

Menorah Foundation School

Abbotts Road, Burnt Oak, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 0QS

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress from their different starting points is not good, especially in mathematics and writing. Attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 1 in 2013 does not match the levels reached by pupils in reading or writing.
- The quality of teaching is patchy. Not enough has been good enough over time to ensure the rate of pupils' progress is fast enough.
- In mathematics, teachers do not always use information on what pupils can do to identify the gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding or skills and then plan lessons that close these gaps.
- In some lessons, pupils are not involved quickly enough in learning which is matched to their abilities, thus slowing their progress. In others, teachers do not always plan activities that are sufficiently matched to all pupils' abilities to ensure their work is not too easy or too hard.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they are learning or how they can improve their work because the guidance they get in lessons, or when their work is marked, is of mixed quality, hindering their progress.
- Across the school, there are limited opportunities for pupils to use and practise their writing skills as they write at length or for a sustained period. The amount of progress pupils make in their writing suffers as a result.
- Middle leaders are not actively involved in checking or reporting on pupils' performance or the quality of teaching. As a result, they are not having a strong enough impact on raising standards of progress and attainment.
- When checking some aspects of the school's effectiveness, governors have, until recently, relied on information from the headteacher rather than their own first-hand knowledge.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good and pupils feel safe and well looked after by adults.
- More Year 6 pupils reached higher levels in mathematics this year. Progress in reading is good, as the teaching of reading is better.
- The governors and senior leaders use information on pupils' progress well to accurately identify the key areas that require improvement. The deputy headteacher has worked alongside staff effectively to improve the outcomes for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons or part lessons. For just over half of these, they were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Accompanied by the head of Jewish studies, inspectors observed pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour in three Jewish studies lessons.
- They looked at work in pupils' books during their classroom observations and, with the Year 6 teacher, scrutinised a range of work by pupils from Year 6, who were not in school during the inspection.
- The inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as talking to parents and carers informally during the inspection. They also took account of an email received from one parent.
- Inspectors observed teaching in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and group reading sessions. They listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read individually and chatted to pupils informally throughout the inspection. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at various times around the school.
- They spoke with four school governors and a representative of the local authority. They spoke to school staff, including senior and subject leaders. The views of 17 staff who completed the staff questionnaire were also taken into account.
- The school's work was observed and inspectors looked at documentation such as policies, including those relating to safeguarding, behaviour, and the school's improvement planning, as well as information on pupils' progress and attendance figures. They observed playtimes as well as looking at the school's website.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Marshall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Avtar Sherri	Additional Inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional Inspector
Rob Ridout	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school. In most classes, pupils are taught in one class. As numbers of pupils are increasing in the Nursery and Year 3, there are two classes.
- The proportion of pupils receiving the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra money given to schools by the government to support pupils in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families. The school currently has no pupils from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and receive support through school action is average. The proportion being supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- For just under half the day, pupils are taught from the National Curriculum whilst for the rest of the time they have Jewish studies. This aspect of the school's work was inspected two days after this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure improvements to the quality of teaching so that all is consistently good and some outstanding by making sure:
 - pupils always know what they are aiming to learn in a lesson and how to improve their work
 - expectations of how much pupils will achieve over time are always high enough and shared with the pupils
 - teachers match learning activities to the abilities of less able pupils so they are better supported and the more able are stretched so both groups are able to learn more quickly
 - pupils are actively engaged and learning at all times, especially when teachers are talking to the whole class.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics for pupils in all year groups by:
 - ensuring teachers more accurately use information from checking pupils' understanding to target the mathematical concepts and skills that pupils are missing or having difficulty learning so they do not fall further behind
 - allowing enough time for pupils to write for sustained periods in order to use and practise the skills they have learnt in their literacy lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the middle leadership team so they can take on greater responsibilities in checking the progress pupils make and in reviewing the quality of teaching and learning across the school
 - making sure governors are even more effective in holding the school to account by checking for themselves how well all aspects of the school are doing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, progress made by pupils has not been consistently good enough, especially in mathematics and writing, because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time. Leaders are taking action to tackle weaknesses and teaching is improving.
- Children enter the Nursery with levels of skills and abilities which are typical for their age. They make good progress as a result of effective teaching, particularly in their Reception Year and enter Year 1 with attainment above expected levels.
- In the rest of the school, progress is stronger in some classes than others, with the weakest teaching in Years 3 and 4. However, because of the inconsistent quality of teaching throughout their schooling, pupils' progress overall is not good. Most make only the expected gains from Key Stages 1 to 2. The proportion of those doing better also matches national levels in writing and mathematics.
- In reading, where teaching is stronger across the school, progress is accelerated and more pupils make good progress. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are able to use their phonic skills to read simple words. In the phonic screening check, they scored above the national average in 2012. Results for the current year look positive but as yet, the national benchmark is unknown.
- Achievement in mathematics was weak in 2012 in both Key Stage 1 and 2. The impact of the actions taken to improve mathematics is not yet fully evident in the progress of all pupils, although end of Key Stage 2 outcomes look more positive this year as a result.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress because the work they receive in lessons is not always as well matched to their needs as it could be. When working in small groups, the additional support provided for these pupils is generally better matched and progress accelerates.
- Extra money provided for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used in several ways, including offering these pupils extra support with their learning. As a result, across the school, this group of pupils generally do as well as, and often better than, their peers. In 2012, at the end of Year 6 these pupils did as well as their peers in English and were almost four terms ahead in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not always promoted good achievement because it has not been consistently good enough. This is particularly the case in lower Key Stage 2. The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching shows some has had a negative impact on pupil performance. As a result of leaders' actions, teaching in some classes is improving.
- The strongest teaching is in Reception, Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2. Here, where teaching is typically good, it is characterised by lessons that are well planned and pupils are encouraged to think carefully and extend their learning because teachers use questions skilfully. Teachers keep a close eye on the pupils' learning and change their plans to match pupils' understanding, ability and progress.
- Inconsistencies remain across the school, however, and hinder some pupils' progress, whilst others struggle to keep up. For example, pupils sometimes have difficulty explaining what they are being expected to learn in a lesson because the 'learning objective' has not been clearly communicated or does not match the activity being completed. Similarly, the quality of the advice they receive during a lesson on how to improve or when teachers mark their work is too variable to enable all pupils to use it to make good gains in their learning.
- Most parents and carers commented positively on how their children enjoyed school. Positive relationships between staff and pupils help to keep the pupils focused and generally support their positive attitudes to learning. However, at times, teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour

or work are not high enough and the quality of their work suffers.

- Progress is most rapid in lessons where teachers question and check regularly how well pupils are doing. As a result, they increase the challenge or provide support where needed, tailoring activities to individuals' needs. This is not yet the norm. Generally pupils enjoy lessons although their concentration and progress dip at times when they are less actively involved, for example when teachers spend too long talking to the whole class.
- The quality of support from other adults is variable. At times, a lack of secure subject knowledge means they give incorrect explanations or are unable to correct misconceptions and so their contribution to pupils' learning is lessened. However, the support from some adults is highly effective.
- In mathematics particularly, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding as a result of a legacy of weaker teaching. However, not all teachers have a secure understanding of the levels at which the pupils in their class are working or use the information they gather from checking pupils' understanding effectively to plan lessons that enable pupils to catch up. This hinders their achievement over time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to one another. They are polite, courteous and friendly. Relationships with adults in the school are also good, contributing effectively to a calm, well-ordered and welcoming atmosphere. They are keen to take on a range of different responsibilities, such as school councillors and classroom monitors.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents and carers agree. Pupils know how to seek help if they are worried and are confident that adults will deal swiftly with their concerns. Guidance on keeping safe, such as when using computers, helps pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe from harm. They know how to keep themselves safe both within the school and as they travel further. Cycling proficiency training, as well as talks on road safety and how to safely use London transport, supports this.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They can explain how bullying differs from the occasional 'fall-outs' which they have with each other. Pupils are insistent that these incidents are uncommon.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is generally good and, at times, excellent. However, pupils say that in some classes pupils do not always behave as well as they should. This was observed during the inspection, where lessons did not engage pupils sufficiently, their behaviour dipped and some became less attentive.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Good progress has not been secured for all pupils within the school and consequently, leadership and management require improvement. Recent actions taken to tackle weaknesses in teaching are beginning to yield better outcomes, but these have not yet had time to become sufficiently embedded across the school for all groups of pupils to make good progress.
- As a result of a review in spring 2013, the school and its leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A previously more generous view of the school's effectiveness had been shared by the local authority. A greater level of support from the local authority since then has been effective in strengthening leadership and providing links to other leaders who are supporting the school and its work well.
- The management of teachers' performance is in place and is increasingly being linked with salary progression. The deputy headteacher has provided coaching to improve teaching and is holding teachers to account for the amount of progress the pupils have made in their classes. There is evidence that these actions are beginning to drive standards up, but this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Other leaders have not been regularly involved in checking how well pupils are doing or the

quality of teaching. As a result, their ability to bring about improvements in provision and progress is limited.

- The staff and governors are committed to ensuring that equal opportunities are provided for all pupils, that there is no discrimination, and that the school provides a caring community. For example, pupil premium funding ensures these pupils are able to take part in school visits and other extra-curricular activities.
- The curriculum is balanced and teachers plan to cover topics that engage the interest of pupils. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, with both the National Curriculum and Jewish studies to teach each day, leaders are aware that this leaves little time for pupils to practise and use their writing skills often enough to drive up standards.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well overall. There are plenty of opportunities to enjoy and take part in sports, music and the arts. Pupils learn about others' beliefs as part of wider topics, for example when studying different countries as part of the geography curriculum. A strong moral code is promoted.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are aware how the school compares with other schools locally and nationally. It was their use of this information which enabled them to effectively challenge the headteacher about the rates of progress pupils made in 2012. The subsequent review gave them a clear view of the priorities for the school. As a result, they have become more rigorous in checking how well pupils are doing. They have a clear understanding about the link between management of teachers' performance and salary progression, receiving appropriate information about the quality of teaching from leaders. Governors are involved in the decisions about how pupil premium is spent. They ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	131359
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	403629

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Holder
Headteacher	Clare Neuberger
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 May 2008
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