

Toras Emes

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

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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

Toras Emes is a Jewish infant day school for boys that serves the orthodox communities of Salford and Prestwich in Greater Manchester. It is registered for up to 16 pupils aged from five to six years of age, although there are currently 17 pupils aged from five to seven years of age on roll. The school is located in a former public house and restaurant in Higher Broughton and currently uses the ground floor and one room on the upper floor. The second floor of the building is also used as a synagogue on Friday evenings, Saturdays, Jewish holidays and sometimes during weekday evenings. None of the pupils in the school have a statement of special educational needs. The school aims to 'cater for the ever-expanding ultra orthodox Jewish community of Northern Manchester' and to 'provide an excellent education guided by and giving over the principles of a true *Toradik Chinuch*' (*Torah* education). The school was registered in March 2011. This was the school's first full inspection.

Thirty-three children attend an Early Years Foundation Stage on the premises that is registered separately and the setting did not form part of this inspection.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of the education provided by the school is satisfactory, as a result the school does not yet fully meet its aims. The curriculum, teaching and assessment are satisfactory and this ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety and the safeguarding of pupils are good and the school meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and is divided into two strands, *Kodesh* (religious studies) and *Chol* (secular studies). Provision for *Kodesh* is satisfactory. It is taught in Yiddish; a strength of the school being that pupils from English speaking homes become fluent in Yiddish at a very young age. The school is developing its written *Kodesh* curriculum which, at present does not include enough detail about *chumash*

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

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

(Bible) and *halacha* (Jewish Law), studies that are integral to the education provided. Pupils receive a good grounding in reading Hebrew and English through daily individual support.

Chol elements of the curriculum are satisfactory and cover all of the required areas of learning with an emphasis on the core subjects of literacy and numeracy. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress from their starting points. The school has a policy of protecting pupils from outside influences. Therefore, at this stage in their education, pupils have no access to computers. The school plans to provide more experiences in information and communication technology (ICT) through computers, as pupils get older. At present, pupils experience information and communication technology through using tape-recorders, digital cameras and other recording devices. The *Chol* curriculum is supported by commercial schemes of work. These are of a satisfactory quality and ensure that the curriculum is taught effectively, but they are not tailored to complement the *Kodesh* curriculum to full effect.

Extra-curricular activities are not provided after school because of the long school day and the ages of the pupils. However, the school enriches its curriculum through visits to museums, a *matza* (unleavened bread) bakery before Passover and other places of religious interest. Pupils see live chickens in connection with the *Rosh Hashana* (Jewish New Year) *kapparos* ceremony and locusts when they learn about the 'ten plagues'. The school has a policy for personal, social and health education (PSHE) that is planned and embedded within the *Kodesh* curriculum. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy eating and exercise through science and frequent discussions during lessons.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Teachers' expectations of the pupils vary. Most teachers challenge pupils effectively and motivate them to learn although some provide less challenge and have lower expectations. Most teachers employ suitable methods which enable pupils to learn and lessons are paced well. However, some miss opportunities to captivate the interest of pupils through a range of teaching methods and an imaginative use of resources. Pupils are given opportunities for independent learning, but lessons are usually teacher-led. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.

Day-to-day planning for *Kodesh* and *Chol* lessons is satisfactory. However, some lesson plans lack detail and planning to meet the needs of pupils of varying abilities is underdeveloped. As a result, teachers do not always focus on supporting pupils who need extra support or on stretching very capable pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into all lessons and make satisfactory progress although their progress is not tracked fully effectively.

Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. There are regular assessment opportunities in lessons that help to inform teachers' planning and to adjust the focus of teaching during lessons. The headteacher tests pupils on *chumash* regularly. The results of these tests are discussed with staff and help to inform future planning and teaching. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is satisfactory but often does not

include sufficient comment on how they should improve. Consequently, pupils do not always focus on ways to improve their written work. Systematic procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are not fully embedded in the school. However, pupils' satisfactory progress can be seen in their work, in lessons, in discussions with them and from their parents and carers' comments. As a result of satisfactory teaching, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding and their behaviour is good overall and usually very good. Spiritual development is central to the ethos of the school. Pupils pray every day and both *Kodesh* and *Chol* lessons are replete with references to religious precepts and spirituality. The school day places a strong emphasis on *middos* (character refinement) and *derech eretz* (appropriate moral behaviour); the effect of this is apparent in the ways that pupils behave towards each other and adults. Pupils are proud of their culture and this helps them appreciate and respect the importance of others maintaining their own cultural traditions. Pupils have a keen awareness of what is right and wrong and they apply this to their interactions with adults and visitors.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy lessons, especially when they are lively and interactive. They are encouraged to enquire about the world around them. An example of this is the discussions that they have regarding the waning and waxing of the moon in reference to the lunar calendar. Pupils especially enjoy the social interactions that they have with their peers and the extra activities that they do together. In questionnaires returned during the inspection one pupil wrote, 'Our school plays nicely together. I love the school.' Another said, 'In my school we do nice crafts and nice pictures. They let us do lots of nice things. There are so many good things; I can't say all of them'. Attendance is good.

Pupils learn about public institutions and services and respect for the law of the land as a religious precept and also through citizenship lessons and PSHE. This is supplemented by trips and frequent class discussions. Pupils gain knowledge of other faiths and cultures through class discussions in both *Kodesh* and through geography in the *Chol* curriculum. They grow in self-confidence when they are challenged by their teachers to think for themselves and discover ways that different topics are connected. An example of this is the way that one teacher challenged pupils to find a similar word to one being studied in *chumash* within phrases in a daily prayer. Pupils' work is displayed throughout the school and this fosters pride in their accomplishments. They contribute to the school community through fundraising on Purim and performing during the annual *Chumash Seuda* (Torah commencement celebration). They attend the inter-school *Tehillim* (Psalms) gathering to pray for the welfare of the community during the High Holidays.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good. All the required policies to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are in place. They are well understood by staff and applied consistently. The procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection meet all requirements and all staff are trained to the appropriate level. All necessary risk assessments for the premises and outside trips and visits are carried out thoroughly and pupils feel safe at school. Fire equipment is checked and frequent fire drills take place. Admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with current regulations.

The school has a policy to promote healthy lifestyles that is effectively implemented. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and are not permitted to bring unhealthy snacks to school. They acquire a good level of awareness of healthy living. Provision for physical education is satisfactory and teachers engage in exercises with pupils during break times in addition to the physical education lessons that take place once a week. The school has full regard for the Equality Act 2010 and has prepared a three-year accessibility plan.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school's procedures for checking the suitability of all proprietors and staff fully comply with the regulations. Criminal Records Bureau checks for staff and other adults who are in contact with children are carried out. Safe recruitment procedures are fully implemented. Good records of checks are kept and the single central register is maintained appropriately.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The quality of the school's premises and accommodation is satisfactory and the premises promote pupils' learning. The classrooms are of a suitable size for the age and number of pupils and there are an appropriate number of washrooms and toilets to cater for staff and pupils. There are suitable facilities for pupils who might become ill. The general décor of the building is good. The quality of provision for outdoor play is satisfactory, with equipment such as riding toys and climbing apparatus. The premises provide a safe environment for the pupils.

Provision of information

The school complies with all of the regulations in its provision of information to parents, carers and others. There are weekly newsletters that include individualised *Kodesh* progress reports and annual reports for all subjects are sent to parents and carers. Many parents and carers returned completed questionnaires and all expressed very positive views about the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints are clear and concise, and comply fully with the requirements.

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:

- provide opportunities for staff to develop their teaching skills so that lessons are varied and suitably challenging for all pupils
- improve lesson planning for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* to ensure that planning regularly includes details about ways of meeting pupils' different learning needs
- improve the quality of the marking of pupils' work and ensure that it always indicates how pupils can improve the quality of their work
- ensure that systematic procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are fully embedded across the school.

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	Orthodox Jewish primary school
Date school opened	September 2010
Age range of pupils	5 to 7 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	17
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils who are looked after	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,520
Address of school	2A Back Hope Street Salford M7 2FR
Telephone number	0161 792 1368
Email address	torasemes@live.co.uk
Headteacher	Rabbi Simon Roberts
Proprietor	Mrs S Guttentag

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.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Toras Emes Primary School, 2A Back Hope Street, Salford, M7 2FR

I was very pleased to be able to inspect your school. I found you to be welcoming and friendly.

As you know, I spent my time in the school observing lessons and reading the questionnaires that you and your parents and carers returned. I also examined the school's paperwork and had meetings with your teachers and *menahel*.

I found that you are well cared and the education in your school is satisfactory. The ways that the school helps you to grow in *Yiddishkeit* and *derech erez* are outstanding.

I have made some suggestions for ways to improve the school by:

- ensuring teachers develop their planning and teaching skills so your lessons are varied and challenging
- making sure marking lets you know how you can improve your work
- keeping a careful check on your progress.

In my discussions with some of you, you said how much you like school and your teachers and how much you enjoy learning. I am sure that you will continue to try your best in school and at home and will give your parents, carers and teachers much *nachas*.

Many thanks for making the inspection so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Rabbi Dr Chanan Tomlin
Lead inspector