and has the determination and capacity to continue to improve its provision for Jewish education.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to develop the writing of a comprehensive Jewish Studies Curriculum by building on the work done in Year 1 and extending it throughout the school.
- ensure that the very good Hebrew Reading standard of most children is achieved by all pupils, by applying the effective systems already in place for supporting Hebrew Reading.

Achievement and standards

Standards in Jewish Studies, overall, are outstanding. This is confirmed by observation of lessons throughout the school, a scrutiny of pupils' written work and the testing of a representative sample of pupils from Years 2, 4 and 6.

Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and this enables them to achieve their full potential. Standards in Hebrew Reading throughout the school are very good, with pupils generally reading accurately and fluently. There is room for improvement in the reading of some of the pupils but systems are now in place to ensure that all pupils will reach a high standard. This is an initiative which should be continued.

The standard of the pupils' recall of the events mentioned in the weekly *Parsha* and their knowledge of the *Chagim* is outstanding. Standards in the translation of *Chumash* are very good.

The level of general Jewish knowledge of most of the pupils on admission is, generally, not very high; however, the progress of almost all the pupils in their Jewish Studies throughout the school is outstanding.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and a major strength of the school. There is full compliance with statutory requirements for a daily act of worship. Inspectors observed a number of *Tefilla* sessions and these were very impressive, both in terms of the appropriate length and content for the year groups and the exemplary manner in which the pupils conducted themselves. *Tefilla* is made meaningful, by pupils being encouraged to pray for the welfare of specific people who are ill.

Attendance is good and the evidence gained from lesson observation and discussions with pupils confirms that they enjoy their Jewish Studies lessons immensely.

Behaviour is exemplary and pupils display an impressive degree of *Derech Eretz* to visitors, teachers and towards each other. Pupils showed courtesy to the inspectors, holding doors open and warmly greeting them. Consideration for others with learning difficulties is imbued in pupils through regular visits to Kisharon College and by welcoming two pupils who come into school from Oakleigh School.

The excellent displays in the corridors are very effective and reinforce good *Middot*. Pupils are taught about the importance of leading healthy life styles and are encouraged to bring healthy foods for lunch. Pupils are encouraged to develop responsibility by way of the "Buddy" programme, where specific pupils look out for others who are lonely and then help them to integrate within a group.

The views of the pupils are taken seriously and issues are raised by means of the effective school council, which is made up of pupils from Key Stage 2 classes. There are some fourteen extra curricular activities offered to the pupils of the school, some of which are linked to Jewish Studies and Jewish way of life.

During the course of school assemblies all the pupils are given the opportunity to display their own particular talents in singing, reciting poetry, movement to music and drama. These activities are within the ethos of the school that "Everyone is a Winner". Extra curricular events, which encourage personal development, take place regularly. The highly popular Year 6 *Shabbaton*, attended by all members of the class and their parents, is a focal point of the school calendar.

Most of the *Chagim* are celebrated together with parental participation, notable examples are the four model *Sedarim* which cater for different age groups and the reading of the complete *Megilla* on the morning of Purim, together with a fancy dress competition. A recent innovation was a *Havdallah* ceremony and workshop held on *Motzei Shabbat*.

A poignant and memorable event is the annual commemoration in the school of *Yom Hazikaron*, when members of the Israel Defence Force join the school in remembering the fallen heroes. Each week a different group of Year 6 pupils visit Kisharon to participate in their *Kabbalat Shabbat* ceremony; in this way pupils learn in a practical manner how to care for those less fortunate than themselves.

This awareness is further increased by the participation of Year 6 pupils in the Lord Jakobovits. Community Service Scheme, which culminates in the presentation of awards by Lady Jakobovits.

Pupils contribute to the Jewish and wider communities in a number of other ways. They collect money for *Tzedakah*, visit and entertain the sick and the aged and take part in a number of community choir presentations.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is outstanding. All staff are highly motivated and dedicated and they are excellent role models. They motivate their pupils and set challenging targets. Teaching is enhanced by the use of interactive whiteboards and computers. There is clear evidence to indicate that pupils greatly enjoy all their Jewish Studies lessons.

Lesson plans are comprehensive and sharply targeted, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the class at the start of the lesson. The previous report indicated the need to develop teachers' skills in differentiation; this issue has been resolved through training and is now a strength of the school. Teachers challenge pupils with differentiated questioning and a range of other appropriate teaching methods, so as to elicit the most from each pupil. This promotes excellent progress across the age ranges. An example of this was a Year 6 lesson in which the teacher compared the Jewish people to the oil of *Chanukah* and challenged the pupils to explain the various ways in which this comparison is apt.

Nearly all of the Jewish Studies staff have qualified teaching status. They have excellent knowledge of their subjects and are involved actively in all professional development activities at the school. Such a focus on professional development has had positive ramifications for the quality of teaching and learning. The Headteacher provides very effective induction strategies for new staff and there is a performance management process in place within Jewish Studies.

Assessment of pupils' progress has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Teachers assess in a variety of ways, including questioning and testing. Accurate records are maintained and these are particularly impressive in Hebrew Reading.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The quality and range of the Jewish Studies curriculum is very good and has improved greatly since the last inspection. It is suitably broad and balanced and reflects the ethos of the school. It provides a solid foundation for the pupils so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their Jewish education.

There are four key areas of the curriculum; *Parsha*, Hebrew Reading, *Chagim* (festivals) and the teaching of *Chumash* with *Rashi*. *Parsha*, Hebrew Reading and *Chagim* are taught throughout the school, whilst *Chumash* and *Rashi* are taught within Key Stage 2.

The school is in the continuous process of developing and improving the curriculum and an enormous amount of work has been done in upgrading and broadening the curriculum so that it has built further on its strengths and also addressed weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Within Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the curriculum has been clearly and comprehensively recorded. However, this work needs to be continued so that the Key Stage 2 curriculum is similarly well defined.

The links between the Jewish Studies curriculum and the national curriculum are excellent and add so much to the holistic education provided in the school. Displays throughout the school, in classrooms and in the corridors, demonstrate this link and are truly magnificent. Literacy, I.C.T., music and art are all presented in conjunction with Jewish Studies. The enrichment activities are a positive and unique feature of the curriculum.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the care, guidance and support of the pupils is outstanding; the school provides a safe and secure environment for them. Discussions with pupils reveal that they feel supported and know whom to approach should they have a problem.

Teachers show care and sensitivity towards pupils of lower attainment. There is a designated expert Senco (special educational needs coordinator) for both Kodesh and secular subjects, who carries out her duties conscientiously and effectively. Under her guidance, statemented pupils receive effective support. All classes have a full time Jewish Studies support assistant.

Parents are very supportive of the school as is evidenced from the parents' questionnaire responses, the majority of which were extremely positive. The care and support which the Headteacher and Senior Management Team give to every child in the school is exceptional, as demonstrated by a comment from a Year 6 pupil, "The Headteacher treats each one of us like part of her family".

The Honorary Principal, who is deeply committed to the school, is available on a regular basis to answer questions from parents and pupils. Two or three times a term he holds a question/answer session for Year 6 pupils which have proved to be very popular.

Security arrangements at the school are very effective; there are two full time security officers who carefully vet all visitors before admitting them onto the school premises. Pupils are appropriately supervised during break and lunch time.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the Jewish Studies Department are outstanding. The excellent leadership demonstrated by the Headteacher, who is also head of Jewish Studies, and supported by her senior management is clearly recognised by pupils and staff. All senior management share a strong commitment to school improvement. This is characterised by great enthusiasm, combined with an effective and accurate self evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. The Headteacher understands the needs of every pupil and is admired by the children at the school.

Effective performance management is in place for Jewish Studies staff. Teachers benefit from a programme of continuing professional development and they receive encouragement and support in gaining professional qualifications, for example there are two members of staff who are training to develop their middle management skills. Regular staff meetings are held which give opportunities for professional development.

Support for new staff is outstanding. The Headteacher skilfully manages the work force ensuring that the expertise of individual staff is recognised, developed and used effectively. It is clear that all staff are regarded as valued members of the school family. The school is very fortunate to have an Honorary Principal who regularly visits the school in an advisory capacity. He speaks at key events and his advice is sought by parents, staff and pupils. The school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection and provides excellent value for money.

Grade: 1

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 unsatisfactory.</i>	School Overall	16–19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of pupils?	1	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being?	1	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	

Achievement and standards

How well do pupils achieve?	1	
The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by pupils	1	
How well pupils' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils	1	
How well pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the pupils?	1	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including collective worship	1	
The behaviour of pupils	1	
The attendance of pupils	2	
How well pupils enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution to the community.	1	
How well pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of pupils' needs?	1	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils?	1	
How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported including provision for collective worship?	1	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils?	1	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that pupils are protected	Yes	
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

The extent to which schools enable pupils to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Pupils are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Pupils are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that pupils stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Pupils are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Pupils are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Pupils, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Pupils are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable pupils to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote pupils' basic skills.	Yes
Pupils have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	n/a
Education for all pupils aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	n/a

