

Beis Malka Belz Girls School

Independent school standard inspection report

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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}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Section 49(2) of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beis Malka Belz is an independent primary day school for orthodox Jewish girls aged from three to 11 years of age, located in the basement of a large Victorian terraced building in Salford, North Manchester. The rest of the building is occupied by Eim Habonim, a school for children with special educational needs, and both schools work closely together to ensure that the premises are safe, secure and in a decent state of repair.

The school has been functioning since May 2008. It currently has a total of 75 pupils on roll. Fifty-one children are in the Early Years Foundation Stage and none of these children receive nursery funding. There are 15 children who attend part time. All the remaining pupils are in Years 1 and 2. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

The school plays an important role in catering for the burgeoning Chassidic community of North Manchester. Its aim is to 'implant the fear of Heaven and good character traits in the children' and to 'enable all children to learn and develop their skills to the best of their abilities'.

The school had a progress monitoring visit in April 2010. This was the school's first full inspection.

EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of the education in the school is satisfactory and meets its aims. The curriculum, teaching and assessment are satisfactory and this leads to the pupils making satisfactory progress. Pupils at the school behave well and the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good. Overall,

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

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/ukpga_20060021_en_4#pt3-ch2-pb4-l1g49

the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is inadequate as are the school's arrangements for safeguarding. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. The school meets most of the regulations for independent schools. It has made some progress in relation to its educational provision since the last visit but no progress with regards to welfare, health and safety.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory for both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school. It is made up of 2 strands, *Kodesh* (religious studies) and *Chol* (secular studies). The *Kodesh* curriculum effectively integrates many aspects of secular learning such as numeracy, science, history and geography. For example, pupils practise adding in relation to the counting of the 49 days of the *Omer* (Passover to Pentecost) period. They also learn about design and technology by, for example, comparing machine and hand-baked *matza* (unleavened bread) when discussing the minor festival of *Pesach Shenit*. Planning for *Kodesh* is only satisfactory because it sometimes lacks sufficient detail to support teachers' planning and does not always include approaches for providing suitable work for pupils with different levels of ability. As a result, and because the *Kodesh* curriculum is not always planned coherently from year to year, some topics are repeated and pupils make only satisfactory progress.

The *Chol* strand of the curriculum is satisfactory. It is based on commercially produced curricula for literacy, numeracy, geography and science. All of the other areas of learning are covered through satisfactorily planned lessons or through integrated *Kodesh* lessons. A good example of the latter was a science lesson delivered in Yiddish when pupils learned about what happens when flowers are left in water and are dyed with different colours. Pupils' access to physical education is limited to one session a week.

Teaching and assessment in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school are satisfactory. In some lessons, teachers use a good range of resources. For example, one teacher used a puppet, watering cans and plants to support a science lesson. Some teachers are also imaginative in their teaching methods. For example, one pupil drew a picture of a cave on the board to support a Hebrew and Yiddish translation and pupils perform 'actions' when they pray and sing. These bring lessons to life and captivate the interest of pupils. However, even in these lessons, teachers are more formal and lessons are very much directed by the teacher and do not seek pupils' opinions or invite their questions. This approach impedes pupils' progress and the opportunities for them to make new discoveries and develop their thinking skills. The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* through one-to-one remedial assistance, especially for reading. It is in the process of appointing a coordinator for special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Assessment throughout the school is satisfactory but is mostly left to the devices of each teacher. Pupils are tested regularly, marks are recorded and they are encouraged to apply themselves and progress. However, more formal systems to determine pupils' progress and to inform planning and teaching are less well developed.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PUPILS

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and their behaviour, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school, are good. Pupils behave well in classes, corridors and in the playground. They enjoy school, attendance is good and they are eager to learn. They develop their self-esteem and confidence through some opportunities to contribute to class discussions and by working on their own during arts and crafts lessons. All teachers have their own methods of encouraging good behaviour, effort and work such as stickers, stamps and charts, although there is no systematic reward system in the school. Morality and an appreciation of spirituality are at the core of what happens at the school. Pupils are taught to respect themselves and others, and have a keen appreciation of, and regard for the laws of the land. They are proud members of a small, closed-knit community; they appreciate this and contribute to the wider community, for example, through giving to charities and by performing for their mothers and grandmothers.

Pupils acquire a broad knowledge of public institutions in England through the personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE) programme, assemblies and a 'People Who Help Us' project. Pupils gain respect for other cultures through wall displays, multi-ethnic toys and an emphasis on tolerance and harmony during class discussions. They also acquire an understanding of other cultures through geography, science and some elements of the *Kodesh* curriculum.

WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school is inadequate. Staff, including the designated officer, have not been correctly trained in child protection procedures. There is insufficient attention paid to child protection procedures for new staff when they join the school. The school has an inadequate level of fire safety because fire drills are too infrequent and are not recorded. The school does not have a current fire risk assessment for the premises.

Pupils are taught how to keep healthy and safe through science and work in *Kodesh* lessons. They know about healthy eating and what they must do to keep fit; unhealthy food is not permitted in school. The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy and ways of promoting good behaviour among pupils are clearly stated in its

behaviour policy. Sanctions are clearly outlined and a sanctions record is in place. A suitable first aid policy has been produced and members of staff are suitably trained in first aid. Risk assessments for the premises and educational visits are adequate but provide only basic details. Health and safety policies are in place and meet the requirements.

The school maintains a register of admissions, and pupils' attendance is recorded appropriately. The school has a three-year plan to improve accessibility as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

SUITABILITY OF STAFF, SUPPLY STAFF AND PROPRIETORS

The school has suitable recruitment procedures in place and ensures that all staff have undergone the necessary checks before commencing work at the school. All staff have the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau and the single central record of staff checks is completed as required.

PREMISES AND ACCOMMODATION AT THE SCHOOL

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory and suitable for learning. The buildings are safe and the school complies with health and safety regulations. There are sufficient classrooms to enable the teaching of the curriculum. Classrooms are an adequate size and are well decorated. There is adequate flooring throughout the school and the accommodation is maintained in a satisfactory decorative order. The playground is small but there is a covered area, sand, riding toys and climbing apparatus. The number of washroom facilities is adequate. Arrangements for looking after pupils that are ill meet regulations.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Parents are provided with some information about the school in a 'Welcome Pack' that is sent home before their children start school. However this pack does not contain some required information about the headteacher and proprietor and particulars relating to the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language, the curriculum, the number of complaints, and the number of staff and their qualifications. The safeguarding children policy is not sent to parents and prospective parents as required. Parents are informed about their children's progress through yearly reports. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire reveal that they are extremely positive about the school, staff and the quality of education that their children receive.

MANNER IN WHICH COMPLAINTS ARE TO BE HANDLED

The procedures for handling complaints are clear and comply fully with the requirements. There have been no formal complaints from parents in recent years.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. The provision and leadership and management are inadequate because procedures to ensure children's welfare and safety, specifically fire safety procedures and the training of staff in child protection, are inadequate. Risk assessments are in place but these are not detailed or frequent enough to ensure safe practice on a day-to-day basis.

Children enjoy their time at school and form good relationships with each other and adults. Activities cover all the required areas of learning, leading to satisfactory outcomes. However, opportunities for children to spontaneously experiment and explore are limited, and the outdoor provision mostly promotes children's social and physical skills.

Staff are at an early stage in developing their practice related to observing and recording children's skills and then using this information to adapt the planning of activities according to individual need. Records are being established to track children's progress over time. Adults interact positively with the children but seldom encourage them to think for themselves, through questioning. Children behave well and understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They develop a strong sense of community and greatly enjoy, for example, singing traditional songs. Weekly newsletters keep parents informed about what their children are learning. The leader is relatively new in post and is taking suitable steps towards streamlining procedures and strengthening the staff's understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage but it is too soon for this to have become embedded into daily practice.

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.⁵

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

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

- ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure that the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13).

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

- ensure that the required information about the headteacher and proprietor has been provided to parents, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (paragraph 24(1)(a))
- ensure that the required information about particulars relating to the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, the curriculum, the number of complaints, and the number of staff and their qualifications has been provided to parents, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (paragraph 24(1)(b))
- ensure that the school sends to parents of pupils (and of prospective pupils on request) a copy of their safeguarding children policy as required under part 3, paragraph 7 (paragraph 24(1)(c)).

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 more formal systems for assessing pupils' progress
- improve the quality of curriculum planning so it provides better support for lesson planning and guidance on approaches to learning for pupils with different levels of ability
- ensure the *Kodesh* curriculum is planned more coherently from year to year, so that topics are not repeated unnecessarily.
- in the Early Years Foundation Stage, establish systems to ensure more consistent recording of each child's progress and use the information gained to plan the next steps in their learning.

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 Girls day school		
Date school opened	May 2008		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 75	Total: 75
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 15	Total: 15
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)	N/A by donation		
Address of school	403 Bury New Road Salford Manchester Lancashire M7 2BT		
Telephone number	0161 792 2323		
Email address	Beismalkah@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Mrs T Eisenbach		
Proprietor	Mr Y Luftig		