

TTD Gur School

85 Fairholt Road, London, Hackney, N16 5EP

5-7 March 2013 **Inspection dates Outstanding** Overall effectiveness 1 1 Pupils' achievement Outstanding 2 Pupils' behaviour and personal development Good Quality of teaching Outstanding 1 Quality of curriculum Outstanding 1 2 Pupils' welfare, health and safety Good 1 Leadership and management Outstanding

Summary of key findings

This school is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding. As a result, pupils achieve very high standards.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It fully covers all of the required areas of learning; most, exceptionally well. It provides all pupils, including those with special educational needs, with a rich, broad and balanced education.
- Behaviour and personal development are good; aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding.
- Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is good; policies and procedures are robust and staff are diligent in the ways that they care for pupils.
- Leadership and management are outstanding; school leaders and staff share a drive for excellence.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

■ The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by six different teachers.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and held meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), staff, a governor, parents and carers and a group of pupils. The inspector took account of the views expressed in 39 school questionnaires returned by parents and carers and seven from staff.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, assessment records and records pertaining to the professional development of staff. He checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Talmud Torah D'Chasidei Gur (TTD Gur) is a school for Orthodox Jewish boys aged between three and seven years from the Chassidic community in North London. Most of the pupils come from families who are attached to the Gerrer Chassidic sect, but the school welcomes all members of the Orthodox Jewish community.
- The aim of the school is to provide a high-quality education which enables its pupils to grow into responsible members of the community and to reach their full potential.
- The school is located in a Victorian building in the centre of Stamford Hill, North London. The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- Currently, there are 68 pupils on roll, none of whom has a statement of special educational needs. There are 42 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage; all receive government funding.
- The school opened in September 2010 and was registered in April 2012. This was the school's first inspection.
- The school is registered for 50 pupils. There are currently 68 pupils on role. The school must apply for a material change visit to increase its numbers for registration.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enlarge the premises and accommodation, including the outdoor play area, to provide more space.
- Increase the variety of resources used for teaching in order to broaden pupils' classroom experiences even more.
- Formalise the process of self-evaluation so that school leaders and managers take a consistent approach to maintaining high standards and identifying areas for development.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

Achievement is outstanding. The school has five classes, three in the Early Years Foundation Stage and two in Key Stage 1. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, all children make outstanding progress and gain excellent grounding in a wide range of subjects including the required areas of learning. Pupils begin having lessons in written and spoken English in Year 2. These pupils make outstanding progress in literacy and exceed national standards. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those that are gifted and talented, make rapid and sustained progress relative to their starting points in all of the required areas of learning. Most make exceptional progress in Hebrew literacy, general knowledge and speech and language development.

All pupils learn exceptionally well and acquire knowledge quickly. They are adept at applying reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills effectively. As a result, progress is accelerated and pupils are always extremely well placed to learn new topics and skills. Standards of attainment are higher than those in similar schools for all pupils including those with special educational needs, as a result of outstanding teaching and an outstanding curriculum. Pupils that are gifted and talented attain exceptional standards. Pupils are independent, active learners. They are curious, imaginative and enthusiastic. As a result, pupils challenge their teachers and lessons are often enlivened by discussions and debates initiated by the pupils.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. Pupils are lively and exuberant and most lessons are charged with excitement. They have very positive attitudes towards learning and this spills over to break times in the playground where pupils sing the songs that they have learned in lessons and enact role plays connected to their studies. Pupils are never passive; they concentrate on what is being taught, are always fully engaged and often get carried away during discussions and debates with their teachers. This sometimes leads to rambunctious behaviour during lessons. Considering this, behaviour is usually good and well managed. Pupils get along well together and instances of bullying are rare. Levels of supervision are consistently high and pupils feel safe in school. Attendance is good and pupils are punctual to lessons.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in all respects. Some aspects of spiritual and moral development are outstanding. Pupils grow in self-confidence through participating in class discussions every day when they offer their own insights and share their experiences. Younger pupils perform during an annual *Chumash Seuda* celebration when they formally begin learning Torah. Family and friends attend this event and older pupils organise a choir to entertain the guests. These and similar events help pupils gain self-esteem and confidence. Spirituality is the foundation of everything that happens at school. Pupils pray every day, learn Torah in depth and perform all of the rituals expected of them. Teachers utilise every opportunity to bring authentic Judaism alive and this creates a drive for spiritualty that is palpable. They are skilful in the ways that they convey an understanding of morality to pupils. An example of this is a lesson on the biblical prohibition from eating meat from an animal that has not been slaughtered when pupils discussed cruelty to animals. As a result of such discussions, pupils learn how to consider issues of morality and make balanced moral decisions.

Pupils learn about other cultures through a focus on different cultural traditions within the Jewish fold such as the Jewish communities of Ethiopia and Yemen. They learn about Arabs in connection to their studies about the forefathers, Greeks with regard to Chanukah and Persians with regard to

Purim. They learn about tolerance and respect for all people as a basic tenet of the Jewish faith and through interactions with visitors and members of the community. Pupils study public services such as the postal system, police and the armed forces. The curriculum, informal discussions in lessons and expectations of good moral and social behaviour enable pupils to develop the personal qualities and attitudes that they need to contribute to their own community and society in general.

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

Teaching is outstanding. Teachers are highly skilled at creating lessons that are interesting, engaging and full of excitement. As a result all pupils make rapid, sustained progress. Lessons cover a wide range of topics and subject knowledge. For example, a religious studies lesson about the upcoming festival of Passover included elements of science through a discussion and demonstration about the waning and waxing of the moon and a discussion about clouds. During this lesson, pupils also discussed Bedouins in connection with Abraham's tent, an excellent contribution to pupils' knowledge of other cultures. During lessons, teachers communicate high expectations to pupils. They draw all pupils into lessons through exciting discussions and debates. Resources are of an adequate quality, quantity and range and are used effectively to support the curriculum. Teachers produce outstanding lessons despite the narrow range of modern resources available to them.

Teachers plan their lessons exceptionally well. Prescriptive marking and regular feedback help pupils appreciate their accomplishments and focus on areas that need to be improved. Planning is based on a clear understanding of pupils' capabilities and aptitudes and ensures that pupils of varying abilities, including those that are gifted and talented, are consistently challenged. Progress is assessed regularly and systematically by teachers and through weekly tests administered by the headteacher. Teachers use a very effective phonetic system of teaching Hebrew reading that provides pupils with excellent reading skills and grounding to accelerate competency in reading English. The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is highly effective; pupils in Year 2 started lessons in written and spoken English at the beginning of this academic year and have already reached high levels of literacy and numeracy.

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

The curriculum provided by the school is outstanding. All lessons, including traditional religious studies such as *Mishna* and *Chumash* (Torah), are fully integrated with a wide range of topics and subject matter. Careful thought and planning ensure that teachers seize every opportunity to enrich the curriculum with memorable experiences and opportunities for pupils to connect new knowledge to previous experiences in school. For example, while a class in the Early Years Foundation Stage was creating a model of the Tabernacle, the teacher took out the eight-branched menorah (candelabra) used during Chanukah and asked the pupils to compare it to the seven-branched menorah used in the Tabernacle. Parents and carers highly praise the school because pupils come home with a wide range of disparate knowledge in addition to very firm grounding in all of the subjects taught. One parent commented 'Our children are happy and can't wait to go to school. They talk all day about school and repeat constantly things that the teachers have taught them!'

The curriculum is supported with excellent, detailed schemes of work, geared to support pupils with a wide range of abilities. It is devised to provide clear progression so that pupils make rapid, sustained progress in all subject areas. It meets the needs of all pupils and enables them to make excellent progress in all areas of learning, especially in reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils are encouraged to develop their communication skills through interactive learning that often involves role play. When learning about Passover, one teacher dressed up as Pharaoh and ran around the room riling up the pupils to describe his reaction during the Plague of the Firstborn.

Enrichment activities are well embedded within the curriculum and are designed to complement the wide range of topics covered. These include posting cards to parents and grandparents before the Jewish New Year and a trip to the *Matzo* Bakery before Passover. Provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage is exemplary and pupils enjoy rich and varied experiences in all of the required areas of learning. As a result, they make rapid progress and are well placed to make great strides in their learning as they get older.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good. Staff are committed to providing high levels of care and a *mashgiach* (mentor/supervisor) is at school throughout the day to provide pastoral support. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust; an appropriate policy is in place and all staff have been trained in child protection to the required levels. Recruitment arrangements ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children. The school conducts regular risk assessments for the premises and trips to ensure that pupils are safe at all times and supervision is consistently good. All of the policies related to welfare, health and safety are comprehensive, up to date and reviewed regularly. As a result, all pupils are well cared for and their safety is ensured.

Bullying is rare; when it does happen, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Teachers manage behaviour well even when pupils are over-exuberant during lessons; this contributes to a pleasant, purposeful learning environment. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and healthy eating. They are not allowed to bring unhealthy snacks to school and learn about general and dental health and about keeping safe. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for at school. Parents and carers agree and this was a recurrent theme in the many questionnaires returned during the inspection.

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders and managers work extremely well together to ensure that pupils are always well supported and challenged. As a result, teaching is outstanding and pupils with a wide range of abilities make outstanding progress. Leaders and managers are idealistic and ambitious; they communicate a drive for excellence that is well received by teachers. They act as role models and are totally committed to ensuring that provision consistently meets very high standards. They have a keen understanding of the needs of pupils. They are constantly looking for ways to support staff and to make the best use of the resources that are available.

Leaders and managers appreciate the importance of self-assessment. They are clear about the school's strengths and areas that still need to be developed, although self-evaluation is not formulated in writing. The school has robust policies to ensure the welfare, health and safety of the pupils including safeguarding. It has excellent policies and systems in place to promote outstanding progress in literacy. Although minutes of meetings are not always kept, it is clear that governors are very involved in the running of the school and take an active interest in all aspects of teaching and the curriculum. They challenge senior leaders and often act as the conduit between parents and carers and the school. Parents and carers are unanimous in their admiration and support of senior leaders.

Senior leaders work with teachers extremely well to constantly develop and improve the curriculum. Behaviour is consistently good and pupils' personal development is good in all respects due to the attention and care that senior leaders convey to staff. Relationships between senior leaders and staff are based on mutual respect and appreciation. As a result, all members of staff

share the common goal of providing the best possible education for pupils.

The school's premises and accommodation, including the outdoor play area, are small but adequately support the curriculum. Leaders and managers recognise that pupils would benefit from larger premises and have acquired a new building that will be ready for occupation in the near future. The school meets all of the requirements related to the provision of information to parents, carers and others, and the complaints procedure contains all of the necessary details. School managers have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number138101Inspection number408689DfE registration number204/6005

This inspection was carried out 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.

Type of school Orthodox Jewish Day School

School status Independent School

Age range of pupils 3-7

Gender of pupils Boys

Number of pupils on the school roll 68

Number of part time pupils 0

Proprietor Talmud Torah D'Chasidei Gur Ltd

Chair Mr Y Traube

Headteacher Rabbi Y Y Esterzohn

Date of previous school inspection 20 December 2011 (Registration)

Annual fees (day pupils)Voluntary contributions

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