

Kisharon Day School

1011 Finchley Road, London, NW11 7HB

Inspection dates

21–23 May 2013

Overall effectiveness

Good **2**

Pupils' achievement

Good 2

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding 1

Quality of teaching

Good 2

Quality of curriculum

Good 2

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding 1

Leadership and management

Good 2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Teaching is good; teachers use a wide range of resources and strategies to ensure that all pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. The school provides a calm, supportive learning environment where pupils thrive both socially and academically.
- The curriculum is good; it is broad and balanced and provides a good range of experiences that enrich learning. It is well suited to all ages and ability groups including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and young people above compulsory school age.
- Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding; levels of care and support are exceptional.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders communicate high expectations to staff and lead a drive for improvement; as a result, teaching is good and pupils achieve well. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection.

It is not yet outstanding because

- *Kodesh* (Jewish religious studies) provision for more-able pupils does not always secure accelerated achievement and progress.
- Resources and facilities for food technology are underdeveloped. As a result, opportunities for pupils to develop life skills through food preparation are limited.
- Governors do not visit and observe lessons; this limits opportunities for them to challenge senior leaders to further improve teaching and learning.
- Teaching assistants do not always adequately support pupils during lessons.

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 10 lessons taught by nine different teachers. He looked at pupils' work and met with the headteacher, heads of departments, staff, parents, carers and pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, assessment records and records of the professional development of staff. He checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in 30 questionnaires returned by staff and 15 responses completed by parents and carers.

Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Kisharon Day School is a small, mixed independent special school which provides education for pupils from the orthodox Jewish communities of North and North West London. It caters for pupils with a wide spectrum of disabilities and special educational needs including those with moderate through to severe and complex learning difficulties, including autistic spectrum conditions. Some pupils also have physical, sensory and communication impairments and lifelong medical conditions.
- The school was established in 1976 and admits up to 45 pupils aged between four and 19 years. Currently, there are 37 pupils on roll, of whom approximately two thirds are boys and one third girls; there are two children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 11 young people that are above compulsory school age. No children receive nursery funding and all pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school occupies two floors of a building in the heart of the Jewish community of North West London.
- The school aims 'to provide an excellent standard of secular and Jewish education within a framework of Jewish life, experience and practice, together with excellent standards of care, therapies, support and personal development'.
- The school was last inspected in January 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the overall effectiveness of the school by:
 - raising levels of achievement and progress in *Kodesh* work for more-able pupils by ensuring that they are consistently challenged
 - improving the provision for food technology through better resources and facilities.
- Further improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that governors take part in observing teaching and learning in order to systematically challenge senior leaders to further improve teaching and raise levels of achievement
 - improving the training and guidance for teaching assistants in order to improve the support that they provide during lessons.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Achievement is good because of good teaching. Pupils have a wide range of abilities and join the school with varying starting points and achieve well and make good progress. Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding well according to their capabilities. They gain a secure understanding in all subjects, but especially in the life skills that they need for their future lives. Provision for food technology is limited because the school does not have a purpose-built kitchen; this results in limited achievement and progress in this subject. Pupils develop and apply skills such as reading, writing, communication and mathematics effectively and are well prepared for their futures when they leave school. Pupils who are more able attain high standards in most subjects. However, achievement and progress in *Kodesh* for these pupils is not rapid enough because of the limited amount of time devoted to *Kodesh* work during the school day.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning and young people that are above compulsory school age achieve well and are well prepared for future employment, continuing their education or in being able to live independently. Older pupils achieve external accreditations through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Pupils are interested in the subjects they learn; they are motivated and eager to take part in a wide range of activities. As a result, they make good progress and develop the personal qualities that enable them to take responsibility and acquire important skills for the future.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. Behaviour in lessons, the corridors and outdoors is exemplary. Pupils are interested in the subjects taught and are enthusiastic about learning new things. As a result, they are engaged in lessons and actively participate in group sessions. Lessons are very orderly but interactive and interesting and are seldom disrupted. Excellent behaviour and very good attitudes towards learning create a pleasant learning environment where pupils are keen to succeed and thrive. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and bullying is very rare. Supervision is excellent and pupils are taught how to keep safe in different situations. As a result, they feel safe at all times, both in school and during activities out of school. Attendance is very good and pupils are always punctual to lessons.

Provision for pupils' personal development is exemplary. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary in many aspects. Pupils are encouraged to consider their circumstances and make decisions on their own. They are given many opportunities to apply independent skills, for example when they use public transport or help organise a tuck shop at a local school. They grow in self-esteem and confidence when they perform at the local home for the elderly or take part in school Bar-Mitzvah celebrations for one of the pupils. Pupils develop spiritually through religious observance, *Kodesh* studies and regular prayer. The school helps pupils gain a thorough understanding of Jewish culture and religious observance through a wide range of resources and activities that are appropriate to their abilities. Examples of this provision are recordings of blessings that pupils use as prompts when they are unable to read the relevant text and a wide variety of interactive workshops that take place before major festivals.

Pupils gain an excellent understanding of morality and moral issues through many aspects of the *Kodesh* curriculum, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and through discussions with teachers. They become socially adept and learn about acceptable behaviour through the careful guidance of their teachers and plenty of group work and activities. For example, older male pupils

pray together daily, prayers being led by a pupil, and pupils eat together and clean up after meals. Pupils gain a very good understanding of other cultures through themed culture weeks, music, art and project work. Examples of this are a project on the Olympic Games and a cross-curricular project where pupils compared Jewish culture with that of the ancient Greeks. Staff hail from a range of different cultural backgrounds; they share their customs and language with pupils and this creates an atmosphere of equality and mutual understanding and acceptance. Pupils learn about the English legal system and public services through citizenship lessons and visitors to the school. When political views are discussed, for example before local elections, they are presented in a balanced, unprejudiced way. Pupils are friendly and welcoming; they are proud to be members of the school community. They take great pride in the ways that they contribute to the wider community through fund raising for charity and volunteer work at local retailers.

Quality of teaching

Good

Teaching is good. As a result, pupils with a wide range of abilities, including those with profound special educational needs and physical disabilities, achieve well and make good progress over time. Teachers have high expectations and communicate these to pupils effectively. Lessons are planned and paced well and teachers use a good range of teaching strategies to support lessons. As a result, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well according to their individual needs and abilities. Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively and pupils gain good foundations in these areas of study. Teachers prepare individual programmes of study for each pupil together with auxiliary staff such as therapists and medical professionals. They are careful to follow plans and make adjustments when necessary, tailoring lessons and programmes of study according to needs and circumstances in order to ensure that all pupils achieve well.

Teachers create a purposeful learning environment where pupils are interested and engaged. Most teaching assistants contribute to this process through well-considered interactions with pupils. However, some are not proactive and are unaware of the many ways that they can positively contribute to the learning and support provided in the classroom. Teachers assess and track pupils' achievements and progress regularly and accurately. As a result, they have a good understanding of pupils' accomplishments and the areas that they need to improve. Teachers know their pupils well and have a good understanding of the factors that might trigger any misbehaviour. As a result, behaviour is consistently managed well and disruptions are rare.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good. It is enriched with a good range of activities and provides pupils with valuable experiences in all of the required areas of learning. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils including those with profound learning difficulties and those with physical disabilities and provides them with many opportunities to make good progress. It is geared to help pupils develop their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills; as a result, pupils make good progress in these areas of learning. The curriculum is organised well and is supported by detailed schemes of work and planning that indicates clear progression and the ways that pupils of varying abilities are challenged. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, good attention is given to the learning, development and welfare requirements and guidance. As a result, children's learning and their social, physical and economic well-being are promoted well.

Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being through a strong focus on English literacy, mathematics, and social and communication skills. They learn and practise life skills through ASDAN and work experiences. Personal, social and health education is good; pupils learn about how to keep healthy and how to lead healthy lifestyles through project work and visitors to the school. For example, one visitor taught pupils about dental health and pupils take part in a *Tznius* (Modesty) project when they learn about appropriate sexual behaviour and health in a

religiously appropriate way.

Enrichment activities are very well suited to the needs and interests of the pupils. Many activities are connected to religious observance and festivals but integrate a good range of other subjects and skills. For example, before *Rosh Hashana* (Jewish New Year) pupils learn how to make *shofaros* (rams' horns) giving them valuable experiences in music and design and technology. Before Passover, they make candles to search for leavened bread and observe live frogs in connection with the Ten Plagues. Before the festival of *Succos* (Tabernacles) they identify willow bushes in a local park giving them insights into one of the religious articles used during the festival in addition to scientific research. Pupils enjoy activities that give them hands-on religious experiences and skills that they can use in the future. They take part in a good range of educational visits that help them become more familiar with the wider world, which complements the education that they receive in school. These include a yearly residential visit and visits to an aquarium, The Rain Room, where they learn about weather and various sporting activities including horseback riding and regular swimming.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

The welfare, health and safety of pupils are outstanding and all regulations are met. Staff see pupils' welfare as a priority and go to great lengths to ensure that pupils are well cared for and supported at all times. They attend a good range of training sessions to ensure that they are fully up to date on the best ways to care for and support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, levels of care are exceptionally high. The school has robust procedures to ensure that pupils are safeguarded: its policy for child protection is comprehensive and implemented effectively; and the designated person for safeguarding and all staff have been trained at the appropriate levels and at the required intervals. Procedures for the safe recruitment of new staff are robust, all of the necessary checks having been conducted and recorded in a single central register. All of the policies related to the welfare, health and safety of pupils are detailed, comprehensive, reviewed regularly and implemented effectively. These include policies for anti-bullying and first aid. The health, safety and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are enhanced through robust policies and procedures that are implemented consistently and effectively.

The school places a clear focus on the importance of keeping healthy through the curriculum, in-school therapies and the healthy meals and snacks that are provided. Pupils understand and appreciate this provision and adopt healthy lifestyles as a result. The school is an inclusive community; staff and pupils get along very well together and pupils are very happy and well-adjusted. Pupils respond well to the warm, caring atmosphere in school; they feel valued, safe and secure. Parents and carers have every confidence in the school's procedures for welfare, health and safety. They acknowledge that staff are firmly committed to high levels of care and support and that their children are happy. The school conducts regular risk assessments for the premises and activities both in and out of school including school trips. Fire risk assessments are carried out regularly; fire equipment is checked at regular intervals and fire drills are regular events that are recorded appropriately. The premises comply with all health and safety requirements.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good. School leaders and governors consistently communicate high expectations and ambition. As a result, teaching is good, the curriculum is broad and balanced and pupils make good progress including in literacy. Governors challenge school leaders at regular meetings but do not visit and observe lessons for themselves. As a result, opportunities for them to gain a greater knowledge and awareness of the quality of teaching and learning are limited.

Leaders have developed a good system of performance management and arrange training sessions to help improve teaching; these are well-matched to the needs of staff and secure consistently good teaching leading to good achievement and progress. Self-evaluation is robust and leaders have prepared an improvement plan that is accurate and realistic.

The school ethos promotes excellent behaviour and personal development. Staff and resources are deployed well to ensure maximum benefits for pupils. However, a system for providing training and guidance for teaching assistants is not yet fully embedded; as a result, some do not support pupils as effectively as they could. The school works well with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that all pupils receive high levels of care and support.

The premises and accommodation are suitable and include a hall, sufficient classrooms and an outdoor area for play and physical education. All areas of the school are well maintained and decorated to sufficiently support the curriculum. The school meets all of the requirements related to the provision of information to parents and carers and the complaints procedure includes all of the required details. The proprietor and 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 number	101386
Inspection number	137807
DfE registration number	302/6085

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	Special school for pupils with severe special educational needs and disabilities
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	37
Number of part time pupils	1
Proprietor	Kisharon Ltd
Chair	Mr Philip Goldberg
Headteacher	Mrs Sora Kopfstein
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 January 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£17,000 – £42,000
Telephone number	020 8455 7483
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