

Beis Chinuch Lebonos Girls School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Julie Winyard 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}

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

Beis Chinuch Lebonos School is an independent Orthodox Jewish girls' day school with 533 pupils on roll from 3 to 16 years of age. It caters solely for girls of the strictly orthodox Chassidic Jewish community from the local area of Stamford Hill. Most pupils come from Yiddish speaking homes and use English as an additional language. There are four pupils who have a statement of special educational needs.

The school which is housed on one site in two separate buildings, is organised into four separate 'schools', nursery, infant, junior and secondary with two headteachers for each school; one who leads the *Kodesh* (religious) curriculum and the other the *Chol* (secular) curriculum. There are eight headteachers in all. The school was founded in 1987 and relocated onto the present site in Woodbury Down in 2004. The nursery school is registered with Ofsted Children's Services for government nursery funding and was inspected as part of this inspection. There are 116 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and a high proportion of these receive nursery funding. The crèche, registered for 100 children aged nought to three, was inspected in June 2010. The school was last inspected in January 2008.

The school aims,

'to produce young women with a strong sense of right and wrong, staunchly loyal to the Orthodox Jewish faith, with an understanding of Torah, *mitzvos* (religious commandments), morality and good *middos* (character traits), and a rounded education in both the *Kodesh* and secular subjects.'

Evaluation of the school

Beis Chinuch Lebonos School provides an outstanding quality of education and is highly successful in implementing its aims. As a result of the good teaching 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

assessment, the excellent *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula, outstanding welfare, health and safety provision and robust safeguarding procedures, the girls develop outstanding spiritual, moral social and cultural knowledge and understanding and make outstanding progress in their academic learning. A large number of parental questionnaires were received all of which were exceptionally pleased with the quality of education their girls receive. In the words of one parent, 'My daughter really loves every second she spends in school and comes home very happy. I am very proud that she attends Beis Chinuch Lebonos.' The school has made good improvement since the last inspection particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage which is now good. The school meet all the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is outstanding overall. The outstanding *Kodesh* curriculum has been written by the school and has exceptionally detailed schemes of work for each aspect. It is specifically designed to meet the needs of the pupils and is taught from when children start school in the nursery. An outstanding feature of this curriculum is how the school have integrated topics with the *Chol* curriculum where appropriate; for example developing the girls' ability to compare and contrast past cultures with those of today. The girls thoroughly enjoy their lessons because their *Kodesh* teachers, who are different from those who teach the secular curriculum, make sure they are interesting and appropriately challenging. For example, the pace of learning is fast and the girls say that they find this stimulating and motivating. They are fully confident in approaching their teachers for additional help if they need this support.

The outstanding *Chol* curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a good range of subjects taught to GCSE level including information and communication technology (ICT) and, more recently, business studies. These further opportunities have been much appreciated; for example Year 8 pupils produced an excellent multimedia presentation as part of their annual school show. The school has also developed their own sewing curriculum and the girls make tailored suits and other clothing to a very high standard. Personal, social and health education is integrated across the curriculum and is also taught discretely within circle time in the lower school and as citizenship in the secondary school. There is a good variety of extra-curricular activities including sports and music. School visits enhance the curriculum and the school has an appropriate range of these. The quality of the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and improving thanks to the support of the local authority.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall. However, during the inspection, a large proportion of outstanding teaching was seen in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* lessons. There has been good improvement since the last inspection because the headteachers regularly monitor the quality of teaching and ensure all teachers have access to training and support. Where teaching is most effective lessons have a precise learning objective which is clearly communicated to the pupils. A range of teaching methods is used, including partner and individual work, and the pace is

appropriate to the learning. Teachers use open-ended questions well to extend pupils' learning. Teachers have effective classroom management skills and there is seamless change from one activity to the next. Teachers assess pupils' learning accurately and give detailed verbal feedback that enables pupils to know exactly what they need to do to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding. Textbooks are used creatively and lessons are interactive. However, a small amount of teaching and assessment remains satisfactory because the school is not yet sharing the best practice with all teachers. In these lessons pupils' progress is satisfactory.

Pupils make outstanding progress overall through the school despite the small amount of satisfactory teaching. This is because progress accelerates very rapidly during Key Stages 3 and 4 due to the girls' growing confidence as learners and the good and outstanding teaching the girls receive.

Teachers' planning is thorough and activities are carefully designed to meet the needs of different abilities within the class. There is good provision for pupils who have been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities and who have a statement of special educational needs. This is managed well by two special needs coordinators who advise teachers and teaching assistants effectively. As a result of this, these pupils make good progress. Whilst progress overall across the school is outstanding, it is difficult for the headteachers to analyse this efficiently, or to be sufficiently precise, because the school does not have a whole-school approach to tracking pupils' progress from the nursery to Year 11.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have highly positive attitudes to school. They take a pride in the school and in their work and have high aspirations; for example when asked what GCSE level they would like to achieve, Year 6 pupils responded with one voice, A*. A Year 10 pupil explained, 'There is great *achdus* (unity) in the school we are like one big happy family.' Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives. By the end of Year 11, pupils' English and mathematics skills are outstanding. Pupils are able to use and apply these skills exceptionally well; for example they organise an annual show which includes budgeting and directing. The school's sewing curriculum offers a potential source of income in the future as well as underpinning the values of the school in preparing the girls for family life.

Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the Jewish community. Every year pupils take part in a wide range of charitable work and have opportunities to choose projects they would like to pursue. There are many impressive examples including taking a child with special educational needs to a range of after-school clubs; helping families with younger children; and, visiting the elderly on a weekly basis. The school finishes two weeks before *Pesach* (Passover) so the girls can help their own mothers

and other families to prepare for the festival. This work contributes to the girls' growing confidence as they move through the secondary school.

Teachers are outstanding role models for pupils because they have often learnt their values in the school as pupils themselves and have become teachers because they value the school so highly. The school promotes the moral values of pupils through the *Kodesh* curriculum. Pupils also make a positive contribution to the non-Jewish community by, for example, offering seats to adults if on a bus or train. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in all lessons and around the school. They have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and show great respect towards adults.

Pupils' exceptional spiritual development is evident in their ability to be reflective about their learning and to engage in self and peer assessment. Pupils have a great respect for their own religious culture, sing beautifully and say special prayers for those who are unwell. They carry out their devotions with great sincerity. Pupils show a good understanding of other cultures because they are taught to show respect and tolerance for those of different faith and cultural traditions. This is supported through a range of cultural visits.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding the pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Safeguarding processes and procedures are fully in place and robust. The single central register is in place and the school carries out all the required checks on adults who work in the school. All staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau certificate and receive the required training, including the designated officer, in child protection. Fire drills are carried out at different times of the day twice a term and pupils have improved the time it takes to evacuate the building. The school has an effective three year plan which meets the requirements for the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

All pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and recognise that their parents encourage them to maintain this at home. All pupils play vigorously at playtimes and take part in a variety of sporting activities after school. Physical education is taught in the school. However, the range of opportunities is limited. All pupils say they feel exceptionally safe at school and that there is no bullying because they are fully committed to the schools' values of always speaking kindly about each other. There are exceptionally strong relationships between pupils and also between pupils and adults.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because there are good outcomes for children in all the areas of learning due to the good provision and good leadership and management.

Children enjoy their learning and make good progress especially in improving their skills in communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's mathematical skills develop well. Children have a good understanding of how to be healthy and feel very safe within the setting. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities with a good mix of those which are child initiated and teacher led. Themes are based on the Jewish calendar in particular the Jewish festivals. All six areas of learning are reflected in the outdoor area as well as inside the classroom. Good use is made of the new garden area. Good links are made between the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula. Tasks are well matched to children's different learning needs, with good support for less able children and appropriate challenge for higher achievers.

Assessment is good and the setting has recently started to record each child's learning journey. These are at the early stages of development in the nursery because children's work and photographs are not yet annotated with teachers' comments and observations. In Reception, learning journeys are more developed. However, teachers' observations are not yet fully integrated. Weekly planning is detailed. The move from the nursery to Reception is carefully managed as is the children's move into Key Stage 1. Rigorous health and safety checks are carried out daily on the premises and risk assessments are made for all journeys. The children's welfare and safety have a high priority. There is excellent communication with parents who value the weekly newsletters explaining what their children will be learning each week.

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:

- develop a consistent, whole-school approach to the tracking of pupils' progress
- ensure that the most effective practice in teaching and assessment is shared throughout the school so that all teaching and assessment is good or outstanding.

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	Orthodox Jewish day school		
Date school opened	1987		
Age range of pupils	3–16		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 553	Total: 553
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 4	Total: 4
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 2,080		
Address of school	Woodberry Down Centre, Woodberry Down London, N4 2SH		
Telephone number	020 8809 7737		
Email address	Headteacher@bclschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Klein, Mrs Reich (secondary school), Mrs Schneck, Mrs Brinner, (junior school) Mrs Spitzer, Mrs Erlich (infant school), Mrs Domb (nursery)		
Proprietor	Mr Schechter		