

Manchester Junior Girls' School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Sheila Boyle

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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.

Information about the school

Manchester Junior Girls' School is an independent day school in the Salford area of Manchester which was founded in September 1993 in response to demands for additional places for Orthodox Jewish education for girls in the area. The school was registered in 1993 as a primary school for girls aged from three to eleven years from the local Orthodox Jewish community. It has charitable status. In 2011 the school was granted permission to make provision for a Year 7 class, to extend its age range to 12 years of age and increase its numbers from 196 to 213. A material change visit took place at the same time as this inspection in response to the school's request to increase its numbers further to 258 and to make provision for a group of Year 8 pupils.

The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision caters for children aged between three and five years, taught in the Nursery and Reception years. Currently the nursery is on a separate site; however, plans are in place to move it on to the main site and unify the provision. Childcare provision is available on the nursery site for children aged from birth to three years and this is managed by a separate independent provider. Forty-eight of the younger children are funded under the government Nursery Scheme. Currently there are 241 girls on roll aged between three and twelve years; all are White British. Four of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. The school aims, 'to equip girls with the academic skills needed to move confidently into British Jewish seminaries and to develop in each girl a deep appreciation for, and a joy in the practice of, the Jewish religion, as laid down by the Torah.' The school was last inspected in December 2008. Subsequent progress monitoring visits took place in November 2009 and in May 2010.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education for all its pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school meets its aims effectively; it has improved well since the last inspection. Pupils receive a broad curriculum, with an extensive coverage of religious studies which reflects the aims of the school. Teaching is good as teachers know the pupils well and provide them with a good range of individualised support; this helps them to make good progress and develop confidence and the willingness to express their views. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and it strongly supports the pupils' outstanding behaviour. Pupils, including those in the Reception and Nursery

provision, are well cared for and safeguarded by the consistent implementation of robust policies and procedures. All of the regulations for continued registration as an independent school are met. The material change request referred to above was recommended for approval.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good, providing a rich variety of experiences for the pupils. Provision is based on *Kodesh* (religious studies) which are taught each morning and covers a wide range of aspects including Jewish history, culture and religious practice and *Chol* (secular studies) which are taught in the afternoons. Together they cover all the required areas of learning, including, those for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's approach is increasing integration in that some secular curriculum topics are covered through the *Kodesh* curriculum. In *Kodesh* lessons both Hebrew and English are used. There are clear, relevant policies detailing the aims, objectives and outline content for each area of learning. These are then used as a basis for more detailed statements of curriculum content in medium-term and short-term planning. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is good and enhanced by regular input from a speech and language therapist. Literacy in both Hebrew and English is given strong emphasis, as is numeracy. There are good opportunities for art and craft activities including designing and making things. For example, Year 4 pupils made interesting 2D shapes using needlecraft. In Year 5, pupils painted attractive sunflowers in the style of Vincent van Gogh. There is a lot of good singing and recitation in Hebrew studies. Pupils have many opportunities to study history and geography topics in *Kodesh* lessons. Science is approached well through both theoretical and practical work such as the study of caterpillars in Reception and the investigation of materials and their properties in Key Stage 1 and 2 classes.

Personal, social and health education runs through virtually everything the school does, but especially at the start of school day in the Early Years setting when children sit around their teacher and talk about themselves, their families and pieces of news in their lives. This 'circle time' also provides an excellent opportunity for talking about what is going on in the wider world. The school is good at inviting people to come and talk. These have included a first-aid worker who demonstrated how to deal with simple injuries. There are satisfactory opportunities for physical education in the playground as well as indoors. Lessons in citizenship are taught to Year 7 which helps pupils prepare for the next stage of their education. Technology is taught in a variety of ways. For example, Year 7 pupils have discrete lessons in information and communication technology (ICT) and others gain experience in different ways, with Year 5 pupils making their own compact disc on the story which forms the basis of the festival of Purim. Younger pupils gain technological experience through the use of digital cameras and by programming toys.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. There is good teaching in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* lessons and in the Early Years Foundation stage. Staff know their pupils well and provide good levels of individual support, particularly for the pupils with

special educational needs who are especially well supported when withdrawn for one-to-one focused attention. In most lessons staff set work which challenges pupils. Occasionally, however, the work set is not matched well enough to the needs of individual pupils. Work in lessons and other activities is generally well structured; planning for continuity of learning within subjects is good but opportunities are missed to ensure consistency and continuity of learning across subjects in the absence of a common framework for lesson planning. Staff use praise appropriately to motivate pupils; they make it very clear that they care and want them to be happy and do well in school. Pupils respond well to this approach. In the best lessons a wide range of teaching methods is used to encourage pupils to think independently.

Pupils' work is frequently assessed. Teachers often do this informally as they discuss work with individual pupils and they have a good understanding of how well each pupil is progressing. Marking is also used effectively as a tool for gaining more precise assessment information.

Provision in the Nursery and Reception Years is very well planned by staff who are trained in the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching is very effective in enabling children to enjoy their learning and to develop well across all the required areas of learning. Assessment is thorough and the data gathered is well used to inform future planning and teaching.

As a consequence of the good teaching, a rich and varied curriculum and the excellent relationships between staff and pupils, progress is good throughout the school. This is true in both the religious and secular parts of the curriculum and among pupils of all abilities.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leads to their outstanding behaviour. Attendance is very high and the pupils enjoy school immensely. The school meets its aim of promoting pupils' personal development exceptionally well, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the main school. Pastoral care is a strong feature of the school, a major focus of which is the development of pupils' desirable personal traits of taking on responsibilities, modesty and consideration (*Middos*). Central to this work is the growth in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Jewish spiritual heritage. Pupils have a deep appreciation of, and respect for, their own culture. This is achieved well through *Kodesh* lessons, regular opportunities for prayer and through the whole ethos of the school. In some lessons, pupils learn with study partners.

Although the pupils come from strictly orthodox Jewish homes, their families represent a wide spectrum of Jewish cultural backgrounds. The school rightly prides itself on the tolerance and harmony which is promoted between pupils from these different backgrounds. Pupils develop a deep respect for people of other cultures as is evident in their dealings with visitors and in their attitudes when speaking about the wider community. Issues of race, equality and prejudice are effectively addressed

in the curriculum. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss other cultures in both their *Kodesh* and *Chol* studies. Visits off site, to museums and historical sites develop their understanding of British history and culture. Older pupils are aware of the major institutions of England, and of the important Jewish view of being law-abiding in that, 'The law of the country is the Law'. Through work in Jewish studies and ethics, pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Relationships at all levels are excellent, and the school is a secure, well-ordered and purposeful community characterised by friendliness and mutual concern. Pupils are prepared effectively for their future economic well-being. They learn to be mature and self-disciplined, to show initiative and to hold positions of responsibility in class such as being monitors at lunchtimes. Their enthusiasm and their contribution to the life of the school and their own community through charitable work are excellent.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision to promote the welfare, health, and safety of pupils is good, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the main school. Policies are clear, regularly reviewed, well understood and consistently implemented by the staff. They support the exceptionally high level of guidance and pastoral care of pupils, on- and off-site. Child protection procedures are robust and staff, including the designated officer for safeguarding, are trained at the required level. Risk assessments are used well by staff throughout the school as they teach lessons and lead activities on and off the site. Staff are clear about their responsibilities for health and safety and for supervising pupils, and they carry them out diligently. Practical lessons are carefully organised to promote pupils' safety. Procedures for fire safety are robust and regular equipment checks are made by specialists. A comprehensive policy to counter bullying and harassment is well understood and applied by the staff, though there is no evidence that bullying takes place. Teachers are highly effective in helping pupils to understand how to stay healthy and safe, and to consider the safety of others. Admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and the deficiencies in the latter identified in the last inspection have been fully resolved. The school has a detailed plan for increasing accessibility for disabled persons which meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. It plans to apply this plan to the refurbishment of the entrance and reception area now taking place.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school carries out all of the required checks on staff and the proprietors, recording these appropriately on a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school now meets all the regulations for this standard. A 'phase one' refurbishment programme is complete and, as a result, issues from the last inspection pertaining to the standard and maintenance of decoration have been addressed. A second phase of refurbishment is underway and includes improvements to the main entrance and the entrance to the Key Stage 3 provision. Plans are in

place to relocate the Nursery unit back to the main site and thus unify the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The Reception unit has suitable outdoor play facilities and there is also a small but adequate hard-surfaced area used by older pupils for playtimes and physical education lessons.

Provision of information

A concise school prospectus containing all the required information is made available to all parents, carers and others. Annual informative reports on pupils' progress are sent to parents and carers. Informal communications between staff and parents and carers are excellent and the latter are highly satisfied with the information which the school provides on the development of their children.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The policy and procedure for handling complaints meet 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.

- Develop a common framework for lesson planning to ensure consistency and continuity of learning across subjects.
- Ensure that in all lessons the work set is well matched to the different learning needs of individual pupils.

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 day school
Type of school	Othodox Jewish
Date school opened	September 1993
Age range of pupils	3–12 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	241
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils who are looked after	0
Annual fees /voluntary contributions	£2,280
Address of school	64 Upper Park Road Salford Manchester Lancashire M7 4GP
Telephone number	0161 740 0566
Email address	office@bchschoool.org.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Lieberman
Proprietor	Rabbi A Ehrentreu

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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Manchester Junior Girls School, Salford, M7 4GP

I promised to write to you about what I thought of your school when we had finished the inspection.

- The school gives you a good education and helps you make good progress.
- The teaching helps you learn well and the subjects and activities are very interesting. They will be very useful to you as you prepare to move on to your next school.
- You are given lots of opportunities to discuss and take part in lessons. You clearly enjoy your learning in both religious and secular lessons, as well as in the activities you carry out in the local community and on trips to other places.
- The staff take excellent care of you. They go to great lengths to make sure you are safe, exercise well, learn to live a healthy life and become very considerate young people.
- Your personal and religious development is excellent and I know that your parents and carers are very satisfied with what you learn.
- The proprietor, headteacher and staff are keen to make your school even better. I have suggested that they do this by making sure that the work they ask you to do in lessons is always suitable and challenging for you.

I would like to thank all of the pupils who helped and talked to us during our visit. I wish you, your parents and all of the staff my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Boyle
Lead inspector