

Beis Rochel d'Satmar Girls' School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Paul Armitage

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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 Rochel d'Satmar Girls' School opened in 1965. It consists of: Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 provision in Stoke Newington; infant and junior and separate senior provision in a single building in Amhurst Park; and a seminary for sixth formers in Stamford Hill. These different sections of the school are known as departments. The school has many of the characteristics of a federation. There is no overall headteacher and departments have considerable autonomy. However, slowly, steps are being taken to bring the departments closer together.

There are 1,129 pupils on roll aged from three to 19 years but the school is registered for 957 pupils. There are 184 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 401 pupils in the infant and junior school, 342 in the senior school and 121 in the seminary. There are four pupils with a statement of special educational needs, mainly linked to behavioural issues and 122 of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive government nursery funding.

The majority of the pupils are from the Satmar community of Orthodox Judaism but there are also girls from other Chassidic communities and the Yemen. The majority of pupils come from homes where Yiddish is the main language spoken and English is the second language. The school is run substantially on voluntary contributions. There are no fees but parents and carers are expected to pay whatever they can. The last inspection was in 2008 followed by a progress monitoring visit in 2010.

The school aims to develop each girl in her Jewish identity while experiencing success academically, personally and socially. It seeks to develop in each girl 'a moral understanding and a range of skills, talents and values such as modesty, tolerance, respect of others, courtesy and general demeanour as a *Bas Yisroel* (daughter of the Jewish faith).'

There is also a boys' school a short distance from the Amhurst Park site. It currently regards itself as part of the girls' school but this has not been approved by the Department for Education (DfE). To regularise the position of the boys' school and incorporate it into the girls' school, the girls' school requested a material change. The material change inspection of the boys' school was conducted at the same time as this inspection but by different inspectors. This report deals only with the inspection

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

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

of the girls' school. There is a separate report for the boys' school material change inspection.

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education in all departments, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good. The curriculum and the quality of teaching and assessment are good and, as a result, pupils of all ages make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as is their behaviour. However, safeguarding and security procedures, including welfare, health and safety arrangements, are inadequate and there are deficiencies in some aspects of the accommodation. The school is currently not meeting a substantial number of regulations, greater in number than at the last inspection, and has not made sufficient improvement. Not all learning and welfare requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are met.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum overall is good. There is a curriculum policy and written schemes of work for all subjects in all departments.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum is planned around the yearly cycle of the *Torah* (Jewish Law), *Sidros* (a portion of the Torah), *Yomin Tovim* (festivals) and *Mitzvos* (commandments). This cycle is then successfully aligned with all six required areas of learning so that they are covered effectively. The curriculum provides for communication, language and literacy to be taught almost exclusively in Yiddish and it does this well but only a few, incidental English words are used. In consequence, the provision fails to provide adequate opportunities for the children to study English.

In the infant, junior and senior departments, *Kodesh* (study of traditional Hebrew texts) is taught in the mornings in Yiddish and *Chol* (secular studies) predominantly in English in the afternoons. *Chol* broadly covers the subjects of the National Curriculum with English used extensively in all subjects. All of the required areas of learning are covered in both. In some instances, *Kodesh* and *Chol* are taught together very well. For example, in *Kodesh*, Year 5 pupils study *Kashrus* (Jewish dietary laws), but this is extended to cover wider issues of nutrition. The study of the laws of *Shabbat* (the Sabbath) has much to do not only with how pupils conduct themselves in respect of God's expectations but also with their relations with other people. Both are good examples of how personal, social and health education (PSHE) is woven successfully through the curriculum.

In art, cookery, singing, sewing and physical education there are religious and secular elements. For example, in sewing, the production of carefully embroidered *Bris* (circumcision) cloths and a display cloth on the *Shvotim* (the 12 tribes of Israel)) promotes religious, historical, social and aesthetic understanding as well as technical ability. In *Chol*, pupils take GCSEs in art, business studies, English, geography, mathematics and history. Science is studied to Year 9. In *Kodesh*, there are formal examinations which are externally accredited. There is a very good programme of

external visits. Pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament and the Imperial War Museum. Local resources are also used to facilitate learning, including the use of the local sports centre.

In the seminary, there is a wide range of courses, such as childcare, health and nutrition, sewing and cookery with a strong focus on the *Bas Yisroel* and it is through such activities that careers education is provided and girls are prepared for adult life. Many students go on to teach in one of the school's departments so there is teacher training, which includes preparation for teaching pupils with special educational needs. There are also courses in art, book keeping, first aid, hair cutting, human anatomy, professional flower arranging and information and communication technology. Some of these are externally accredited by national bodies.

Teaching and assessment are good. Effective teaching means that all pupils make good progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they plan lessons carefully. The quality of the resources is good; they include the use of computers and electric typewriters.

For older pupils, the frequent use of tests, as well as feedback from teachers during lessons, means that teachers know pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well and so they adjust their teaching accordingly. Teachers' careful tracking of pupils' progress is shared with pupils who understand the targets set. Generally, the teaching in classes is formal with the teacher doing most of the speaking. Pupils listen carefully, make notes and there are often lively and sometimes suitably noisy question-and-answer sessions. However, opportunities are occasionally lost to give pupils opportunities to take more responsibility for their own learning. There is some compensation for this shortcoming in learning outside the classroom and in joint project work.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's progress is monitored accurately and the information is used well by teachers to inform their teaching. They provide a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities and there is good use of indoor resources. The setting is a very happy place where children enjoy learning and this contributes significantly to their good progress. Accurate assessments are made at the end of Reception Year for completion of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Staffing ratios fall just short of requirements and staff qualifications do not meet requirements. However, there is no evidence that these two factors adversely affect children's progress and safety.

Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are very well served with specialist support. Pupils' progress is very carefully monitored with suitable modification, as necessary, to their curriculum and teaching. There is similar help for pupils experiencing difficulty in learning English and reading beyond the early years.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Most pupils seamlessly link their faith, traditions and culture very effectively with all aspects of their personal development and contemporary life. As they progress through the school, they become more knowledgeable, understanding of others and grow in confidence. Their behaviour and attitudes towards learning are outstanding. Moral dimensions are considered all the time; there is always a moral issue explored in every *Kodesh* lesson. Moral factors are also considered in *Chol*. For example, a small number of senior girls made vibrant, well-informed speeches about the need to support organisations such as the World Wildlife Fund.

Social development is outstanding. There is a strong sense of community. Girls of all ages get on very well together and there is strong respect for family life and the wider community. This is supported by the emphasis given to successful activities such as collecting for charity, *Chessed* (kindness) and contributing to 'Helping Hands' to support families in need. There is no school council but there are class representatives who take on various responsibilities and older pupils who work conscientiously with younger ones. Cultural development is impressive and provision promotes tolerance and harmony very effectively. Apart from the many visits which help pupils understand aspects of the life of the United Kingdom, there is frequent study of different counties, of different genre in art, and the world of business in book keeping and business studies. History and geography are popular subjects supporting pupils' understanding of the wider world.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, personal, social and emotional development is a strong feature. Teachers have established a supportive atmosphere in the classroom and make frequent requests to children to help others to undertake small tasks. This creates confidence and ensures that children treat each other with kindness and respect.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. Recruitment and staff vetting procedures are not robust enough in all departments. The training of some child protection officers is out of date and some training has not been at the right level. In all departments, staff have not been formally trained in child protection procedures on a regular three-year cycle.

The assessment of risks for outside visits is effective in all departments. However, with the exception of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the risk assessment of premises in the other departments is neither systematic nor rigorous. The head of one department said that they keep a 'watchful eye' on the building and its facilities but do not undertake formal risk assessments. Although fire extinguishers and emergency lighting are regularly checked, only one department provided a fire risk assessment certificate for its building and this was out of date. There are regular fire drills which are recorded and staff know what to do in emergencies. Pupils are properly supervised when drills take place.

Staff are appropriately trained in first aid including paediatric care. There are suitable arrangements regarding medicines.

The school has the required range of policies including those for child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, fire, first aid, and health and safety. These policies pay due regard to national guidance but are not fully implemented. The child protection policy says that recruitment procedures follow those stated in *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (DfE, 2007)* but in practice, they do not. The school fails to follow health and safety policy requirements in respect of risk assessments.

Pupils are aware of healthy eating issues; the topic is covered in both *Chol* and *Kodesh*. Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy food to eat and some classes have undertaken topics such as Year 1's wall display on healthy foods.

There is no suitable plan covering all departments to ensure the school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The vetting of staff is inadequate. No interim List 99 checks have been undertaken on eight staff who are awaiting Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, therefore children are not properly safeguarded. There is no single central register. Currently there are three different departmental registers but they are not kept in required format and not all staff are recorded on registers. There is no provision for entering List 99, the right to work in the United Kingdom and overseas checks. The registers provide some of the required information, in particular, confirmation of some CRB checks.

Entries in the register could not be verified because personnel files contain insufficient evidence to confirm that the necessary checks have been done. Medical checks are undertaken and the evidence is in the personnel files but records of evidence of references and of the previous employment history of applicants is not evident in all files.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The seminary is located in a substantial urban house. It provides a pleasant environment for learning. Classrooms are adequate in size and there are spacious areas for art, sewing and other activities. There are two well-used computer suites.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1, the indoor teaching areas are adequate in size and there is a suitable outside area for play but the outside area is not covered, which restricts its use for teaching purposes. Toilets in the setting are not always maintained in a hygienic condition and one of the staff toilets does not have facilities for hand washing.

At the Amhurst Park building, the accommodation is adequate for the number on roll. However, the classrooms are at maximum capacity. Outdoor space is adequate though the large number of pupils means that careful supervision is required to prevent pupils from becoming boisterous. This is done effectively. There are insufficient numbers of toilets for staff, pupils and visitors. There was no hot water in the taps sampled. A cupboard containing cleaning materials was not locked and this compromises pupils' health and safety. Facilities for pupils who are ill are inadequate for pupils in the Amhurst Park building. Some security arrangements are inadequate.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints policy meets regulatory 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 the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that there is a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and is implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1))
- in the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensure that the school provides lessons in written and spoken English (paragraph 2(2)(d)).

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 arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and ensure that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7)
- ensure there are effective measures to ensure pupils' health and safety which have regard to the Department for Education guidance (paragraph 11)

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

- 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:

- ensure that it can be verified that no member of staff is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list)
- ensure that it can be verified that anyone who carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (A List 99 check) (paragraph 19(2)(a))
- ensure that for all appointments from 1 September 2003, appropriate checks have been carried out and completed to confirm each member of staff's:
 - identity
 - medical fitness
 - and where appropriate, qualifications, and
 - for all appointments made from 1 May 2007 that additional checks of their right to work in the United Kingdom have been undertaken (paragraph 19(2)(b))
- ensure that for all appointments since **1 September 2003** an enhanced criminal bureau (CRB) check has been made by the proprietor in respect of any member of staff appointed to a position at the school and that the enhanced CRB certificate which is the subject of the application is obtained before or as soon as was practicable after the person's appointment (paragraph 19(2)(c))
- ensure that for appointments from **1 May 2007** only, in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining a CRB certificate is not sufficient to establish his or her suitability to work in a school, that further checks have been made as the proprietor considers appropriate which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 19(2)(d))
- ensure that the checks in 19(2)(b) were completed before a person's appointment apart from where exemptions apply (paragraph 19(3))
- ensure that where applicable, the chairperson has made the following checks on other members of the proprietorial body:
 - an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) check
 - the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom

and

- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 21(6)(b))
- ensure that there is one single central register and that it is capable of being reproduced in a legible form (paragraph 22(2))
- ensure that for each member of staff appointed on or **after** 1 May 2007, the register shows that the following checks were made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
 - of the person’s identity
 - that the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification, prohibition or restriction having the same effect
 - of relevant qualifications, if appropriate
 - of whether an enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) certificate was obtained
 - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - of their right to work in the United Kingdom
 - in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of children for whom accommodation is provided, a check was made to ensure compliance with Standard 38 of the national minimum standards for boarding schools, or where applicable, Standard 27 of the national minimum standards for residential special schools. (paragraph 22(3))
- ensure that for each member of staff appointed at any time **before** 1 May 2007, the register shows that the following checks have been made, including the date on which each check was completed or the certificate obtained:
 - of the person’s identity
 - to establish whether the person is not barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (ISA barred list), or there is no direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act in respect of that person (List 99), or disqualification, prohibition or restriction having the same effect
 - of relevant qualifications where appropriate
 - of whether an enhanced CRB certificate was obtained
 - in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, the further checks made which

have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(4)).

- In relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after **1 May 2007**, does the register show whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained? Checks required include:

- an enhanced CRB check and, where requested by the Secretary of State, countersigned by the Secretary of State
- the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom

and

- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(6)).

- In relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor who was appointed at any time before **1 May 2007**, does the register show whether the checks referred to in 21(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained? Checks required include:

- an enhanced CRB check and, where requested by the Secretary of State, countersigned by the Secretary of State

and

- in the case of any person for whom, by reason of living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, further checks in regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 22(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 the proprietor has ensured that the water supply meets the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(a))
- ensure that adequate security arrangements are in place for the grounds and buildings (paragraph 23(d))
- ensure that no areas of the school compromise health or safety (paragraph 23(i))
- ensure there are sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, which take account of regulations 3 and 4 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(j))

- ensure there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in the Amhurst Park building, in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 23(k))
- ensure classrooms and other parts of the school are maintained in a tidy, clean and hygienic state (paragraph 23(m)).

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

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that the setting provides lessons in written and spoken English.

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that safeguarding procedures are implemented effectively
- ensure that all members of staff, including the designated person for child protection, are appropriately trained at the required level and undergo refresher training within the recommended timescales
- ensure that all policies, including the child protection policy, are fully understood and are implemented by staff, particularly in relation to recruitment procedures and the content of a single central register
- ensure that the setting complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and that a fire risk assessment is carried out on all sites
- ensure that the ratio of staff to children complies with statutory requirements
- ensure that staff have the correct level of qualification to comply with statutory requirements
- ensure good hygiene in the children's toilets by regular checking and provide hand washing facilities in every staff toilet
- ensure that the setting contributes to the development of a whole-school plan to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

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	Jewish		
Date school opened	25 October 1965		
Age range of pupils	3–19 years		
Gender of pupils	Female		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 1,129	Total: 1,129
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: 4	Total: 4
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ Nil		
Address of school	51–57 Amhurst Park London N16 5DL		
Telephone number	0208 800 9060		
Email address	None		
Headteacher	Mrs Smuss as administrator but not headteacher		
Proprietor	Beis Rochel D'Satmar Charitable Trust		

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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beis Rochel d'Satmar Girls' School, London, N16 5DL

I am sure that you will remember that we inspected your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and I would like to thank you for the help that you gave us as we came to understand and enjoy all the many things that you do in school.

We were very impressed with your curriculum and the wide range of things that you study in *Kodesh* and in *Chol*. There are so many things that I could pick out as special but I would like to mention how impressed I was with the quality of your work in art and how much I enjoyed the beauty and delicacy of your sewing. The speeches given by some of you about support for charitable organisations and for the Nobel Prize were very professional and demonstrated the confidence which you are developing during your time in school. We also very much enjoyed our time in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1. It was nice to see the fun that children experience as they learn.

We were very impressed and respectful of the way in which your religious beliefs, your culture and its history influence very positively the way in which you conduct your lives. We acknowledge the very important way in which your teachers and all other staff in the school support you in this process. Your teachers are very good and really want you to do well. You know this, because many of you said this in your responses to the questionnaires that we gave you.

There are some important things that we have asked the proprietor and teachers to improve. Your welfare and safety must be better protected and safeguarding and security arrangements must be more robust. There are a number of improvements that must be made to the premises and accommodation.

Finally, I would like to give you my best wishes for the future. Your school opens the way to lots of exciting and rewarding opportunities and I am sure that you will be successful in whatever you choose to do.

Yours sincerely

Paul Armitage
Lead inspector