

Talmud Torah Yetev Lev

Independent school standard inspection report

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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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

Talmud Torah Yetev Lev is an independent Jewish day school for boys aged from three to 12 years of age and is located in the Broughton Park area of Salford in Lancashire. It currently has 245 pupils on roll none of whom have a statement of special educational needs. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage with 82 pupils but is not supported by the nursery-funding grant. The school was opened in 1997 and is owned and maintained by the Satmar Chassidic community, although it accepts children irrespective of their Jewish sectarian allegiance. All pupils come from the immediate area. The school aims to provide a sound Jewish education that reflects the Satmar traditions and moral values. It seeks to protect the pupils from any negative influences that may arise locally, or from the secular media. To this end, the pupils and their families do not mix socially in the neighbourhood or use any of the secular facilities that are available to them. The school was last inspected in November 2007.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of the education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum and teaching are satisfactory and help pupils make satisfactory progress; the *Kodesh* (religious studies) aspects of the curriculum are good. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school meets its aims in providing pupils with a sound Jewish education. Since the last inspection the school has made some progress in developing the *chol* (secular studies) curriculum and in ensuring that all staff are suitable to work with children. Most arrangements for the safeguarding of children are sound although the school does not carry out risk assessments of visits out of school to ensure pupils do not come to harm nor is the school effective in stopping the small number of instances of bullying. As such, overall pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. The school meets most of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school has established curricula for both *kodesh* and *chol* and these are supported by basic schemes of work. Teachers plan their lessons for *chol*, however for *kodesh*, lesson planning is less formal and

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

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

often teachers adjust their lessons as they go according to the responses of pupils. The *kodesh* curriculum covers all subjects, for example, *chumash* (Bible), *davenning* (prayer), *gemoroh* (Talmud), *halacha* (Jewish law) and *hashkafa* (Jewish philosophy). The school is in the process of developing the ways that it delivers *yedios klalios* (Jewish general knowledge).

For older pupils, much of the day is spent on Talmud study. The study of Talmud is analytical and involves debate and discourse. This teaches pupils to constantly consider their responses and to view all areas of learning from a variety of angles. The Talmud incorporates elements of the required areas of learning such as mathematics, science, and human and social awareness. Talmud lessons observed during the inspection included elements of mathematics, science, history and geography. A good example of cross-curricular teaching was observed in an English lesson where pupils extended their vocabulary and writing considerably through work on skeletal joints in the human body. Pupils hone their linguistic skills through debate and some opportunities to speak in front of their peers. They have limited opportunities to be creative through arts and crafts activities connected to the Torah portion read each week and before festivals. Teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver their lessons effectively. As a result of extensive Talmud study, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, when they graduate to *yeshiva ketana* (preparatory rabbinical college).

The *chol* curriculum is satisfactory. English and mathematics are taught as discrete subjects. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. The school takes every opportunity through the *kodesh* and *chol* curricula to inform and guide pupils in these areas of their learning. This is a significant factor in the pupils' good personal development. Pupils value very much the opportunities for personal development through residential experiences although these are infrequent.

The school has addressed the regulatory failures identified at the last inspection. It now has appropriate plans and schemes of work for all areas of the *chol* curriculum. There is also a clear framework by which pupil performance is evaluated across the curriculum. This includes regular testing, an 'Assessment Progress' policy for *chol* and informal assessments daily to gauge pupils' understanding and progress. In addition to this, the oldest pupils take commercially produced tests at the beginning and end of the school year to gauge progress.

Pupils take part in a limited number of extra-curricular activities such as festivities around Purim and Chanuka and periodic *seudos* (celebratory meals). Often, pupils take part in arranging and conducting these activities. The school acknowledges that the provision of extra-curricular activities is an area for development and is exploring ways of ensuring that such activities are in keeping with the school's insular ethos.

Teaching and assessment in the school are satisfactory including arrangements for checking on pupils' progress. The school is exploring ways of training and guiding staff with a view of maximising their potential as effective teachers. Teachers that do employ a variety of teaching methods provide their pupils with valuable learning

experiences that they respond to well. Pupils are less engaged when teaching is formal and didactic. Pupils come from families where study and academic pursuits are extremely important. This is ingrained in pupils and they come to school with a thirst for knowledge regardless of the ways that it is delivered. Pupils are tested orally every week on their *kodesh* studies by their teachers and the headteacher. This is then re-enforced at home when they revise their studies with parents. *Kodesh* teachers monitor the progress of their pupils well and adjust lessons accordingly. As a result of the academic ethos of the school and satisfactory teaching, pupils make satisfactory progress.

Teachers of both *kodesh* and *chol* manage time well and although resources are limited, pupils do engage in scientific and technological pursuits during *chol* lessons. Examples of this are circuitry and modelling to support science and design and technology. The English and mathematics curricula are supported by textual material that is old and outdated. The reason for this is to minimise pupils' exposure to modern society. Teachers manage behaviour well and behaviour during the lessons observed was consistently outstanding. Pupils have only the bare minimum instruction in physical education although they are encouraged to use break times to exercise. Pupils with special educational needs in *kodesh* are supported by one-to-one teaching. However, pupils who struggle in *chol* receive less support.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Spiritual development is at the core of the ethos of the school. Pupils take part in daily prayer sessions and lessons are replete with references to spiritual awareness. The school day revolves around practices that remind pupils about their religious responsibilities at every moment. These include ritual washing, blessings before and after eating and a distinctive mode of dress. Included within the religious instruction is a strong emphasis on moral behaviour and morality in general. Pupils have a keen awareness of what is right and wrong and they apply this to their interactions with adults and visitors.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy lessons especially when they are lively and interactive. The very large majority of pupils behave exceptionally well and this was evident during the inspection in classes, corridors and the playground. They know what is expected of them and act accordingly. However, the school acknowledges that instances of bullying take place on occasions which are not dealt with fully. Pupils learn about public institutions and services and respect the law of the land as a religious precept. Pupils gain knowledge albeit limited of other faiths and cultures through class discussions in both *kodesh* and *chol*. They are taught to respect others as is evident in the ways that they treat visitors and others who work in the school. Pupils grow in self-confidence when they help arrange school activities and lead prayer services in the classroom.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school is inadequate overall although it is satisfactory for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils are provided with limited knowledge about healthy eating and lifestyles through class discussions. Pupils are supervised well both in the building and playground. However, the school does not carry out risk assessments for visits out of school to safeguard children from potential harm. All of the necessary requirements for child protection are in place and there is a designated member of staff who is suitably trained. Parents and carers report that generally their children feel safe in school. However, some parents, carers and children say that instances of bullying occur in the school and that not enough is done to stop this happening; records of bullying and serious misbehaviour are not kept. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Recruitment procedures are rigorous. Careful attention is given to ensuring that the required safeguarding checks are carried out for all members of staff. The school meets all of the regulations regarding staff checks and the maintenance of a single central register. The school has remedied the regulatory failures identified at the last inspection.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The premises are satisfactory but most parts of the building looked tired and are poorly decorated; this diminishes many opportunities for effective learning in an attractive environment. Classrooms and communal areas are similarly characterless, with virtually no displays. The school occupies a large building on four levels and this creates some accessibility issues. However, there are currently no pupils with mobility problems and the school has a three-year plan to improve accessibility. As school numbers have grown, the pressure on space has increased and some classrooms are approaching capacity. To accommodate this increase, additional toilets and washroom facilities have been provided although there is no warm water available for pupils to wash their hands. The premises, both indoors and outdoors are secure. The outdoor area is suitably surfaced but there are no apparatus or playground markings for pupils in the main school and only limited outdoor resources for those in the Early Years Foundation Stage to stimulate pupils' sense of adventure or play.

Provision of information

The school provides all the required information for parents, prospective parents, carers and others. Parents and carers are satisfied with the information provided by the school. Nearly all feel they are kept well-informed but the school has identified that this aspect of its work could be improved further. The school prospectus is

limited in its content but all of the necessary information is included. Parents and carers of prospective pupils are invited to visit before the time of admission.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

Procedures for handling complaints are clear, concise and comply fully with regulatory requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enjoy learning and make satisfactory progress from their individual starting points, which are broadly as expected for children of their age. By the time they enter Year 1, their skills and abilities are broadly in line with expectations in most areas of learning. Outcomes are satisfactory. Relationships are good at all levels and children work and play together harmoniously. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and this is reflected in their good attitudes to learning and behaviour.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers and their assistants work positively in the classroom to ensure that all children play an active role in lessons. There is a satisfactory emphasis on developing basic communication, language and literacy skills. Consequently, children develop a firm foundation for future skills development. Adults provide positive role models and spend time with each child, valuing them as individuals. Although, classroom resources are adequate overall, there is a limited amount of outdoor play equipment. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is an adequate range of opportunities for children to gain experiences in all of the required areas of learning. There is a satisfactory balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. Parents and carers are closely involved in their children's education and are warmly welcomed into the school. The children are satisfactorily cared for. They are children kept safe. Healthy eating is encouraged and children readily approach adults if they are upset or have a concern.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The leader of this phase has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and areas for development.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that the written policy to promote good behaviour amongst pupils, which sets out sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving, is implemented effectively (paragraph 9)
- ensure that it has effective procedures to prevent bullying which have regard to the DCSF guidance *Safe to learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools* (DCSF-00656-2007) (paragraph 10)
- ensure that it has procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety on educational visits which have regard to DfES guidance *Health and safety of pupils on educational visits* (DfES ref:HSPV2) (paragraph 12)
- keep a record of the sanctions imposed upon pupils for serious misbehaviour (paragraph 16).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that the water supply meets the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(a))
- ensure a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration (paragraph 23(p)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Introduce more extra-curricular activities in order to extend pupils' knowledge and experience.
- Provide more stimulating playground equipment for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

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

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Jewish (Strictly orthodox, Satmar Chassidic)		
Date school opened	October 1997		
Age range of pupils	3 to 12 years		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 245	Girls: 0	Total: 245
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)	£1,404 - £2,600		
Address of school	393-395 Bury New Road Salford Lancashire M7 2BT		
Telephone number	0161 7929922		
Email address	ttypsatmar@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Rabbi Abraham Goldberg		
Proprietor	Talmud Torah Yetev Lev LTD		