

Menorah Grammar School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	302/6089
Unique Reference Number (URN)	101387
Inspection number	386824
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2012
Reporting inspector	Chanan Tomlin

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090070.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2012



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

Menorah Grammar School was established in 1978 with the aim of providing a high quality education within a caring and secure *Torah* environment. Its purpose is to provide education for boys from the strictly observant Jewish community of North West London and to successfully blend religious and secular education. There are currently 126 students on role within the age range of 11 to 18 years, of whom 11 are post-16 students. The school provides a designated special educational needs department, the Darchei Noam Centre, which is linked closely to the mainstream educational provision of the school. There are 24 students at the school who have a statement of special educational needs, and all attend the centre. All students go on to study in *Yeshivah* (Talmudical College) having taken GCSEs and most take A levels. The school was last inspected in September 2008.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of the education provided by the school is good and the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has made some improvement with regard to education since the last inspection and meets its aims. Arrangements for safeguarding and for the welfare, health and safety of the students are inadequate. The school does not meet all of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The overall quality of the curriculum is good. It is made up of two strands, *Kodesh* (religious studies) and *Chol* (secular studies). The *Kodesh* curriculum is largely dictated by the class teachers and includes all of the core subjects needed to equip students for their futures in *yeshiva*. *Kodesh* subjects include *gemoro* (Talmud), *chumash/rashi* (Bible with commentaries), *mishna* (Mishnaic studies), *halacha* (Jewish Law) and *nach* (Prophets). Curricula for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are good and cover an adequate range of subjects and all the required areas of learning. The *Kodesh* curriculum effectively integrates some aspects of other areas of learning such as personal, social, citizenship and health education (PSCHE), history and geography.

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

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

The school offers a good variety of GCSE and A-level qualifications. The health element of PSCE is lacking because students do not learn enough about healthy eating and lifestyles. Schemes of work for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* are at least satisfactory and many are good.

The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities during school hours which include sports tournaments, a chess club and table tennis. These are complemented by a wide range of *Kodesh*-related activities that take place in Golders Green and Edgware in the evenings. These include regular learning sessions in local synagogues and informal get-togethers on Sabbaths and festivals. These events contribute to a warm, family atmosphere that permeates the school. Students from the main school go on an annual trip to Jewish sights in mainland Europe and Darchei Noam students take part in a trip to Israel. Students enjoy learning and are especially enthusiastic about *Kodesh*.

Overall, teaching is good and assessment is satisfactory. Where teaching is especially effective, students take part in lively discussions and all are attentive and fully engaged. This is especially true in Talmud lessons, where teachers have exceptionally good subject knowledge and students enjoy lively debates with them. In *Kodesh* lessons, although teaching is more formal and a limited range of teaching methods are used, in keeping with the traditional nature of advanced *Torah* study, they enable students to learn well. In these lessons students are given opportunities for independent learning and self-expression when they study in pairs. Students especially enjoy scheduled time in the study hall where they review their Talmud studies in pairs. At varying times throughout the day, the study hall is charged with excited interest while students debate topics and challenge each other under the careful supervision and guidance of their teachers. Lessons are paced well.

Most teachers plan their lessons in at least a satisfactory manner. Planning to meet the needs of students of varying capabilities is not well developed, although in practice, different learning needs are met well. Assessment systems are in place but marking is mostly rather basic and on occasions work is not marked at all. When work is marked, it too rarely offers clear guidance to the students on how to improve their work.

Overall, students make good progress in both *Kodesh* and *Chol*. In *Kodesh*, students are tested regularly by their teachers and take part in oral examinations by their *menahel* (*Kodesh* headteacher) and external examiners. Teachers record marks in order to inform learning and planning. The school has recently instituted a system of tracking students' progress, although it is not fully embedded to enable the school to monitor attainment and trends within the school. For *Chol* there are some effective forms of assessment and good systems of recording. These inform teaching and ensure progress. *Chol* results show a consistent upward trend and overall GCSE and A-level results for 2011 were better than in previous years.

The provision in the Darchei Noam Centre for students with special educational needs is outstanding and has improved since the last inspection. It caters for

students with a statement of special educational needs and also provides support for students with less significant needs in the main school. Individualised programmes of study ensure that students are sufficiently challenged. Students make good progress and the strides forward they make in their learning enable them to achieve either vocational qualifications or GCSEs. Students' progress is carefully monitored and this informs future planning and the delivery of lessons at all stages. A certified food technology/catering course is particularly popular and once a week students from the centre cook and prepare dinner for the whole school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with some outstanding features. Students enjoy many aspects of the education that they receive and appreciate the close relationships that they forge with their teachers and each other. Parents and carers acknowledge that teachers take a personal interest in their children and that there is a special atmosphere in the school. One parent commented that 'all teachers are very caring and approachable' while another stated that, 'teachers, *rebbe*s (*Kodesh* teachers) and headteachers are available 24/7 for any query or problem, small or big'. Behaviour is satisfactory overall as much of the behaviour in the corridors and during break times is satisfactory. In lessons where students are engaged, behaviour is often good. Attendance is good but students do not always arrive to school on time and lessons do not always start punctually.

Students are well mannered and courteous to visitors. They have plenty of opportunities to challenge their teachers and take part in discussions and debates both in lessons and in the study hall. Teachers encourage students to assert themselves and offer their own opinions, especially during Talmud lessons and independent learning sessions. This helps them grow in self-esteem and self-confidence. During *Kodesh* activities in the evenings, Sabbaths and festivals, students are given opportunities to speak in front of their peers. There is a school choir and students provide musical entertainment during major events. These activities further bolster students' opportunities for self-expression.

The school places a very strong emphasis on the moral and ethical teachings as taught through *Kodesh*. This instils in the students the importance of distinguishing between right and wrong extremely well. They take part in a 'Slosh the Losh' programme when older students teach younger ones the laws of tale bearing and gossip once a week. Students learn to understand the importance that Judaism attaches to respecting the law of the land and being law-abiding citizens. Spirituality and morality form the basis of well-received assemblies that focus on historical figures as well as current events. Examples of assemblies that promote morality are presentations on Martin Luther King, Rosa Parkes and the 13 essential character traits dictated by Rabbi Yisroel Salanter.

Students contribute much to the local and wider Jewish community in a variety of ways. They raise funds for local charities and visit the local home for the elderly. Students in Year 8 raised funds and purchased phylacteries for a needy Bar Mitzvah boy in Russia in the run-up to their own Bar Mitzvahs. Students learn about public

institutions and services in England through the *Chol* curriculum and during assemblies.

Students prepare for their future economic well-being through well-structured mathematics lessons, academic and vocational qualifications and through healthy attitudes to learning. They are prepared well for the next stage of learning when they attend yeshiva (Talmudic seminaries) after they graduate. Students learn about other cultures through history, geography and during assemblies. Aspects of the *Kodesh* curriculum also help students understand and gain an appreciation of different cultures, religions and practices in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. A policy for educational visits is in place but the school does not adhere to its policy and does not conduct satisfactory risk assessments before school trips. The child protection policy is inadequate and is missing some important details. The designated person and staff have not received appropriate training in child protection. The school does not have a current fire audit for the premises and fire risk assessments are not updated. Although fire drills are conducted, appropriate records are not kept. Students are not taught to keep healthy and the tuck shop mainly sells unhealthy foods. They are taught to keep safe through frequent visits and assemblies. The school does not consistently ensure all areas are free from potential safety hazards. The school does not have a suitable three-year plan to improve accessibility, as required by the Equality Act 2010.

The school ensures student supervision is good on a day-to-day basis and students say they feel safe. The school has a suitable anti-bullying policy and ways of promoting good behaviour among pupils are clearly stated in its behaviour policy. Students assert that bullying is rare and that if it were to happen, it would be dealt with appropriately. Students are clear about the sanctions imposed by the school for misconduct and a sanctions record is in place. A suitable first aid policy has been produced and staff are trained in first aid. The school has an appropriate policy for health and safety. It maintains a comprehensive register of admissions and daily attendance registers are taken.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school's recruitment procedures are inadequate because prospective staff are not checked for medical fitness. All staff have the required enhanced checks with the Criminal Records Bureau and the single central record of staff checks contains the necessary details.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation are satisfactory overall and there are adequate security arrangements in place to enable students to feel safe. There are sufficient classrooms to enable the teaching of the curriculum. Classrooms are an adequate size and are bright and airy; however, they are scantily decorated and little of students' work is displayed around the school. Wooden flooring in one classroom is broken and uneven. In another classroom some carpet areas are torn. These instances present potential safety hazards. Generally, the maintenance of the building and accommodation is unsatisfactory and many areas of the school are unkempt. The school has two outdoor play areas that are large but not well equipped. The number of toilets and hand basins is adequate and there is warm running water for students to wash their hands. Arrangements for looking after pupils who are ill meet requirements and there is a designated medical room.

Provision of information

Parents and carers are provided with clear information which meets requirements about the activities of the school and about their children's progress. They are kept well informed through an impressive weekly newsletter that is sent home both in hard copy and electronically. Parents and carers' responses to the inspection questionnaire reveal that they are positive about the quality of education their children receive.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints are unclear and the complaints policy is missing many of the required details. It therefore does not comply fully with the requirements. There has been one formal complaint in recent years and this was dealt with in line with 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'), 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 that have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)

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

- ensure that there are effective measures to ensure pupils' health and safety which have regard to the DfE guidance (paragraph 11)
- ensure that there are effective procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety on educational visits which have regard to DfE guidance (paragraph 12)
- ensure that there is compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 13).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (standards in part 4) and must:

- carry out appropriate checks to confirm each member of staff's medical fitness before their appointment to a position in the school (paragraph 19(2)(b)).

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 no areas of the school compromise health or safety (paragraph 23(i))
- ensure that there a satisfactory standard and adequate maintenance of decoration (paragraph 23(p))
- ensure that there is appropriate flooring and that it is in good condition (paragraph 23(r)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the manner in which complaints are to be handled (standards in part 7) and must:

- ensure that the complaints procedure includes clear timescales (paragraph 25(c))
- ensure that the complaints policy stipulates that complaints can be made in writing (paragraph 25(e))
- ensure that the complaints policy stipulates that one person on the panel should be independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 25(g))
- ensure that the procedure indicated in the complaints policy allows for parents to attend the panel hearing and, if they wish, to be accompanied (paragraph 25(h))
- ensure that the procedure indicated in the complaints policy provides for the panel to make findings and recommendations (paragraph 25(i)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.⁴

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

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				✓
--	--	--	--	---

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Orthodox Jewish Secondary		
Date school opened	1978		
Age range of pupils	11–18		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 125	Girls: 0	Total: 125
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 24	Girls: 0	Total: 24
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,000		
Address of school	Abbots Road Edgware Middlesex HA8 0QS		
Telephone number	020 8906 9756		
Email address	admin.mgs@hotmail.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Brown		
Proprietor	Menorah Grammar School Ltd		

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.



18 January 2012

Dear Students,

**Inspection of Menorah Grammar School, Abbots Road, Edgware, Middlesex
HA8 0QS**

It was a great privilege to be able to inspect your school. I found you to be welcoming and courteous.

As you know, I spent my time in the school observing lessons and reading the questionnaires that you and your parents and carers returned. In addition to this, I examined the school's paperwork and had meetings with various members of staff.

I found that the education that your school provides is good. Similarly, the ways that the school supports your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although you are well cared for in school, the welfare, health and safety at the school is inadequate because of the ways that the school does not implement some of its policies.

In my discussions with some of you, you expressed how much you like school and your teachers and how much you enjoy learning. I am sure that you will build on these positive attitudes and grow into mature, responsible adults with the help of your teachers and mentors.

Many thanks for making the inspection so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely,

Chanan Tomlin
Lead inspector