

Beis Ruchel d'Satmar, London

Independent school standard inspection report

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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

Beis Ruchel D'Satmar opened in January 2009 with several girls, aged three. It was not registered. In March 2011, the school was granted registration for 40 girls aged five to six years. At the time of this inspection there were 112 girls aged three to five years, 29 were aged five to six years and 21 were aged six to seven years. The school is not registered for the three to five-year-olds and the six to seven-year-olds. Because of this, with the agreement of the Department for Education, the inspection covered only the registered provision for five to six-year-olds. However, a social care inspector attended to check the welfare and safeguarding of the unregistered pupils.

The school occupies the premises of a former independent mixed school in Stamford Hill, Hackney. It serves the ultra-orthodox Jewish Satmar community and the language spoken in the pupils' homes is Yiddish. In Year 1, pupils learn in Yiddish in the morning and in English in the afternoon. In adherence to its religious ethos and commitment, the school follows the educational traditions and rules of this particular religious Chasidic sect. The school aims to 'develop each girl her Charedi, Satmar Jewish identity while enabling her to experience success, progress and enjoyment academically, personally and socially'. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. This is the school's first full inspection.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is good and the school successfully meets its aims. The curriculum and the quality of teaching and assessment are good overall and as a result, pupils make good progress. The curriculum in *Kodesh* is outstanding. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to the pupils' good behaviour. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding. All but three regulations are met. The welfare, health and safety provision, including safeguarding arrangements, for unregistered pupils are satisfactory.

Quality of education

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

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

The curriculum is good overall. There is a clear curriculum policy and suitable written schemes of work. The curriculum covers all of the areas of learning. The *Kodesh* curriculum is outstanding. It provides an excellent range of religious, philosophical, social and practical experience across most of the areas of learning. It is also impressive in the way it is adjusted to the needs of pupils of different abilities. For example, *Sedra* (portions from the Bible) includes not only the knowledge to be taught but provides for the development of skills through art and craft activities and questions to go home for parents and carers to use on *Shabbos* (Saturday). General knowledge is developed through the study of the Jewish months of the year and related topics. The teaching of *Middos* (character traits) focuses strongly not only its theological and spiritual basis but incorporates a helpful and challenging personal, social, and health education (PSHE) curriculum. The resources to support *Kodesh* are also outstanding. They include excellent quality textbooks, teachers' own resources and teachers' guides of a very high standard.

The *Chol* (secular) curriculum is good. It is supported by schemes of work as well as effective medium- and short-term plans. The curriculum has good emphasis on literacy and numeracy as well as science, history, geography, design and technology, art, music and physical education. The curriculum is suitably enhanced by outside visits, for example, the recent visit to a pond to observe 'growing things' when learning about this topic in science.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good overall and pupils make good progress. The majority of lessons seen were good and the rest were satisfactory. Staff are enthusiastic, have excellent subject knowledge and many lessons include practical activities which pupils thoroughly enjoy. In one lesson observed the pupils were learning about *Tochen* (grinding), which is one of the forbidden acts of work on *Shabbos*. The joy on the pupils' faces when, after washing their hands, they chopped up their own vegetables, mashed potatoes, and ate them with their lunch, was a delight to see.

Most lessons are successfully adapted to meet the needs of the various ability levels among the pupils by teaching in small groups. As a result, pupils are generally challenged well. This teaching in small ability-based groups, especially in reading, both in *Kodesh* and *Chol*, results in the pupils making overall good progress. Pupils were only introduced to the English language during this school year. They have made good progress in their speaking skills; they can all speak fluently and are making good progress in their reading and writing. Science too, is taught in an effective way, which generates enthusiasm. Pupils have the opportunity to observe caterpillars grow, turn into butterflies and then watch them being released. They look after and monitor the growth of various plants. However, in a few lessons, particularly in whole-class lessons such as numeracy, the level of challenge is satisfactory because little extension work is given to the more able and the level of challenge on occasions is limited. This is why teaching is judged to be good overall rather than outstanding.

Provision for pupils who need a little extra support is good. Every pupil's progress is carefully monitored and additional support is given when needed. Teaching assistants are used effectively. Resources are effective and support the good teaching and learning well.

The monitoring of pupils' progress and assessment is good. Reading is assessed using a commercial plan. Teachers use the information gained from assessment to monitor pupils' progress and plan next steps in learning. Literacy is taught systematically and records are made of how well pupils are blending letters and recognising sounds. All pupils have individual literacy targets. The results of tests in numeracy and in *Sedra* are recorded and are used for the future planning of teaching. This practice of using results is not done consistently in a few lessons in *Chol*.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a growing awareness of awe and wonder through the *Davening* (prayers) that is said in such a way that they understand what they are saying and appreciate what *Hashem* (G-d) does for them. Pupils recite *Brachos* (blessings) before and after eating food. They also show awe and wonder through science lessons, which recently focused on 'growing things', for example tadpoles and plants.

Pupils are taught to care for each other and understand what is right and wrong. Moral teaching permeates every aspect of school life. This was especially evident in a special assembly during the week of the inspection for the new Jewish month. There was a slide show and a story focusing on honouring parents and carers. The pupils were able to relate this well to their own lives.

Relationships between pupils are good and between teachers and pupils, they are excellent. As a result pupils feel happy, secure and safe in their learning environment and are confident to talk to all adults who work with them. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Attendance is good too. Pupils are taught to share and take turns, as seen during break times when they play with their bikes.

There is a strong sense of community at the school. Pupils feel they belong; giving charity and helping others is the norm. Pupils have recently undertaken a project on the Queen's Jubilee and are now discussing the Olympics. Pupils learn mainly about their own culture but are encouraged to be tolerant and respectful to all. Living in the multicultural borough of Hackney makes them very aware of cultural differences. They do learn about other cultures through books and lessons that focus on people from around the world. Parents and carers have been asked to contribute to this by filling in a form with their children about the countries they or their parents and carers came from, which continent it was, and what the climate, currency, dress and foods are like in those countries.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils is satisfactory. All of the required policies are in place, including those for child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, fire, safer recruitment and first aid. Procedures associated with the policies are well understood by staff. All staff and a governor have undertaken training in child protection at the appropriate level, including the child protection officer who is now absent from school on maternity leave. Currently, therefore, there is no suitably qualified child protection officer in school, although the school has made suitable arrangements for the training of staff in the immediate future. These staff already have good knowledge of child protection issues and there is no current risk to pupils. Risk assessments of the building and for outside visits are carried out regularly with accurate records kept. There is a fire risk assessment and procedures are in place to ensure regular fire drills, and checks of the fire extinguishers and alarm system occur. Electrical equipment has been suitably checked, including the emergency lighting. Recruitment procedures are robust, ensuring pupils' safety and there is always a suitably qualified first aider on site. Pupils are properly supervised at all times.

The school does not yet meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Pupils have a good awareness of staying healthy; they know that they should bring healthy snacks to school. They wash their hands before touching food and after using the toilet. They particularly enjoy their physical education lessons. They have a growing awareness of staying safe both in school and in the wider environment.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

There are robust procedures for the recruitment of staff with appropriate vetting checks carried out on staff and others. A single central register is correctly maintained and meets requirements.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school has just moved into its present building. It is a large, listed building and is being renovated over time. The classrooms being used at present have been refurbished; they are bright and spacious for the present number of pupils. However, the walls in the hall, gym and toilets are not in good decorative order and are not maintained to the standard of the classrooms. Some flooring is in poor condition although it is not currently unsafe. Outdoor space is adequate.

Provision of information

The school welcome pack includes all of the necessary information and safeguarding, and childcare protection policies are available on request. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel

the strength of the school is its warm, safe and nurturing environment in which their children can thrive and develop both academically and socially.

The school has two consultation meetings a year and sends out two written reports to parents and carers about their children's progress. Every week a folder goes home which includes samples of work from most subjects that the pupils have completed during that week. In addition to this there are 'link' books for home to school communication.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints procedure meets requirements. There have been no formal complaints this academic year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there is a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration (paragraph 23(p))
- ensure that all flooring is in satisfactory condition (paragraph 23(r)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Ensure that in all lessons there is sufficient pace and challenge to enable the more-able pupils to reach their full potential.
- Ensure that assessment information is used effectively in all lessons to inform the teaching.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

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	January 2009		
Age range of pupils	5–6		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 29	Total: 29
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
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 0		
Address of school	117 Stamford Hill Hackney N16 5RS		
Telephone number	020 8809 9636		
Email address	None		
Headteacher	R Frankel Mrs Intrater		
Proprietor	Mr Klien		

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.



24 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beis Ruchel D'Satmar School, Hackney N16 5RS

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed my inspection visit. I was pleased to see you working hard and having exciting lessons. Your school provides you with a good education and you make good progress. The *Kodesh* curriculum is outstanding. Nearly all government requirements are met.

I think you have good teachers who care about your learning and want you to enjoy your lessons. They plan many interesting activities to help you to learn.

I think you are well looked after by your teachers and as a result you feel happy and safe in school I know that you try to eat healthy foods most of the time. Many of you bring healthy snacks to school. You should try to do this all the time, and you eat a healthy lunch.

I think some of you find your work at times, a little easy, so I have asked your teachers to make some of the lessons a little harder so that you have to really think, question and consider the work you are doing. This will make your standards even higher and make the lessons even more interesting.

I have also asked the school to improve some of the decorating and flooring and to deal with an issue about staff safeguarding training.

I would like to wish you all the best.

Yours sincerely

Fayge Levenberg
Lead inspector