

Peninim

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	302/ 6001
Unique Reference Number (URN)	137502
Inspection number	393285
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2012
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

Peninim is a school for girls from two to 12 years of age that serves the Orthodox Jewish community of North West London. It is located in a renovated house on a main road in Golders Green. There are currently only two classes: one for nursery children aged from three to four years of age in the Early Years Foundation Stage and a Year 1 class for pupils aged from five to six years of age. The school has a total of 20 children on roll and none has a statement of special educational needs. Six children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive government funding. The school opened in September 2010 and was registered in September 2011. It aims to 'provide a high level of excellence in both religious and secular studies, based firmly on Torah principles'. This was the school's first full inspection after its registration.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. The school meets its aims and all of the regulations for independent schools. Teaching is satisfactory and enables the children to make satisfactory progress. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and behaviour is good. Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

Quality of education

The curriculum is a strength of the school and is good. It is divided into two strands, *Kodesh* (religious studies) and *Chol* (secular studies). The *Kodesh* curriculum, which is delivered solely in Yiddish, is particularly strong and is woven into the *Chol* curriculum in such a way that it provides Jewish experiences throughout the school day. This forms a strong basis for children's excellent personal and social development and underpins the school's effective policy for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive firm grounding in Hebrew reading and are well prepared for when they start studying *Chumash* (Torah with translation) in Year 1 through '*Lshon Hatorah*' ('Language of the Torah'), a curriculum especially developed by the school.

The *Kodesh* curriculum covers all areas of religious study appropriate to the age ranges of the children, including the youngest. These include a focus on the weekly

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

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

Torah portion and '*Yedios Klalios*' (general knowledge) topics. These topics include the seven species of fruit unique to the land of Israel, work on the Patriarchs, Matriarchs and tribes of Israel, the ten plagues, prayers, scribal arts, Hebrew numerical values, priestly garments and Yiddish words. Children learn about religious precepts, customs and duties throughout the year at significant junctures and milestones such as before festivals and the '*Siddur Party*' when they start using a prayer book. The *Kodesh* curriculum is further complemented with an impressive schedule of projects that include work on holidays, mornings, light, prayer and Jerusalem. These projects integrate a good range of secular topics, including work on materials, measures, numeracy and health and safety.

The *Chol* curriculum is strong and provides a broad and balanced coverage of all of the required areas of learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with good grounding in the six areas of learning and the results of their progress are properly recorded, supported by photographic evidence. They have plenty of opportunities to learn through play, although outdoor learning is satisfactory rather than good. Children in Year 1 are provided with well-organised and well-planned experiences in all areas of learning, with a special emphasis on the core subjects of literacy, numeracy and science. Work on literacy is particularly well developed; the Year 1 class had produced their own book, *The Runaway Suitcase*, that demonstrates good integrated work with regard to reading, writing and art. Children have physical education (PE) sessions twice weekly and learn about information and communication technology (ICT) through using digital cameras and programmable toys and with some access to computers. They learn about design and technology through weaving, baking and links to healthy eating; for example, Year 1 made salads using a variety of kitchen tools. Children study art and design through arts and crafts activities, usually linked to *Kodesh*. Both the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula are supported with an adequate supply of resources.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teaching observed during the inspection, was satisfactory overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teaching is satisfactory but teachers do not always secure a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities and some opportunities for children's self-expression and exploration are missed. For example, children are not always provided with a wide choice of activities and some teachers do not challenge children to appreciate that they are also learning when they play. The outdoor area, although satisfactory, is not well equipped for learning and children have limited regular access to the outdoors during lessons. In Year 1, although lessons are satisfactory and their pace affords solid coverage of the curriculum, lesson objectives are not always made sufficiently clear to the pupils.

Lesson planning for both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Year 1 class is sound and includes information on the ways in which teachers will meet the learning needs of pupils of varying abilities. Disabled children and those with special educational needs are well supported through a careful assessment of their needs and the provision of individual support. Ongoing assessment procedures, end-of-term checks on progress and summative assessments at the end of each term are suitably established. These processes inform future planning and teaching.

Children in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 make at least satisfactory progress. Progress in Year 1 is suitably assessed against national levels. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage, their levels of knowledge and skills are discussed with parents and carers. This provides the school with a good baseline record against which to measure pupils' progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1 are keenly aware of Jewish spirituality which they celebrate through prayer and religious observances. Members of staff imbue children with an awareness of 'all things spiritual' through prayer, discussion and lessons in both *Kodesh* and *Chol* that include, for example, an emphasis on the awe and wonder of creation. Children enjoy wonderfully warm relationships with their teachers who act as excellent role models for them to emulate and they have excellent attitudes towards learning. Children love school and attendance is very good.

The school stresses the importance of moral and social development at every turn and the personal, social and health (PSHE) curriculum forms a strong basis for teaching about moral and social issues and concerns such as self-restraint, contentment, fairness, good manners, self-confidence, inner happiness, friendship and bullying. Children relate well to the emphasis placed by the school in these areas. As a result, behaviour is good, relationships between all children are outstanding and the school has a wonderful warm family feel about it.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage gain a good understanding of other cultures through discussion and play that focus on the different backgrounds of children in the setting. In Year 1, they learn about other cultures through lessons in literacy, geography, history and PSHE. Examples of this work are the visits made by 'Gershon the Goose' to different countries and the display of a map of the world produced by the children highlighting different cultural areas.

Children grow in self-confidence through performances for their parents and carers during the festival of Chanukah and at the yearly '*Siddur* Party'. They gain self-esteem through the constant praise and encouragement that they receive from their teachers and a range of incentives and rewards. They are keenly aware of what is right and what is wrong through the strong religious ethos of the school and this is apparent in the respectful ways that they act towards each other, staff and visitors. Children learn about respecting the law through discussions about the legal system and the monarchy, especially currently in connection with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. They learn about public services through visits, for example, from the local fire and rescue service, discussions and work on *Kodesh* projects.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of all children is satisfactory. All the required policies to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are in place and are applied correctly. The procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection meet

requirements and all staff, including the designated officer, are trained to the appropriate level. Risk assessments for the premises and outside trips and visits are carried out and children feel safe at school and are well supervised. Fire equipment is checked on a regular basis 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 and its application is satisfactory. However, this is not consistently implemented because children in the Early Years Foundation Stage sometimes bring unhealthy snacks to school. Provision for physical education is good and lessons take place twice a week. The school pays full regard to the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school's procedures for checking the suitability of the proprietor and staff comply with the regulations. Criminal Records Bureau checks for staff and other adults who are in contact with children are properly carried out. Safe recruitment procedures are fully implemented. 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. It provides a safe environment and suitable setting for learning. Classrooms are of a suitable size for the age and number of children and there are an appropriate number of washrooms and toilets to cater for both staff and children. There are suitable facilities for children who might become ill. The general décor and maintenance of the building is satisfactory.

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 and bi-annual reports for all subjects that are sent to parents and carers. Parents and carers that returned completed questionnaires expressed very positive views about the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints are clear 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:

- develop the outdoor play area so that it provides a richer learning environment for children
- provide children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with more regular opportunities to learn outdoors
- develop the teaching skills of staff so that:
 - lesson objectives are always clear
 - in the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are always varied and suitably challenging
 - there is a more consistent balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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		
Date school opened	September 2010		
Age range of pupils	2 – 12 years		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 20	Total: 20
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,900		
Address of school	209 Golders Green Rd London NW11 9BY		
Telephone number	0208 209 0610		
Email address	peninim@familykaufman.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Mati Galandauer		
Proprietor	Mr Joseph Kaufman		

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.



20 June 2012

Dear Children

Inspection of Peninim, London NW11 9BY

I really enjoyed inspecting your school!

I spent my time in the school observing lessons and reading the questionnaires that you and your parents and carers returned to me. I also went through the school's paperwork and had meetings with your headteachers.

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

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

- improving the outdoor play area
- ensuring that children in the first two classes have better opportunities to learn outdoors
- ensuring that teachers develop their teaching skills so that your lessons are varied and challenging.

I enjoyed the wonderfully warm atmosphere in your school and noticed how much you love your teachers and 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*'!

Yours sincerely

Rabbi Dr Chanan Tomlin
Lead inspector