

Beis Trana 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}

Information about the school

Beis Trana is an independent day school for girls aged three to 16 years from *Charedi* Jewish families. It opened in 1995 and is situated in the Stamford Hill area of London. The school abides by the standards set by the Rabbinite of the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations resulting in no access to television, the internet and certain curriculum-related subject matter. The main language spoken at home is Yiddish. *Kodesh* (religious studies) is mainly taught in the mornings in Yiddish, and *Chol* (the secular curriculum) is taught in English in the afternoons from Year 1. Only Yiddish is spoken in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are currently 248 on roll. Of these, 53 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 40 of whom are in receipt of government funding. Two pupils have statements of their special educational needs. The school was last inspected in December 2007 and has had three subsequent monitoring visits. The school's main aim is 'to deliver a high class education, which is firmly based on Torah principles and combined with the National Curriculum.'

Evaluation of the school

Beis Trana provides a satisfactory quality of education and makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Except in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress overall. They learn well in lessons and reach good standards in the national tests at age 11 and in the two GCSE examinations that they take. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate due to insufficient regard to the requirements for this age group. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and their spiritual and moral development and behaviour are outstanding. The school's arrangements to safeguard pupils and ensure their welfare, health and safety are inadequate. Although the school mostly meets its aims, it fails to meet a number of regulations including some weaknesses previously identified by Ofsted which have not been fully addressed, particularly in relation to the premises.

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

Quality of education

The curriculum for Year 1 onwards is satisfactory and between the *Chol* and *Kodesh* studies, includes all the required areas of learning.

The *Kodesh* curriculum is good and pupils make good progress in these studies which prepares them well for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life in the *Charedi* community. The curriculum includes the translation and understanding of text, reading and writing Hebrew, Jewish laws and customs, general knowledge and the speaking and writing of Yiddish. Medium- and short-term plans are detailed and ensure that the curriculum is systematically taught, evaluated and updated. Personal, social and health education takes place during *Kodesh* curriculum time and fully reflects the school's ethos and aims. Extra-curricular activities and enrichment, including visits, visitors and performances, are carefully planned across both curricula and are appropriately linked to specific subjects. Numerous projects support learning and the integration of the two curricula. They are often completed as homework.

The *Chol* curriculum is satisfactory. Curriculum planning and guidance provide a good, solid, systematic basis for teaching and learning. There is, appropriately, a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. The school has no specialist facilities for any subject other than sewing. This means that opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge to practical work and investigations, such as in science and technology, take place but are limited to what can be arranged in classrooms, and these are sometimes too small for such purposes. The school does not provide careers guidance from Year 7 upwards, however, citizenship is taught and subjects such as accounting and typing are taught in Year 11 specifically to prepare the pupils for their future lives. Although girls in Key Stage 4 study age appropriate courses for a number of subjects, they are only allowed to take GCSE examinations in mathematics and geography. Pupils learn well in *Chol*. Last year, for example, 18 pupils were entered for these GCSEs; nine achieved A* or A grades in geography, and 14 achieved these grades in mathematics.

From Year 1 onwards, the quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in *Kodesh* where interesting resources, discussions and activities such as art and craft are often used to support learning. Teaching is sometimes good in *Chol* lessons but overall, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn from independent investigation, collaboration and, for the older girls, from debate and exchange of ideas. *Chol* teaching tends to be teacher-led and relies heavily on text books and worksheets. This is partly due to the traditional expectations of the community and partly because of the limitations in accommodation and specialist resources. The most effective teaching in both curricula is characterised by good subject knowledge, questioning to check pupils' understanding and an interesting, dynamic delivery which enlivens the lesson.

Despite some weaknesses in provision, pupils learn well in lessons and, from Year 1 onwards, make good progress. Their behaviour is outstanding at all times and they concentrate, listen and apply themselves extremely well. They expect to work hard and want to achieve well. The presentation of their work is often exemplary. Pupils with special educational needs have these met effectively by additional support and activities tailored to suit their capabilities.

Assessment is good and developing well in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* studies. It is beginning to be used to inform teaching and learning. In *Chol* studies, assessment is based appropriately on National Curriculum level descriptors and pupils' attainment and progress are tracked. A similar levelling system, devised in school, is used in *Kodesh*.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

This aspect of pupils' development is good overall, but their spiritual and moral development is outstanding. From the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' personal development is very well supported by the ethos of the school, the strong, effective *Kodesh* curriculum and the *Charedi* culture. Pupils' attendance is good and their behaviour is outstanding. They are highly attentive in class, and are polite, friendly and happy individuals who enjoy school and develop good friendships with one another. There is virtually never any bullying or harassment and pupils feel safe, happy and secure in school.

Through the *Kodesh* curriculum and prayers, pupils learn right from wrong, and how to conform and meet their society's expectations. Pupils say that the school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds. Prayers are conducted with real enthusiasm and are excellent spiritual experiences for the girls. They are very respectful of adults, for example always standing back to let staff and visitors pass. They learn to take responsibility for others, and to give back to society, for example, by visiting a local Jewish senior citizens' home and raising money for charities. The *Chol* curriculum also contributes to pupils' future well-being, as they learn key skills, knowledge and understanding which will help them in their adult lives. Pupils come to understand the democratic society in which we live through outings, visitors and subjects such as history and citizenship.

The girls' cultural development is satisfactory with many good aspects. Pupils learn successfully about other cultures, such as nomadic tribes and people in Eastern Europe, and the school emphasises cultural learning through subjects such as poetry, drama and literature. Pupils respond well to these and enjoy putting on performances and giving presentations to their families. However, opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures in Britain are too limited.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The arrangements to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety, including child protection, are inadequate. Staff and other adults involved with the school have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau and there is a designated person for safeguarding who has been trained appropriately, as have staff. The required policies are in place, for example for child protection and to prevent bullying. However, some of these were not written by the school and do not sufficiently apply to it or help secure robust safeguarding practices. This limits the policies' effectiveness. Fire safety precautions are insufficiently rigorous and do not meet some aspects of the Fire Safety regulations. Other risk assessments such as those made for educational visits, are adequate. However, the poor accommodation and, particularly, the lack of hot water in the hand basins, have a negative impact on pupils' welfare.

More positively, the close, family-like ethos of the school and the emphasis placed on *Kodesh* and preparing the girls for their future lives within their own community meet their personal needs very effectively. Leaders and managers say clearly that this is at the heart of their work. Pupils feel safe at school and the curriculum promotes their ability to make healthy and safe choices effectively. The school has a three-year accessibility plan in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school does not have adequate arrangements to check and record the suitability of the proprietor, staff and other adults to work with children. Checks do not include whether staff members have the right to work in the United Kingdom, or whether staff from outside agencies have been suitably checked. Additionally, therefore, the single central register of staff checks does not hold these required details.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school occupies two large, adjoining Victorian semi-detached houses on a busy road. There is a playground to the rear, part of which includes good adventure play equipment for younger pupils and those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, installed on an appropriate safety surface. Despite the addition of one new classroom, some classrooms are still too small for the number of pupils, which restricts the flexibility and effectiveness of teaching and learning arrangements. Some parts of the school are undecorated, and much of the remainder is in a poor decorative state. For example, some walls are covered with staples that were once used to fix displays, and some light switches are fixed to the wall by duct tape. There are sufficient toilets for pupils of all age groups, but the number of hand-washing basins still does not meet requirements. Hot water does not run from all the relevant taps, and overall, hot water is in short supply in these basins. Conversely, in a few basins it runs too hot. There are no separate toilet facilities for staff.

Provision of information

The school mostly provides clear, accurate and up-to-date information. The prospectus provides all the information required and indicates clearly what additional information can be requested. Good quality reports on pupils' progress in *Kodesh* are provided and a helpful new report format has been introduced to report pupils' progress in *Chol*.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a suitable complaints policy and procedures which meet all but one of the regulations, that relating to the availability on the school premises, for the proprietor or the headteacher, of a copy of the outcomes of a complaint.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the setting is inadequate because of the staff's insufficient knowledge and understanding of the learning, development and specific welfare requirements for this age group. Consequently, leadership and management and the quality of provision are inadequate. Staff ratios and qualifications do not meet requirements, and the provision takes insufficient account of the national statutory framework for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The weaknesses in welfare, health and safety which affect the whole school also impact on the provision. There is insufficient hot water in the hand basins, and no member of staff has yet trained in first aid for children. Too many activities are adult-led, and the staff's observations and assessments do not directly inform planning for each child's next steps. Resources are inadequate and too little use is made of outdoor learning. Curriculum planning is insufficiently based on providing planned opportunities for learning in the six required areas. Furthermore, no English equivalent is provided for much of the children's learning in Yiddish, which does not prepare them well for their *Chol* studies in Year 1.

Nevertheless, there are positive aspects. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with the setting and good partnerships are established with them. Children enjoy school, play happily and imaginatively with their friends, and feel comfortable in the warm, caring, family-like atmosphere. Their behaviour is good. All three classes provide well for children's personal, social and emotional development, with good outcomes. The children develop skills, knowledge and understanding from the activities provided for them. They make choices about activities and comply with expectations. However, as a result of the weaknesses in provision, the children make inadequate progress towards the early learning goals leading to inadequate outcomes overall.

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.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- amend the secondary curriculum policy to include plans and schemes of work for careers guidance (paragraph 2(1))
- provide appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education (paragraph 2(2)(g))
- provide classroom resources that are of adequate quality, quantity and range (paragraph 3(f)).

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

- make suitable arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school with regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure full compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- check that every member of staff appointed after 1 May 2007 has the right to work in the United Kingdom (paragraph 19(2)(b))
- ensure that any person offered by an agency only begins work at the school after receiving written notification that the checks listed in paragraph 20(2)(a) have been completed, including an indication of the date each check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 20(2)(a))
- check that before they start work at the school, the person offered for work by the agency is suitable for the work required (paragraph 20(2)(b))
- check the identity of any staff not directly employed by the school before they begin work at the school, irrespective of any check made by the agency (paragraph 20(2)(c))
- include in any contractual arrangements with an agency, the requirements set out in paragraphs 20(2)(a), including a requirement to supply a copy of a Criminal Records Bureau certificate that contains any disclosures (paragraph 20(2)(d))

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made

- for each member of staff appointed on or after 1 May 2007 record on the single central register that appropriate checks have been made on that individual's right to work in the United Kingdom, including the date on which the check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 22(3))
- in relation to staff not directly employed by the school, show on the single central register whether written notification has been received from the agency that it has carried out the checks referred to in 20(2)(a) together with the date of the written notification that each check was made or the certificate obtained (paragraph 22(5)).

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 that having regard to the number, age and needs (including and special needs and disability) of pupils that all classrooms are appropriate in size to allow effective teaching (paragraph 23(i))
- ensure that there are sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including pupils with special needs and disability, which take account of regulations 3 and 4 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(j))
- ensure that there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration throughout the school (paragraph 23(p)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

- ensure that the policy stipulates that a copy of the panel's findings and recommendations are available for inspection on the school premises by the proprietor and the headteachers (paragraph 25(i)).

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that staff ratios and qualifications in all three class groups are in line with the statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- provide an educational programme for children based on the six areas of learning that lead to the statutory early learning goals of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- implement suitable assessment arrangements throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, culminating in a summary assessment of each child's skills at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
- ensure that teaching takes full account of children's capabilities, interests and learning needs, and is focused on learning through well-chosen, adult-directed and child-initiated activities.

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that the school's revised policies and practices in relation to safeguarding children and promoting their health, safety and welfare are applied with consistency and rigour to the Early Years Foundation Stage
- ensure that at least one person has a current, paediatric first aid certificate and that this person is on the premises at all times when children are present. There must also be at least one person on outings who has a current paediatric first aid certificate.
- ensure that toilet facilities meet the regulations for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in independent schools.

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	Day school for Charedi Jewish girls
Date school opened	1995
Age range of pupils	3–16 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	248
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	2
Annual fees (day pupils)	None charged
Address of school	186 Upper Clapton Road London E5 9DH
Telephone number	020 8815 8003
Email address	btschool@btconnect.co.uk
Headteachers	Mrs Hirsch, Mrs Weiss, Mrs Smaya, Mrs Hager
Proprietor	Mr Konig