

Menorah Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101341
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	376552
Inspection dates	29 February – 1 March 2012
Lead inspector	Jane Chesterfield

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	442
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Wolinsky
Headteacher	Jackie Menczer
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 November 2006
School address	The Wohl Campus 1–3 The Drive London NW11 9SP
Telephone number	0208 458 1276
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jane Chesterfield	Additional inspector
Peter Dannheisser	Additional inspector
Maura Docherty	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 27 lessons taught by 22 different teachers and spent 14 hours in classes. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including data on attainment, tracking and monitoring records, school self-evaluation and development planning, headteacher's reports to governors and minutes of governing body meetings, pupils' books and documentation related to safeguarding. They analysed questionnaires returned by 199 parents and carers, 98 pupils and 22 staff members.

Information about the school

Menorah Primary is an above-average sized school situated in a residential area of North London. Pupils come from the Orthodox Jewish community. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is low compared with the national average and so is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with the national average though the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These needs relate mainly to physical or medical needs and speech and language difficulties. Boys and girls are taught in single-sex classes from the time they leave the Nursery. The school meets the current floor standard and has Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- Menorah Primary is an outstanding school where pupils achieve exceptionally well. The strength and vision of the school’s leadership have brought about considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum since the previous inspection, resulting in excellent progress for pupils.
- Over the five years since the previous inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 have been high compared with other schools nationally. This represents outstanding progress for pupils who enter the Nursery with skills which are broadly in line with those expected for their age.
- Teaching in the school is outstanding. This is because of the exceptional quality of the planning across all subjects, providing high levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers have high expectations for what all pupils can achieve. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and support them very skilfully in learning through exploration and discovery. However, the school is unable to provide a full range of opportunities for children’s outdoor learning because of limited accommodation and resources in the outside areas.
- Pupils’ behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. Both they and their parents and carers are rightly confident that the school keeps them safe at all times.
- Thanks to outstanding leadership and management, the areas of weakness identified by the previous inspection are now strengths. Systems for monitoring of teaching and tracking of pupils are used exceptionally well. Performance management is a priority and has led to the continuous improvement of teaching. The development of subject leaders since the previous inspection has enabled them to promote excellence in teaching and the curriculum very successfully. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is

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exceptionally well promoted as a result of the rich curriculum and of the shared values of the school community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the accommodation and resources in the outdoor areas of the Nursery and Reception classes in order to provide a full range of opportunities across all the areas of learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Throughout the school, pupils' learning is excellent and their progress is rapid and sustained. They develop habits of application and concentration from an early age. After a Reception class phonics session, for example, children went to their different activities, sounding out to themselves the letters of objects that they came across, such as 'milk' and 'book'. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is well above average and remains so when the pupils leave the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know how to tackle unknown words and do so with confidence. They learn quickly and are eager to apply their learning. When told the purpose of speech marks, for example, one Year 1 pupil scanned through her book, found some more and commented, 'They're talking again here.' Pupils in Key Stage 2 understand how to read beyond the text in order to infer and deduce the author's meaning.

In the boys' classes, learning is often characterised by an energetic and active approach and a willingness to exceed expectations. When a group of Year 6 boys were told to work out the answers to problems without using the digit six, they produced seven or eight different options to each problem, rather than being content with just one. Girls' classes are often characterised by an atmosphere of quieter concentration, producing work of a similarly high standard.

Boys and girls achieve equally well, and the school takes care to monitor each cohort carefully so that any potential variations can be eliminated. Boys' writing has been effectively promoted, so that they exceed national averages for both genders at the end of Key Stage 2. They have confidence in themselves as writers. In Year 1, for example, higher attaining boys happily sat down with a blank piece of paper to write about the history of the Jamaican steel band which had performed in school the previous day, and applied themselves with determination to the task.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs outperform their counterparts nationally at both key stages. This is because of the quality of the school's tracking of their progress which enables them to receive timely, well-targeted support. Parents and carers are rightly very happy with the progress their children are making and pupils themselves feel strongly that the school helps them to do their best.

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Quality of teaching

Parents and carers expressed extremely positive opinions about the quality of teaching and their views were reflected during the inspection. The teaching seen was very often outstanding and never less than consistently good, accurately reflecting the outcomes of the school's own recent monitoring. High quality planning underpins and supports teaching across the curriculum in all classes, reflecting the excellent leadership and direction of teaching from subject leaders and the senior leadership team. Accurate tracking of pupils means that their needs are well known and effective use of this information enables work to be planned to meet the needs of all. The school has invested in high levels of staffing so that additional teachers and learning support assistants can be deployed with different ability groups. Teamwork is very strong so that all additional staff know exactly what needs to be achieved by the end of each lesson. Individual care and attention for pupils with physical and medical needs are very sensitively provided so that these pupils can achieve to the best of their abilities. This is an example of the extremely effective way teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and inject a driving pace and energy into lessons, carrying pupils with them. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher had pupils on their feet within minutes of the start, each with a number and looking for other pupils whose numbers were factors or multiples of their own. Teachers make excellent use of questioning, successfully encouraging pupils to think and to check their understanding. In literacy and numeracy, teachers assess understanding very effectively by asking pupils to write answers on small whiteboards, so that any misconceptions can be quickly tackled. An example of this was seen in a Year 1 phonics session, where the teacher was then able to explain the difference in spelling between words that sound the same such as 'Rome' and 'roam'.

High quality marking and clear target setting help pupils know exactly how to improve their work in English and mathematics in order to reach the next level of attainment. Pupils know that if teachers ask them to improve a particular aspect of their work they must add it to their target. Marking is less detailed in other subjects, but gives pupils positive feedback about their work.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. High levels of staffing mean that teachers can cover planned focus areas effectively with small groups, particularly for numeracy and literacy skills, while other staff can follow children's interests and help them develop their learning through careful questioning. All areas of learning are very well covered within the classrooms but cramped space and worn resources have an impact on what can be done outside. The staff do their best with what is available, for example by taking children to the main playground to use climbing equipment or wheeled toys.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to behave in class and around the school. In the playground they are lively and fun-loving, show awareness of others, and support younger children. They move round the school in an orderly way, holding doors for others and standing aside for adults. In class they do as they are asked, listen carefully to their teachers and settle very quickly to their work. This is because all teachers share and pass on to pupils the school's high expectations for their behaviour and refuse to accept behaviour which does not meet these standards. Pupils' attendance is consistently above average and their punctuality is good.

There have been no exclusions in the school for more than three years, no racist incidents have been recorded and bullying is rare. Pupils who responded to the questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors felt that bullying was not a problem and were confident that teachers would handle any issues quickly and firmly. They also believe that the school prepares them effectively for any racism they might encounter in the wider community. Parents too were rightly very positive about the way the school maintains high standards of behaviour and deals with any problems which arise.

Leadership and management

Since the previous inspection, the outstanding drive and determination of the headteacher and senior staff have ensured that all areas for development identified then have not only been fully addressed but have become strengths. The creation and development of the school's subject leaders have meant that weaknesses in the curriculum have been eradicated and that attainment in science is now as high as that in English and mathematics. The monitoring of teaching and tracking of progress made by pupils, previously the responsibility of senior leaders, have been extended to subject leaders, so that they have had excellent opportunities to develop provision and outcomes in their subjects.

As a result of this, the curriculum offers pupils a rich and varied diet, which is supplemented with excellent enrichment opportunities and themed weeks, for example the music week taking place during the inspection. Clubs, for chess for example, are oversubscribed, and demand for choir places is so high that there are choirs for both boys and girls. Planning and content are excellent across the curriculum. In a Year 2 history lesson, boys looked at original sources to learn about the Great Fire of London and were challenged to discuss the reasons behind the tactics used to stop the spread of the fire. They were given tasks which were adapted to their different needs and gave them the opportunity to write at length.

The quality of the curriculum and the values of the school make an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through their religious studies pupils develop a strong spiritual and moral awareness which is apparent in the everyday life of the school. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to

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appreciate artistic, sporting and cultural events. Year 6 pupils have recently visited the Olympic park, for example, and concerts have taken place in the school for music week involving Jamaican musicians and Yiddish singers. The school develops attitudes of tolerance and openness to ideas very effectively and is helping pupils gain a greater awareness of the cultural and ethnic mix in modern Britain.

School self-evaluation and development planning are accurate and incisive, focusing on the right priorities for improvement. Senior staff and governors have already identified the gaps in the Nursery and Reception outdoor areas and set aside funds to tackle them. The governing body provides the school with excellent levels of challenge and support. For example, governors made a strategic decision to invest in additional staffing across the school, which has proved invaluable in improving the outcomes for all pupils, promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. The school gives good attention to safeguarding. All staff are appropriately vetted and training for child protection is up to date. Pupils and parents and carers alike feel very confident that pupils are safe and well cared for at school.

Improvements in provision and in leadership and management since the previous inspection have been considerable and at the same time the school has maintained consistently high standards in its outcomes for pupils. It is now outstanding in every aspect of its work and consequently has an excellent capacity for future improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Menorah Primary School, London NW11 9SP

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school recently and for helping us with the inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and sharing your lessons. Thanks also to those of you who completed a questionnaire for us.

We found that Menorah Primary is an outstanding school and is giving you an excellent start to your education. These are just some of the things we liked about your school.

- We agree with you that the school helps you to do as well as you can. You are making outstanding progress and reaching high standards in your work.
- You also told us how well you are taught and we agree. Teaching in your school is outstanding and you are developing excellent skills in reading, writing and mathematics as a result.
- Both you and your parents and carers told us that you feel very safe at school and we were able to confirm that you are kept very safe and well cared for. We were very pleased to see that your behaviour is outstanding and we agree with you that any rare instances of bullying are handled very well by staff.
- Your school is exceptionally well led and you are given excellent opportunities to learn new things in all the subjects of the curriculum and to develop other skills and talents.

To help the school improve even further, this is what we have asked the staff to do.

- Improve the outdoor areas for the children in the Nursery and Reception classes, so that they can enjoy more learning outside.

Yours sincerely

Jane Chesterfield
Lead inspector

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