

Pardes House Grammar School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Yonoson Yodaiken

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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.

This was a light touch educational inspection which focused principally on: the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils; and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Pardes House Grammar School was opened in 1972 and is situated in North West London. It offers a secondary education for Orthodox Jewish boys, with provision for both religious and secular studies. The school was last inspected in February 2008. There are 233 students on roll between the ages of 11 and 16. In 2001, the school moved to its present site, which is a grade 1 listed building. The school has no students with a statement of special educational needs, but a significant proportion are receiving additional provision to help them with their special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school states its aim as:

'besides stressing academic achievements in both general and religious studies' to put 'great emphasis on the social, moral and spiritual well-being of the students, whilst affording them the skills to interact with the wider community and show respect for, and value the outlook of others' .

On leaving school, all the students continue their education in *Yeshivos* (Talmudical Colleges) in the United Kingdom.

Evaluation of the school

Pardes House has maintained its high standards since the last inspection, it meets its aims and now meets all of the regulations for registration, having put in place robust procedures for fire safety and by designating an appropriate room for students who are taken ill. The quality of education is good. There are some outstanding features which include the pastoral care given by the staff, the *kodesh* (Jewish studies) curriculum and the students' spiritual and moral development.

The curriculum is good and in both *limmudei kodesh* and *limmudei chol* (secular studies). The quality of teaching is good resulting in students making good progress. The arrangements for the safeguarding and care of students are satisfactory. Students' behaviour is good both in class and around the school. The strong Jewish

ethos permeates the whole school day and the values that are taught are reinforced continuously. Parents are very positive in their support of the school, making comments such as, 'The school is very caring and considerate' and 'My child is carefully nurtured and has made good progress.'

Quality of education

The quality of education is good overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers a good developmental school experience. It is made up of *limmudei kodesh* and secular studies. The outstanding *kodesh* curriculum forms some 55% of the school day and is taught predominantly in English, but with some input in Yiddish. Secular studies are taught in English. The *kodesh* curriculum very effectively incorporates many aspects of the personal, social and health education curriculum and has a major impact on students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An example of this is the way in which each class has an opportunity to learn *mussar* (ethical teaching) every day as a discreet subject. The special educational needs department provides impressive support for students who need extra help and require a tailor-made curriculum.

A strength of the secular curriculum is the breadth of subjects offered at GCSE, which boys take in either Year 9 or Year 10, and the growing number of subjects offered at A level which boys take in Years 10 and 11. These include English, mathematics, physics, Biblical Hebrew, economics, government and politics, law and Modern Hebrew. The opportunity for the development of students' technological skills is enhanced by a dedicated technology workshop. Due to pressure on time, the coverage of art and music is minimal, as is the opportunity for learning physical education, with only one lesson per week for each class. The curriculum is enhanced through guest speakers, events and visits which the students enjoy, although some students and parents find that there are not enough educational visits arranged. A voluntary nightly learning session is held in a community centre and it is well attended with some 50 boys regularly taking part.

Teaching and assessment are good overall, with some examples of satisfactory teaching and occasionally outstanding teaching. The relationships at all levels are very positive and staff know the students well, offering exceptional pastoral care to them. In most lessons, when teaching is good, questioning strategies used are effective and planning and assessment are good. The pace of these lessons is brisk and students are well engaged. As a result, good progress is made and students confirm that they enjoy school and their lessons. In the few lessons where teaching is less than good, the needs of lower-attaining students are not consistently met as the work is sometimes pitched at too high a level and, as a result, some students are not engaged effectively. Parents receive regular reports on the progress their son is making every month.

Assessment is regular and information from assessments is used well to support teaching. For each student at the school there is an ongoing assessment, which plots their progress and how it deviates from the class average. As a result, appropriate

intervention strategies are then put in place when needed, including a special programme in *kodesh* for students of high attainment. The results of national tests are impressive, with the vast majority of students making good progress and gaining levels well-above average for their age.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good. Students say they greatly enjoy school and they are keen and motivated to learn. Their behaviour is good and their attendance is high. Students value the support given by staff and as one student stated, 'It is very good that staff really care about us.' Another comment was, 'My school helps me to understand the correct way to live.' There is mutual trust and respect between staff and students, and as a result, students make good progress in their personal development and social relationships. Students' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and has a very positive impact on their good behaviour. Throughout the school day, moral teaching plays a very important part and permeates every aspect of the school. During *kodesh* lessons, values such as thinking about other students' feelings, being kind to the less fortunate and looking after other people's property are discussed at length. Uplifting prayer sessions take place daily and guest speakers frequently address the school on spiritual themes. Students are taught to distinguish between right and wrong and their knowledge of public services and institutions in England is good.

Students' attitudes to work are good, and they are keen to come to school. They are well prepared for their future lives. Students have an excellent knowledge of their own culture and are presented with a satisfactory variety of materials which help them appreciate other cultures. Teachers encourage students to display tolerance and respect for those of other faiths and cultures.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding the welfare, health and safety of students is satisfactory. The very caring and friendly ethos in the school ensures that the boys feel safe and valued. They report that there is no bullying and that staff care for them well. Safeguarding procedures meet all the regulations. The school has an appropriate safeguarding policy and staff have received child protection training in line with current guidance. It has effective recruitment procedures in place to ensure that staff have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. A single central staff register of these checks has been compiled in line with the latest statutory requirements. Staff are deployed effectively so that student safety is ensured. The school fulfils its duties in accord with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as amended. The school has effective risk assessment systems in place to ensure that the building is free from the risk of fire. The school's provision to promote healthy lifestyles is barely satisfactory because there is too little emphasis on students exercising regularly and there is too little nutritious food in the tuck

shop. Both students and parents view these as areas in which they would like to see some improvement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Further promote healthy living by providing more opportunities for physical education lessons and more nutritious foods in the tuck shop.
- Ensure that teaching strategies in lessons consistently meet the needs of all students, including those of lower attainment, by using the already good assessment information to set work that is closely matched to the individual learning needs of students.

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 day
Type of school	Grammar school
Date school opened	September 1972
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 233 Girls: 0 Total: 233
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0 Girls 0 Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,850
Address of school	Hendon Lane, Finchley N3 1SA
Telephone number	0208 349 4222
Email address	admin@phgrammar.co.uk
Headteacher	Rabbi Dunner
Proprietor	Mr Lisser