

London Jewish Girls' High School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Fayge Levenberg

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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

The London Jewish Girls' High School is an independent day school for girls between the ages of 11 to 16. It is located in a residential area in Barnet and all students live in Barnet. It was founded in 1997 as a charitable trust. At present, 125 students are on roll; of these, 81 are in Key Stage 3 and 44 in Key Stage 4. There are no students who have a statement of special educational needs. No student speaks English as an additional language. The school is based in a building that was originally designed primarily as a meeting hall and which is owned by the synagogue. The school was last inspected in March 2008. The school aims:

'to educate its pupils to fill the traditional role of a Bas Yisroel within the modern world'. With this aim in mind, 'the school seeks to provide the pupils with the Hashkofo [ethos] and knowledge to help them to be firm in their Yiddishkeit [Judaism], whilst at the same time teaching them the necessary skills to deal successfully with the world around them'.

Evaluation of the school

The London Jewish Girls' High School, Tiferes provides a good quality of education that matches its stated aims well. The students make good progress in all strands of their curriculum because the quality of teaching is good and the attitudes of the students are positive. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and behaviour are outstanding. Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Safeguarding requirements are met. The school carries out all the necessary checks on adults who work in the school. However, occasionally welfare, health and safety policies are not fully implemented. Since the last inspection, the school has made a

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

number of improvements; there is now a formal training programme to support teachers in further professional development, the school offers a course on child development and there are a number of additional AS-level qualifications. It also now meets all of the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is divided into three strands; *Kodesh* (Jewish studies), *Chol* (secular studies) and 'extra-curricular' (informal). The wide-ranging *Kodesh* curriculum, which was written by the principal, covers a wide range of subjects, which includes *Chumash* (Biblical texts), *Parsha* (weekly portion of the Bible), *Nach* (Prophets), *Hashkofo* (ethos), *Avos* (ethics), *Tefilah* (prayers), *Dinim* (laws and customs) and Jewish general knowledge. The secular curriculum is broad and balanced. Mathematics, English language and literature, science, information and communication technology (ICT), modern and Biblical Hebrew, art, sewing, music, physical education (PE), and child development are all studied.

In Years 10 and 11, all students are entered for public examinations. Core science is taken in Year 10 and students take either AS level in biology or child development in Year 11. All students take mathematics, with some taking the AS level in Year 11. Biblical Hebrew is taken in Year 10 and some choose to take the AS level in Year 11. All students take either art or sewing in Year 10, with some taking AS levels in Year 11. Most students take modern Hebrew in Year 10, with some taking the AS level in Year 11. In Year 11, students take GCSEs in English language, history or geography, statistics or English literature.

The informal curriculum is wide and varied with different programmes in each year group in addition to whole-school events. It includes the *Bas Mitzvah* (coming of age) programme in Year 7 and weekly circle time sessions with the *Mechaneches* (form teachers) to discuss this important milestone in the life of the students as they reach the age of 12. The culmination of these classes is a dinner, prepared by the girls, who even bake their own *Challos* (loaves of bread), to which all their mothers are invited. Weekly circle time sessions also take place with other year groups. There is a very popular walking tour in Year 9 and a *Shabbaton* (a weekend away) in Year 11 is organised and enjoyed by the students. Whole-school events include a *Rosh Chodesh* (new Jewish month) activity which may include a quiz related to the upcoming new Jewish month. The school has prepared their own Jewish general knowledge programme which the students learn at their own pace. This has now resulted in an inter-school quiz, with Year 9 students being joined by students from other schools at a popular annual event. The extra-curricular *Derech* (good manners) programme has proved to be popular, with many students attending the lunchtime club.

Careful thought has been given to the amount of time each aspect of the curriculum is taught in each year group, which differs from year to year. This good, tailor-made,

broad and balanced programme results in well-adjusted students who are happy and very well prepared for their adult life and further education and training.

There are written schemes of work for all subjects, some of which are more substantial and give more guidance to teachers than others. A few long- and medium-term curriculum plans provide more limited guidance for staff.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall, with some outstanding lessons observed. Teaching is monitored regularly and all teachers have access to regular training and support. In the best lessons, teaching is delivered at a brisk pace by teachers who know their subjects and students well and use excellent questioning techniques which challenge and stimulate their students. This results in highly motivated students who are eager to extend their learning and behave in an exemplary manner. Teachers search for depth and detail in students' responses and move learning forward methodically and progressively. There is a clear purpose to learning. As a result, students are thoughtful and contribute well to these challenging lessons. There are some cross-curricular links established. For example, in one outstanding lesson, on *Chevra* (circle time), Torah texts were used to teach the students how not to judge others from outward appearances. Students were taught good techniques in how to formulate opinions and express themselves well.

Learning objectives are not always shared with students. Resources are good and support the good learning, although there is no school library. All students are well catered for, with the more able being extended and challenged and the less able well supported either in class or in regular one-to-one sessions. This leads to all students making good progress. Public examination results are impressive, especially taking into consideration that a number of GCSE examinations are taken in Year 10.

Assessment through regular and ongoing testing is thorough and shows the progress of each individual student as they rise through the school. However, marking, reports and teachers' notes on students do not regularly indicate what a student can do or what they should do to improve further. Some students also expressed the view that they did not always know how well they were doing.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is outstanding. Through the positive school ethos, students grow in self-confidence and develop extremely strong spiritual, moral and social values. *Tefilah* take place twice daily and are taken seriously by the students. There is a good system where each form teacher meets each student formally at least once a term but informally on a regular basis, which further enhances the students' self-esteem. In discussion with the students, they said they feel very supported through this process and always have someone they can approach who has time to listen to them.

Moral teaching permeates every aspect of school life both in and out of lessons. Students have a good understanding of right and wrong and show respect to adults. Relationships between students are excellent, with students eager to support and collaborate with each other, sharing their ideas readily, rather than competing against each other. They feel there is a family atmosphere in this 'happy school'. This is another positive outcome from the three-strand curriculum which promotes success not just in academic learning but also very well in personal development and in doing so meets the aims of the curriculum policy. Incentives in the form of credits at Key Stage 3 and the diploma at Key Stage 4 are highly valued. Students work towards bronze, silver and gold awards based on their behaviour, academic achievement, attitude, attendance and accountability. Attendance is good and behaviour is outstanding.

Students, in their free time, go out into the community to help families with younger children and undergo professional training in interpersonal skills to help them to make a positive contribution in the care homes they visit. Through the many informal activities organised by the students, they learn many life skills, such as budgeting, directing the annual school play, collecting adverts for their brochures and management skills in relation to school projects. Although the school, at times, seeks the views of the students through form captains and they are listened to, there is no student council at present.

Students show a good understanding of other cultures because they are taught to show respect and tolerance for those of different faith and cultural traditions. They have opportunities to learn about other cultures in English, art and sewing lessons. The curriculum is also very well enhanced by visits to places of interest, such as the Houses of Parliament, the Old Bailey, the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Imperial War Museum.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding the students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The child protection policy and the single central register of checks on staff are fully in place and the school carries out all the required checks on adults who work in the school. The designated child protection officer is trained at the higher level required. The training for the rest of the staff is now out of date but the staff are fully aware of the correct procedures in the event of an incident and further training is planned to take place imminently. Fire drills are carried out regularly and the school has a suitable plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), as amended. Students say they feel safe and secure in the school environment. However, occasionally, the school is not rigorous in fully implementing some policies. For example, although staff were very aware of potential risks, a few written risk assessments for visits out of school lacked some details.

Although healthy lifestyles are discussed in science lessons and many students walk to school, a number of parents and students expressed the view that the school does not do enough to promote this aspect.

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:

- ensure all long- and medium-term curriculum plans provide good guidance for staff
- ensure all policies related to safeguarding and the welfare, health and safety of pupils are fully implemented
- make sure marking and reports for parents and others show students how well they are achieving and how they can improve further.

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	Jewish Day School		
Date school opened	28 October 1997		
Age range of pupils	11–16		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 125	Total: 125
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: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total ; 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 4,800		
Address of school	The Community Centre 18 Raleigh Close Hendon London NW4 2TA		
Telephone number	020 82038618		
Email address	tiferes@onetel.com		
Headteacher	Mr Joel Rabinowitz		
Proprietor	Mr David Hersh		