

Side by Side School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	204/6409
Unique Reference Number (URN)	133439
URN for registered childcare	EY347595
Inspection number	385167
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2011



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

Side by Side School is an independent special day school in North London. The school opened in 1997 and was registered in 2002. It has moved several times since it opened and is now situated in two temporary buildings adjacent to parkland. It caters for 57 pupils aged from two to sixteen years who come from the local Orthodox Jewish community in Stamford Hill. English, Yiddish and Hebrew languages are taught and spoken in the school. *Kodesh* (Jewish studies) take up to half of the school day and is taught by trained *Rebbes* (Rabbis). There are 24 pupils aged from five to sixteen years who have a statement of special educational needs. Their difficulties range from profound and multiple to moderate learning difficulties, with many pupils having complex medical needs. There are two small classes for primary-aged pupils one of which is a Reception class, and one class for secondary-aged pupils. There are 31 children in the Nursery classes. The school receives government nursery funding for 12 children. Four children attending the Nursery setting have a statement of special educational needs. The Nursery is registered to take up to 35 children with a maximum of 20 children aged from two to three years at any one time.

The school's last full inspection was in June 2008 and the Nursery was last inspected in December 2010. The school's stated aim is to: 'employ the finest special educational techniques within a Torah setting in order to help our children achieve a level of performance commensurate with their abilities, intellect and talent.'

Evaluation of the school

Side by Side provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets its aims. The curriculum is good and enhanced by the high quality of the *Kodesh* curriculum which

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

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.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents.

results in pupils making outstanding progress in their spiritual development. The overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. The school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory and safeguarding arrangements comply with regulations. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school has improved the curriculum since the last inspection and now meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. The curriculum provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The *Kodesh* curriculum is well organised and is central to the school's work in helping pupils to make outstanding progress in their spiritual development. It is developed by senior staff and tailored to meet pupils' needs and helps to integrate them into the local community. The curriculum includes strong elements of personal, social and health education which is taught extensively throughout the *Kodesh* curriculum. The *Halacha* (life-skills) programme is particularly well matched to the needs of pupils, with the use of English translations of Hebrew text and diagrams to explain each phrase. Older boys are prepared for integration into the wider community by helping weekly with a meals-on-wheels programme, delivering prepared meals to members of the local community and by attending a local synagogue once a month.

The *Chol* (secular studies) curriculum is based on topics which are supported by suitable medium- and long-term plans. Progression across the curriculum is supported by a commercial primary programme and suitably covers all the required areas of learning. It provides well for developing pupils' speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills with lessons taught in small groups according to pupils' levels of communication skills. The *Kodesh* curriculum is regularly linked with the *Chol* curriculum in lessons. Opportunities, for example, to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills or matters related to health and safety are pursued where possible. As a result, pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy.

The school ensures that pupils are provided with both small group and individual therapy sessions, as appropriate, where pupils receive support and guidance from speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists which are closely matched to their individual needs so that they make good progress in developing their physical, social and communication skills.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Most teaching is in English, but this can change into Yiddish, the home language of most pupils. Teaching and assessment related to the *Kodesh* work are of a consistently high standard and the clearly planned routes of progression ensure pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school. In the better lessons, teachers use a range of strategies to engage and motivate pupils; they use practical apparatus and act out

lessons to help pupils understand and remain engaged with the subject matter. Across the school, staff encourage pupils' enjoyment in every lesson. Teachers are quick to praise and to celebrate every achievement by a pupil. A high staff-to-pupil ratio and the staff's caring approach ensure that pupils have positive attitudes to learning and frequently show that they enjoy activities. Staff ensure that work is assessed regularly so that pupils' progress is monitored and work is adapted as necessary to suit the needs of the great majority of pupils. However, for a small minority of primary-aged pupils, assessments of their progress against the targets in their individual education plans have not been as frequent as they could be. Individual case files provide evidence of pupils' progress and confirm that the great majority are making good progress in most areas. However, the school's system to record and track pupils' progress from their starting points is not fully developed.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show their outstanding spiritual development, for example, by spontaneously reciting psalms during playtimes. The Jewish festivals play a major part in school life and opportunities to reflect and develop their spirituality are extensive. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their high levels of attendance.

Pupils have fun in the lessons and their behaviour is outstanding in response to the caring and supportive approach shown by staff. Pupils of all ages relate well to each other, developing excellent relationships and showing genuine care and consideration for each other. Older pupils are given opportunities for work placements which they accomplish with pride and enjoyment. As a result, they are prepared well for adult life and their future lives within their community. The school's curriculum teaches the pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to show appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. Pupils are taught about public institutions as part of their life-skills programme and through their daily walks around the local area. Their understanding of the wider world is less well developed.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Safeguarding procedures and child protection training, for all staff including the designated officer are up to date. The school's child protection policy is clear and staff are aware of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a child. The school has clear procedures for the recruitment and appointment of staff. However, some of the school's practices are not conducted rigorously. For example, annual checks on fire extinguishers and fire fighting equipment have been completed by professional contractors, but checks by staff on fire safety equipment are not completed weekly.

The school has a cohesive and friendly family ethos; pupils are well supervised at all times. The school works well to ensure that they make healthy and safe choices. Learning about healthy eating and hygiene form part of *Kodesh* studies and pupils

show a good understanding of healthy eating from a young age. The school has previously made good adjustments to both the curriculum and the premises and devised a suitable three-year plan to further improve access for pupils with disabilities to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All appropriate checks are in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children. Criminal Records Bureau checks are up to date and the school regularly ensures this clearance is renewed. The school's records show that checks on the suitability of members of the board of trustees have been completed. All checks are recorded on a single central register as required.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school makes good use of a number of small classrooms which allow staff and therapists to work with individual pupils and provide suitable specialist resources and support their good learning and development. Therapy rooms include hoists and other weight-bearing equipment. The school has developed the facilities to include improvements to the Reception class area and to specialist therapy facilities. The interior of the school is brightened by displays of pupils' work in some areas. The decoration around the school is tired in some places. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not all have direct access from their classrooms to outdoor areas but staff ensure that children have very regular opportunities to access a range of suitable toys and resources outdoors.

Provision of information

The school's website provides access to all the required information and policies. Parents, carers and others are provided with regular information on the academic progress of their child. They regularly receive advice and guidance from class teachers and therapists. Parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school and its work and recognise the caring approach of staff. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, parents and carers are invited to termly reviews of children's individual education plans. Individual education plans for older pupils include targets within the *Kodesh* curriculum where appropriate.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure complies with all requirements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children make good progress in most areas of learning given their various starting points. Children are encouraged to eat healthily and older children speak knowledgeably

about their healthy food. Warm and friendly relationships ensure that children of all abilities develop their early communication skills by talking and using sign language.

Staff working with children under three years of age take good care to welcome them into the class, helping them to make good progress in their social and emotional development. From their arrival at two years of age, children learn to share resources and they show good levels of kindness to each other. Specialist staff help children to make good progress in developing their early motor skills and physical control as well as their speaking and language skills. Enthusiastic and friendly support staff supervise children closely and attend to their various medical needs. Support staff are well deployed and by regularly attending therapy sessions they are able to reinforce the therapist's work and maintain children's learning and progress between sessions.

The leadership and management of the setting are good and leaders have identified areas of weakness and acted swiftly to make improvements. They ensure that the provision for children under three-years-old meets the requirements of the early years register. They regularly monitor planning and suggest amendments. They have drawn on external support to develop the use of assessments in key areas. The provision is satisfactory because assessments in the creative areas of learning and in some classes are not as frequent as they might be, so that activities do not consistently build and develop children's creativity. Children do not have direct access to outdoor play, although staff ensure that they provide regular opportunities for them to play and learn outdoors. Children with limited mobility enjoyed spending time together developing their balance on a swing. Young children enjoyed using chalk to develop their writing skills, drawing letters and detailed pictures on the playground.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations')⁵.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Embed systems to record and track the progress of pupils from their starting points.
- Ensure there are more frequent assessments of the progress of a small minority of primary-aged pupils against in their individual education plans.

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

- Ensure there are more frequent assessments of the creative areas of learning so that activities consistently build on previous learning to develop children's creativity in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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			√	
--	--	--	---	--

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 Special School		
Date school opened	2002		
Age range of pupils	2–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 33	Girls: 17	Total: 50
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 5	Girls: 2	Total: 7
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 11	Girls: 8	Total: 19
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 24	Girls: 4	Total: 28
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,217– £22,414		
Address of school	9 Big Hill, London E5 9HH		
Telephone number	020 8880 8300		
Email address	school@sidebysidekids.org.uk		
Acting Headteacher	Mrs S Gerrard		
Proprietor	Mr J Margulies		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Side by Side School, London, E5 9HH

Thank you for the friendly way you greeted us when we came to your school. We were very pleased to see how very well you behaved in lessons and around the school. You work hard and enjoy your lessons at all times, as we saw with your laughter and excitement. We were very impressed by the progress you made in *Kodesh* lessons and when some of you carried on saying psalms at playtimes.

All staff at the school listen to you and care for you really well. They take care to find out about your special educational needs and to learn sign language so that they can help you learn. They help you a lot when they join you in lessons with special teachers so that you can practise what you have been taught. We noticed how all of you worked well together and were kind to each other. That is why most of you make good progress across the school.

Young children of two and three years old are well looked after and enjoy their time at school. The staff who manage the classes for the younger children are good at making things better for you. They provide exciting activities for you to play with and help you at all times. In the best lessons teachers know what each of you can do and plan carefully to help you learn and develop more quickly in all areas. To help improve your school further we have spoken to the headteacher and asked that she and the teachers measure the progress of pupils of all abilities better and, for teachers of the youngest children, to check more closely on how well children are doing in creative activities.

Thank you for making us feel welcome. I hope that you carry on working hard.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector