

The Gateshead Cheder Primary School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	390/6008
Unique Reference Number (URN)	136000
Inspection number	361448
Inspection dates	13-14 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1,2}

Information about the school

The Gateshead Cheder Primary School is an orthodox Jewish independent day school for boys aged 5 to 11 years. The school is located in Gateshead, which is in north east England. The school opened in October 2009 with Year 1 pupils only. There are now 27 pupils in Years 1 and 2, all of whom live within the immediate area of the school. The school moved to its current site in August of this year. The school 'aims to provide an all round excellent education in both religious and secular studies', through 'an environment within which the boys will be able to grow in their Torah (religious learning), to develop good Midos (character traits) and to become good citizens.' In their secular studies, the school aims to 'provide pupils with the knowledge and skills up to National Curriculum standard in literacy and numeracy as well as experience in a range of other subject areas.' This is the first published inspection report for the school.

Evaluation of the school

The Gateshead Cheder School is providing a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and, overall, is making satisfactory progress in meeting its published aims. Pupils' attainment in the Kodesh curriculum is good and it is satisfactory in their secular studies. Overall, the pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but not always sufficiently challenging of the pupils' abilities; this applies to higher attaining pupils in particular. The school provides a safe and secure learning environment and meets all safeguarding requirements. The school has addressed most of the regulatory requirements from its registration visit in July 2009, although a small number still need to be addressed to ensure full compliance with all the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory, although Kodesh provision is good. The planning of the Kodesh curriculum is very detailed and contains a range of detailed schemes of work, which effectively target the pupils' learning. There is a broad range of learning opportunities, which support aspects of human and social education and the religious aspects of Chumash, Sedra, Halacha, Hebrew writing and

¹www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

²www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Tefilla for the pupils. Parents and carers appreciate the detailed and focused work that is taught as part of the Kodesh curriculum. This part of the curriculum underpins the core ethos and value system of the school very effectively. The secular curriculum gives an important emphasis on developing key skills in literacy and numeracy. There are very detailed schemes of work in literacy, numeracy, and science, which help ensure progression in pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas. However, there are no schemes of work or sufficiently detailed lesson plans in other subjects taught; for example, art and craft, physical education and geography, which means that it is hard to plan for pupils' progress in their learning, commensurate with their capabilities.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching and assessment are satisfactory, although there are some good features in the quality of teaching seen. Teachers' lesson planning for the teaching of the Kodesh curriculum is more thorough than that seen for the secular subjects. Teachers' planning is satisfactory but too limited in providing for the full range of ability in lessons. This means that some pupils are not being sufficiently stretched in their learning. Teaching is competent in terms of management and control of the pupils, with the pupils clearly understanding what the teacher or Rabbe expects of them at all times. Working relationships are good, although some teachers fail to pick up quickly enough on those few pupils who drift off-task because the work is insufficiently challenging for them. The pace of learning is at least satisfactory. Teachers have very good command of their subjects, both in the secular and Kodesh curricula. Teachers use praise well in lessons, but too many lessons are overly teacher directed, which limits the potential for the pupils to become more informed independent learners. The use of assessment is also satisfactory. Although the school regularly collects a range of information about the pupils' progress and attainment in the Kodesh, and in aspects of literacy and numeracy, this information is not used to help inform planning, especially in relation to the known abilities of the pupils. Marking is satisfactory in terms of its regularity, but it does not always provide clear enough feedback about the quality of the work, or how it can be improved.

Although there is a range of ability in the school, the overwhelming majority of pupils achieve a satisfactory or better standard in their learning. In the Kodesh curriculum, pupils' attainment levels are good. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are mostly developing in line with their abilities, although some of the higher attaining pupils are capable of achieving even higher standards. While all pupils generally make progress in their learning, the limiting nature of some aspects of the secular curriculum, together with a limited use by teachers of assessment information to plan more challenging learning activities means that, overall, progress is satisfactory against the stated aims of the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is good overall, and meets the aims and expectations of the parents and carers very well. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Pupils learn the importance of distinguishing between right and wrong and the school's strong emphasis on moral and ethical teachings, as taught through the Kodesh curriculum, permeates every aspect of their lives. For example, pupils are taught to appreciate that they live in a *Malchus Shel Chesed*, a kind and tolerant country where they are able to practise their religion free from discrimination. Behaviour is mostly good; sometimes it is exemplary, but there are occasional lapses, often related to less effective teaching, which mean that some pupils drift off-task and, as a consequence, their own learning and progress and sometimes that of their peers slows down appreciably. Pupils make a positive contribution to the local orthodox Jewish community; for example, they visit their friends when they are sick and they visit the homes of friends and neighbours on the festival of Purim with gifts of food (*Mishloach Monos*). The attendance of the pupils is outstanding, currently running very close to 100%. Older pupils are effectively learning to accept responsibility for younger ones, though the oldest pupils in the school are still only 6 or 7 years of age. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their school and, as one pupil said to an inspector, 'I love coming to school.' Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and respect those from different cultural backgrounds, and to have empathy with them. In literacy lessons, the pupils read about 'Handa's Surprise', a story about a child growing up in Africa. However, such learning opportunities are limited. Pupils have some opportunities to learn about public institutions and services in England, with the planned curricular provision including visits to the local fire station, and meetings with the local police. External visits to places of local interest add to the pupils' growing appreciation of their local culture.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are satisfactory overall. There is a range of suitable policies in place to safeguard the pupils when in school, and all reasonable actions are taken to supervise them in lessons and when they move about. The school is aware that it needs to promote the healthy well-being of the pupils, through awareness of eating sensibly and participating in regular physical education lessons. The school has responded quickly to address identified fire safety issues raised by the local fire and rescue service after the school took up tenancy in its new location in Gateshead. Fire safety checks now comply fully with the regulations, and relevant details about safety checks are being recorded on a regular basis. The school does not meet fully the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act legislation. A plan submitted during the inspection fails to take account of the intended improvements in access to the curriculum and in the provision of information in a range of formats for disabled pupils.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school meets the regulations for ensuring that all staff are suitably qualified and appropriately checked for them to work with the pupils. All classroom teachers have recently undergone relevant child protection training, as part of the school's provision for safeguarding. The school maintains a detailed single central register as required.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation are of a satisfactory standard. The school recently moved to a new location in Gateshead, and is now based in a large two story house, within spacious grounds. The school occupies part of the ground floor only, and has access to a fenced hard-court outdoor play area. The building is large enough to house the number of pupils currently on roll. The general décor of the building is satisfactory, although some parts of the outside front of the school are in a minor state of disrepair. Resources for learning are satisfactory, and the pupils have access to a suitable range of washrooms and toilets.

Provision of information

The provision of information for parents, carers and others is satisfactory. Although the school makes it clear in its brochure that a number of policies are available, on request, to parents and carers, it lacks specific references to its provision for special educational needs, sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving, and the number of complaints from the preceding school year. It does not ensure that a copy of its safeguarding children policy is sent to all parents and carers. The school provides an annual pupil report to all parents and carers, but this does not include all subjects which are taught, especially the Kodesh, physical education, art and craft, and geography. The use of the generic title 'topic' in the report is insufficiently precise to cover these subjects. Also, most comments in the reports refer to attitudes and work ethic which, although important, do not describe sufficiently accurately the actual progress made by the pupils.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The manner in which complaints are handled, including the school's policy on this aspect comply fully with all regulations.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- develop written schemes of work for all subjects taught (paragraph 2(1))
- ensure that teachers' planning takes better account of the needs, aptitudes and prior attainment of the pupils (paragraph 3(d)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information (standards in part 6) and must:

- ensure that the information for parents, carers and others explicitly states the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs, the sanctions used by the school in the event of pupils misbehaving and the number of complaints from the preceding academic year (paragraph 24(1)(b))
- ensure that a copy of the safeguarding children policy, as required under part 3, paragraph 7, is sent to all parents and carers (paragraph 24(1)(c))
- ensure that an annual written report of the progress and attainment of each registered child in the main subject areas taught is provided, except where a parent or carer has agreed otherwise (paragraph 24(1)(f)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.⁴

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Plan and provide a range of learning activities that suit the abilities of all pupils in all lessons.

³www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

⁴www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1

- Ensure that teachers make use of assessment information about pupils' prior attainment and progress.
- Provide regular and ongoing feedback about the quality of the pupils' work as an aid to them knowing how well they are doing, and what they need to do further to improve the quality of their work.
- Develop detailed schemes of work for all subjects taught, as an aid to helping all pupils to make progress more commensurate with their ability.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Orthodox Jewish day school for boys		
Date school opened	1 October 2009		
Age range of pupils	5-11 years		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 27	Girls: 0	Total: 27
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,600		
Address of school	Winney House Durham Road Gateshead Tyne and Wear		
Telephone number	07758 772128		
Email address	gabrielheilpern@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Dr Rabbi G Heilpern		
Proprietor	Mr Y Z Schleider		