

# Mechinoh School

13 Upper Park Road, Salford, M7 4HY

<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–28 November 2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	Adequate	3
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Adequate	3
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Adequate	3
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings

### This school is inadequate because

- There are a number of significant health and safety issues.
- Many regulations for independent schools are not met.
- The school has made insufficient progress since the last inspection; school leaders' capacity for securing further improvement is limited and there is no clear plan on how to improve.
- School leaders are not taking sufficiently effective steps to secure good teaching and achievement for all groups of students including those with special educational needs and the more able.
- Leaders have not ensured that the provision for students' welfare, health and safety is at least adequate and that all requirements for the premises and accommodation have been met.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain topics clearly. This is especially the case with those teaching the Talmud.
- Provision for the spiritual and moral development of students is good.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet 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. The details are listed in the full report.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by 10 different teachers. The inspector looked at students' work and held meetings with the headteacher, teachers and students.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of students' progress and assessment records. He checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in six questionnaires returned by staff. There were no Parent View responses.

## Inspection team

Chanan Tomlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Mechino School was opened in 1982 and is situated in Salford, North Manchester. It offers secondary education for up to 73 orthodox Jewish boys, aged between 11 and 16 years with provision for both religious and secular studies.
- There are currently 69 students on roll. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school aims 'to provide a comprehensive religious education for its students and to prepare them for entry into *yeshivas* (Talmudic Colleges) to further their religious education. In addition, it aims 'to equip students with the basic skills required for adult life, such as literacy, numeracy and general knowledge whilst placing great emphasis on developing a high standard of ethical behaviour'.
- On leaving school, all students continue their education in *yeshivas* in the United Kingdom.
- The school's last full inspection was in October 2010. It received a progress monitoring visit in November 2011.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is at least good and always involves:
  - well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, particularly in secular studies
  - activities which interest and engage students in their secular studies, especially students with special educational needs and the most able.
- Ensure that the proprietors and school leaders have a secure understanding of all the regulatory requirements for independent schools, and that these are implemented rigorously.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
  - ensure that references are obtained for new staff, in line with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007) (paragraph 7)
  - correctly implement the written policy for health and safety by ensuring that there is a satisfactory level of fire safety and appropriate accommodation for students that become ill (paragraph 11)
  - comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 by preparing a fire risk assessment for the premises and checking fire safety equipment regularly (paragraph 13)
  - implement the first aid policy effectively by ensuring that there is suitable accommodation for the medical examination, treatment and short-term care of sick and injured students (paragraph 14)
  - complete medical fitness checks for staff appointed from 1 September 2003 (paragraph 19(2)(b))
  - ensure that all required checks on the suitability of staff are completed before new staff are appointed (paragraph 19(3))
  - ensure that suitable washing facilities are provided for students (paragraph 23A(1)(a))
  - ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for students who receive physical education (paragraph 23A(1)(c))

- ensure that there is suitable accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of students (paragraph 23B(1)(a))
- ensure that there is suitable accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured students, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet (paragraph 23B(1)(b))
- ensure that washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water (paragraph 23F(1)(b))
- ensure that all required information is made available to parents of students, parents of prospective students and all interested parties and includes particulars of its policies for admissions, discipline, exclusions, sanctions, the provision for students with special educational needs and English as an additional language, academic performance and staff and their qualifications (paragraph 24(1)(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Adequate

Achievement is adequate. Taking account of their different starting points, students make adequate progress over time due to adequate teaching and an adequate curriculum. The school's systems for charting students' progress with reference to its own aims are adequate. However, systems to compare achievement and progress with national standards are less well developed. Students do not take accredited courses or GCSE's. Test results for English, science and geography indicate that students have made at least adequate progress since the last inspection, in line with the school's expectations and targets. The school has not provided past years' test results for mathematics but results for the current year indicate that students achieve at least satisfactorily and make adequate progress. End of year reports for the last three years show that overall, students have made adequate progress in all *Chol* (secular studies) subjects and better progress in *Kodesh* (religious studies).

Overall, achievement and progress in *Kodesh* subjects including Talmud, *chumash* (Torah and commentaries), *mishna*, *halacha* (religious law) and *nach* (prophets) is good. However, observations during lessons, examination of students' work and discussions with teachers and students indicate that students with special educational needs do not receive enough support to enable them to make good progress. Although the relevant regulations are met, the most able students are not always challenged well enough to achieve the higher standards of which they are capable in secular subjects.

During lessons, students acquire knowledge and an adequate understanding of the various subjects. They develop and apply reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills to a suitable standard. All students continue their education in *yeshivas* where English, reading and writing are not skills that they require for success. The communication and mathematics skills that they acquire at school are sufficient to help them succeed in *yeshivas*. The *yeshivas* attest that the school prepares students well for advanced Talmudic study.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Adequate

Students' behaviour and personal development are adequate. Behaviour in lessons varies according to the teacher and year group. In some good lessons, especially for older students during *Kodesh* lessons, behaviour is good and this contributes to a productive learning environment where students are engaged and maintain concentration. During lessons for younger students, especially in *Chol* lessons, behaviour is only adequate and sometimes minor disruptive behaviour occurs resulting in slower progress for some. Overall, students have good attitudes towards *Kodesh* work but appreciate their *Chol* studies less; as a result, achievement and progress in secular studies is only adequate.

Overall, behaviour in corridors and outdoors during breaks is adequate but some students become rather boisterous. Students have some awareness of the different forms of bullying; they claim that bullying does happen occasionally but when it does, it is dealt with appropriately. Students say that they feel safe in school. Attendance is good and the school day and lessons start punctually.

Provision for students' spiritual and moral development is good; social and cultural development is less well developed and is only adequate. Students have opportunities to grow in self-esteem and self-confidence through debates amongst themselves and with teachers during Talmud lessons, public speaking during religious celebrations and a yearly performance around Purim time. They develop spiritually through daily prayer sessions and *Kodesh* studies that take up most of the day. Students gain a keen awareness of moral issues through regular *mussar* (religious ethics) lessons and discussions with their teachers; as a result, they learn to respect others' needs and interests and to make responsible and reasoned judgements. Weekly assemblies and opportunities for students to collect for the school at different points during the year support social development.

Students gain a good understanding and awareness of their own culture through *Kodesh* work and the pervading religious atmosphere in the school. They gain a more limited awareness of other cultures through elements of *Kodesh* and geography. Students are taught to respect all people as part of the religious tenet that everyone is 'created in the image of God'. They learn about public institutions and services through work on citizenship which also enables them to develop the attitudes and qualities that will help them contribute to British society in the future. There is no evidence that students are taught issues of a political nature in an unbalanced way.

### Quality of teaching

### Adequate

Teaching is adequate overall but there is too great a difference between teaching in the *Chol* and *Kodesh* subjects. As a result, students make at least adequate but not good progress. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are provided with extra support through additional tuition organised and paid for by their parents. Teachers plan some work in lessons to meet students' different needs but not enough to ensure that students with a range of abilities can all make better than adequate progress across the full curriculum. When more-able students have mastered a topic, they are encouraged by their teachers to undertake different studies by themselves quietly during lessons. There is insufficient support for these students to accelerate their learning and enable them to make better than adequate progress. Teachers' expectations of students' achievement in *Chol* are low and the subject matter is occasionally too easy. *Kodesh* teachers have higher expectations of students and encourage them to apply themselves and achieve good results.

Teachers plan lessons which enable students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects to adequate levels. However, as plans are not always written down teachers cannot always focus well on the range of students' abilities and needs in order to provide them with good support. Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught adequately resulting in adequate achievement and progress in these areas of study. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain topics clearly. During *Kodesh* lessons, especially those on the Talmud, students are encouraged to discuss and debate topics amongst themselves and with their teachers. They also learn independently and collaboratively when they revise their lessons in pairs. During *Chol* lessons, especially mathematics, students proceed with text-based work on their own and teachers circulate and support them. This enables students to make adequate progress according to their abilities because it enables teachers to explain the subject matter again to help students to complete the work correctly. Overall, both *Kodesh* and *Chol* lessons are paced well.

Generally, *Kodesh* subjects are taught orally and lessons involve little written work. Work in *Chol* is not always marked well and when it is, it is usually a series of ticks and does not specify areas that need to improve; this impedes good achievement and progress. Teachers assess students' learning and progress effectively through regular tests for both *Kodesh* and *Chol* work. Most teachers

manage disruptive behaviour effectively. However, with younger year groups, especially in *Chol* lessons where behaviour is sometimes not as good, it is managed less well.

### Quality of curriculum

#### Adequate

The curriculum is adequate and contributes to adequate achievement and progress. It meets the needs and interests of students mainly because of its emphasis on *Kodesh* work. The *Kodesh* curriculum covers all of the areas of religious study necessary to equip students well for *yeshiva* learning. The *Chol* curriculum gives students adequate experiences in all of the required areas of learning and gives them opportunities to make adequate progress in developing their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills. All students intend to pursue advanced Talmudic studies for their foreseeable futures. They therefore have limited interest in courses that lead to accredited qualifications, including GCSE awards. The leadership of the school has not taken sufficiently robust action to raise the status of the *Chol* subjects.

Both the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula are suitably organised and planned. They generally indicate how students of different ages and aptitudes are to be supported and how students are enabled to progress from one competency to another. However, the implementation of the set curriculum in providing work for students of varying abilities varies according to the teacher. Schemes of work meet requirements but are not detailed. Students are prepared for their future economic well-being through a suitable grounding in basic English and mathematics. Some aspects of education for personal, social and health education are effective. For example, students are keen to lead healthy lifestyles and have a good awareness of health risks. Extra-curricular activities for enrichment are limited and include periodic trips to museums and an aquarium. These activities, plus reward trips and annual residential trips are enjoyed by all students.

### Pupils' welfare, health and safety

#### Inadequate

Provision for the welfare, health and safety of students is inadequate; not all of the independent school standards are met. The school has established policies and procedures that are generally in keeping with current legislation. The school implements its anti-bullying policy effectively because rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with appropriately. It does not implement its health and safety policies effectively because: there is inadequate accommodation for the medical examination, treatment and short-term care of sick and injured students; the school has not prepared a fire risk assessment; and fire equipment is not checked regularly resulting in inadequate fire safety. Risk assessments have been prepared for the premises and accommodation but are outdated. The school prepares risk assessments with suitable detail for excursions out of school. During this inspection, a small number of minor omissions were found in some policies; these were brought to the attention of senior leaders and were rectified. Fire drills are conducted regularly and are recorded appropriately. Although one member of staff is trained in first-aid, the school does not implement its first-aid policy effectively because there is inadequate accommodation for students who may become ill.

Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements, are reviewed regularly and the school implements its child protection policy effectively. All staff and the proprietor have received clearances through the Disclosure and Barring Service to work with children; these and other checks are included in a single central register. A designated person for child protection and all staff have attended the required training at the required levels. Staff induction procedures are inadequate because the school does not obtain character references as part of the recruitment process or medical fitness checks for new staff before they are appointed. All staff are from within the orthodox Jewish community and are usually well-known to senior leaders. However, the school does not acquire written character references for new staff to be kept on file. New staff are made aware of child protection procedures before they commence work.

The school has established a rota for teachers to ensure that students are supervised appropriately

during break times. Parents, carers and other agencies have little to do with the running of the school and therefore have little input in ensuring that students are safe. Despite this, students say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. Most teachers promote at least adequate levels of behaviour in lessons; behaviour in corridors and outside during break times is sometimes less well managed. Students learn about nutrition and health during science and many are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles.

## Leadership and management

## Inadequate

Leadership and management are inadequate and the school has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. Senior leaders have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met; these include regulatory failures that have a negative impact on students' welfare, health and safety. Senior leaders have good relationships with staff but for the most part are not involved in developing the curriculum or monitoring its provision. They place great emphasis on *Kodesh* work and expect students to achieve and progress in their religious studies. They communicate these expectations to staff appropriately, resulting in good achievement and progress in *Kodesh* studies. However, expectations for achievement and progress in *Chol* throughout the school are lower resulting in only adequate progress overall. Teachers state that the provision for their professional development is inadequate; they cite the reason for this being that it is a small school. Senior leaders do not conduct lesson observations and have little input in improving the teaching methods adopted or the resources used by teachers. They have not produced a self-assessment document or a development plan to identify areas that need to improve. As a result, the overall quality of teaching is only adequate and areas that need to be improved are neglected. The proprietor is only marginally involved in the running of the school and does not challenge leaders to improve the provision.

Senior leaders have produced curricular policies to ensure that students make adequate progress in all subjects including literacy. The school ethos promotes adequate behaviour and personal development. Provision for students' spiritual and moral development is good; provision for their social and cultural development meets requirements but is less well developed. Systems to monitor and track students' achievement and progress are adequate. Senior leaders do not have a precise picture of the achievement and progress of all individual students, including those with special educational needs and those that are more able. This limits the quality of lesson planning and the extent of students' learning.

Parents, carers and other agencies have little involvement in the running of the school and rely on senior leaders to ensure that the school achieves positive benefits for its students. Parents and carers expressed no opinions with regard to the school's provision during this inspection. Overall, the premises and accommodation are maintained and decorated to a suitable standard and adequately support the curriculum. However, there is no warm running water for students to wash their hands and there are no suitable changing and showering facilities for when they take part in physical education. The school does not have facilities for students who are unwell that meet requirements. The school does not meet the requirements related to the provision of information for parents and carers because the prospectus does not include: particulars of its policies for admissions, discipline, exclusions, sanctions, provision for students with special educational needs and English as an additional language; or information about academic performance and details of staff and their qualifications. The complaints procedure includes all of the required details.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105999
<b>Inspection number</b>	422695
<b>DfE registration number</b>	355/6020

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Boys' secondary, faith school
<b>School status</b>	Independent secondary school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	69
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mechinoh School Organisation
<b>Chair</b>	Rabbi M Kupetz
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rabbi N Baddiel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	By contribution
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 795 9275

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

