

Vishnitz Girls School

196 Lordship Road, London, N16 5ES

Inspection dates	3–4 July	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good

- The girls make good progress in their *Kodesh* (Jewish/religious studies) and secular studies. This includes good progress in Yiddish, English and mathematics.
- Leadership and management are good. The leaders have a clear vision of how they wish the school to develop and, by their actions, are ensuring that teaching is good and girls make good progress.
- The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good overall. Teachers know the girls well so that the needs of the girls are met well and they are eager to learn.
- The school is a supportive community, where the girls grow in self-confidence and self-esteem. Pride in the school is shared by all the girls and staff.
- The girls are well cared for. The safeguarding arrangements are good.

It is not yet outstanding because

- The school has yet to implement fully, the developments identified by the good self-evaluation.
- Occasionally, teachers do not share objectives with the girls so it is not clear to them what they have to achieve.
- A small minority of marking does not make clear to the girls how to improve.

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 one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, taught by 11 different teachers, including one joint observation. The inspectors looked at the girls' work and held meetings with the proprietor, headteachers, special educational needs coordinator and staff.
- The inspectors looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of the girls' progress, assessment records and records detailing the professional development of staff. The inspectors took account of the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 15 staff and 38 from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Fayge Levenberg, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jill Bainton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Vishnitz Girls School is a school for Orthodox Jewish girls aged between three and seven years from the Vishnitz community in North London.
- The aim and ethos of the school is governed by the codes of the Torah and is based on the three tenets of Judaism, 'Torah, Prayer and acts of loving kindness'.
- The school is located in two large three-storey houses in the London Borough of Hackney. It uses no other provision.
- Currently, there are 103 girls on roll, none of whom has a statement of special educational needs. A small number of girls have special educational needs. There are 62 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school was registered in 2009 as an early years setting and registered as a primary school in 2012. This is the school's first inspection since registration as a primary school.
- The school is registered for 80 girls. The school has applied for a material change to extend the age range to eight years and to increase the number of girls to 127.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers share with the girls the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson and check they have achieved them at the end
 - ensuring that the marking of the girls' work is consistent and include targets for improvement.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the school development plan is clearly formulated and identified priorities for continual improvement are embedded
 - making sure detailed schemes of work are in place for all elements of the *Kodesh* curriculum
 - using the national guidelines on teachers' standards to further develop the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

The achievement of all the girls, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good due to the good quality of the teaching and curriculum. The girls are all from Yiddish-speaking homes and enter the Nursery with limited English skills. They make good progress in their Yiddish and English because of the many opportunities they are given from the Nursery class upwards. They are developing their reading skills well, making rapid progress in learning letter sounds and blending (phonics) and are able to show their understanding of the books they are reading.

Girls make good progress and develop their numeracy skills well because they are given many opportunities to practise them. In Reception, girls were given various coins and asked to make them into groups of 10 pence. They were able to do this in a number of ways which showed that they understood this concept well. In Year 1, girls were working with numbers up to 100, showing how the larger numbers were formed; for example, 87 is made up of 80 and 7 and is between the numbers 80 and 90. Girls make good progress in their *Kodesh* (religious studies), particularly in Hebrew reading and Yiddish.

At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of girls are reaching above average standards. Those girls who have been identified with special educational needs also make good progress because of the good support they receive in lessons and in individual sessions with support staff and a specialist teacher.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

The girls' behaviour and personal development are good. There is a friendly, welcoming atmosphere in the school which visitors feel immediately. Support for girls' personal and social development is embedded in the life of the school and works effectively as all the girls are happy. They confirm that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Their attendance is very good. Relationships at all levels are positive and the girls respond well to the kind and caring staff. The girls' self-confidence and self-esteem are promoted from an early age being given small responsibilities which they carry out with pride. For example, during library time, a Year 2 girl is asked to be the librarian and, once a week, Year 2 girls teach the younger girls the *Sedra* (weekly Torah portion).

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the girls is promoted well. Their spiritual awareness is well developed through the ethos and values of the school, which permeate the whole school curriculum. The staff are good role models, which the girls imitate. Staff use every opportunity to reinforce consideration for others. The girls mix well together, both in lessons and at play. A wide range of local visits extends the girls' knowledge of public institutions, such as visits to the local shops, the fire and rescue service and the police station. The girls learn about other cultures and faiths through projects such as studying individual countries, their cultures and traditions. The school makes good use of the multicultural environment the girls live in to develop their respect for and tolerance of others. The school ensures that balanced views are presented when any controversial or political issues are considered.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching overall is good enabling girls, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to make good progress. Teachers know the girls well and, together with the positive relationships, this results in girls being motivated to learn and eager to gain new knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons seen, activities are exciting and interesting. One example of this was in a Reception lesson where the teacher brought in a sewing machine and showed the girls

how it worked, how to thread the needle and sew a straight seam. The girls then had an opportunity to make their own paper clothes for their dolls, checking to see if the pattern would fit. Girls work cooperatively in groups and pairs, as seen in a mathematics lesson when partitioning numbers and a literacy lesson when Years 1 and 2 girls read together, with the more capable girls supporting the less able. The teaching support given to girls who have special educational needs allows them to access the curriculum together with their classmates. Teaching is good rather than outstanding because occasionally, teachers do not share with the girls what they are to learn at the beginning of the lesson, nor do they always check that the objectives have been achieved at the end of the lesson. Resources while adequate are used well by the staff.

Teachers assess girls' progress well, through regular tracking and record keeping especially in literacy, mathematics, Hebrew reading, *Chumash* (Bible studies) and personal development. Regular meetings are held with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and teachers to monitor these records and discuss whether specific girls may need additional support or challenge. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, records are kept of the monitoring of each girl's progress towards meeting the early learning goals. While most girls' work is marked well, a small minority of marking does not give the girls sufficiently clear feedback on how to improve.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good and schemes of work include the further age group for which a material change is sought. The curriculum is divided into two parts: *Kodesh* is taught in the morning and *Chol* (secular studies) in the afternoon. Together, they cover the required areas of learning, however, the curriculum is not yet outstanding as some schemes of work are still being developed.

The *Chol* curriculum is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study. Science is taught as part of the *Kodesh* curriculum, but also follows the National Curriculum programme of study. The commercial schemes of work, especially in literacy and numeracy, are detailed and include well-planned lessons which result in good progress. There are many subjects with cross-curricular links, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage department. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught discretely as well as being woven throughout the curriculum in all classes.

The well-thought-out *Kodesh* curriculum is a strong feature of the school's provision and ensures that a spiritual ethos permeates the school. In the *Kodesh* work, *Sedra*, *Chumash*, general knowledge, *Yahadus* (calendar/festivals) *Halochoh* (laws), Yiddish and *Tefilah* (prayers) are taught. These subjects are all supported with mostly good schemes of work. However, a few are in the early stages of development and are being trialled. The Yiddish scheme of work is being developed on the lines of the commercial literacy programme used by the school. It is proving most successful in using a phonic approach to the teaching of Yiddish reading and writing. As a result, girls' are making very good progress in this subject.

The curriculum is enhanced by many visits and other experiences and these are a strength of the school. The girls have watched sheep being sheared and chickens being hatched. They have visited, amongst others, the Florence Nightingale Museum, the Transport Museum and a *Shaatnez* laboratory where they were able to check whether linen and wool were together in a piece of fabric. They go to the local supermarket and have watched *Matzo* (unleavened bread) being baked. In addition, visitors help to enrich the curriculum, sharing their expertise. Parents and carers remarked that these extracurricular activities add much to the girls' experiences.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

Arrangements for the girls' welfare, health and safety are good and all the regulations are met. The school has devised and implemented an appropriate range of policies and procedures including those for first aid, health and safety, behaviour and anti-bullying. The girls are well-supervised because of suitable girl-to-staff ratios. There are appropriate sanctions.

Arrangements for the safeguarding of the girls are good. The school has ensured that all staff are trained in child protection at an appropriate level, including the designated officer. Staff have been checked for their suitability to work with children and the information is held on the required single central register of staff appointments. There are trained staff for first aid, including paediatric first aid. Detailed risk assessments are carried out on all aspects of the school and off-site activities. All fire equipment is checked and fire drills take place and are recorded termly. Admission and attendance registers meet the regulations. There are opportunities within the curriculum for the girls to consider healthy lifestyles, with opportunities for regular exercise in physical education. Healthy eating is encouraged and is included in the curriculum, such as when a nutritionist spoke to the girls on *Tu B'Shevat* (birthday of the trees).

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good. This has resulted in the girls making good progress in the short time the school has been registered. The school has made a positive start under the guidance of a well-informed, supportive proprietor and the senior leadership. They have completed a comprehensive self-evaluation and have a clear understanding of the current requirements of the school and what they need to do to improve the provision. They are using this information well. However, the information has not yet been formalised into a school development plan to address the needs of the school in a cohesive and manageable way, identifying realistic timescales and targets.

The headteachers have begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, although they do not yet monitor against national teaching standards to raise the overall quality of teaching even further. The school has identified the need to expand the expertise of the senior management and new appointments have been made for the next academic year.

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and came in especially to talk to the inspectors expressed a very high degree of satisfaction with the school, as did the staff. The complaints procedure meets requirements and parents and carers receive all the required information. The current premises and accommodation in the two houses are suitable for the planned number on roll and the additional year group. A material change is recommended to allow no more than 127 girls in the school as a whole and to extend the age range up to eight years of age.

The proprietor has ensured that all the independent school regulations 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	138516
Inspection number	420258
DfE registration number	204/6006

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 for Girls
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–7 years
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Steiner
Headteacher	Mrs Weiss and Mrs Fogel
Date of previous school inspection	This is the school's first inspection
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,700
Telephone number	0208 800 8541
Email address	vishnitzgirlsschool@gmail.com

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