

The Gateshead Cheder Primary School

Former Felling Police Station, Sunderland Road, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 9NJ

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| Inspection dates | 11–13 March 2014 | |
| 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

- Pupils' achievement is good. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress in *Kodesh* (religious studies) and good progress from their starting points in *Chol* (secular studies), particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, enabling children to make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and their personal development are outstanding. They show great respect to adults and to each other.
- The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good, enabling pupils to achieve well over time, particularly in their *Kodesh* studies.
- Leaders and governors have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching, the curriculum and pupils' achievement, particularly in *Kodesh* studies and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because they rigorously check and evaluate the work of the school. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection. Leaders have ensured provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding.

It is not yet outstanding because

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length and fully develop their writing skills in their *Chol* studies, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers do not always ask probing questions to promote pupils' thinking skills.
- While teachers give effective oral feedback, teachers' written marking of pupils' work does not give them clear feedback on how to improve and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to marking.

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 school was informed about the inspection one day before the inspectors visited.
- The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 14 teachers, some jointly with the Principal and headteacher of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They also heard pupils read, conducted a learning walk and evaluated samples of pupils' work. Discussions were held with a group of pupils, the Principal, headteachers and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools. A wide range of documents were evaluated, including those in relation to safeguarding and policy documents to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views expressed in questionnaires from 29 staff and 51 parents and carers.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Christine Inkster, Lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Nathaniel Lieberman | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The Gateshead Cheder Primary School is a small primary school for Orthodox Jewish boys and is registered to admit pupils from three to 11 years of age.
- It was established in October 2009. It serves the strictly Orthodox Jewish Community in Gateshead and provides for pupils' specific religious and educational needs.
- There are currently 94 full-time and 18 part-time boys on roll, from three to nine years of age. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school moved to its current site in September 2012 and the number of registered pupils was increased to 200.
- The school aims to 'provide an all-round excellent education in both religious and secular studies' through 'an environment within which the boys will be able to grow in their *Torah* (religious learning), to develop good *Middos* (character traits) and to become good citizens'.
- The Principal leads the *Kodesh* curriculum. He is supported by two headteachers, one for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the other for the *Chol* curriculum. The *Chol* headteacher is recently in post.
- The school was last inspected in October 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement, particularly in the *Chol* curriculum, by:
 - ensuring that there are more opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring teachers ask more probing questions to promote pupils' thinking skills
 - ensuring that written marking and feedback identifies what pupils need to do to improve their work and make sure that pupils have regular opportunities to respond to marking.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement, including that of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is good because of the good quality of teaching and the curriculum. Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below those typically found in children of their age. Children in the current cohorts are making good progress because each child is supported closely to enable them to learn a wide range of skills. They make particularly good progress in their speaking and listening skills as they have many opportunities to explain their views and ideas. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in *Chol* studies to reach standards broadly expected for their age in Year 5 in reading and mathematics. However, pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid and slows in Key Stage 1 as there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils' writing in Years 4 and 5 shows good use of vocabulary and attention is paid to developing pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress because work is specifically targeted to meet their needs.

Pupils' achievement in their *Kodesh* studies is good and sometimes outstanding. Some pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, are making outstanding progress in their reading and have developed skills a year ahead of their age. This is helping to lay secure foundations for future learning. The Principal and *Rebbes* (teachers) have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and work is challenging, particularly for more-able pupils. Pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge of *Gemara*, *Mishna* (Oral Law) and *Chumash* (Bible studies).

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. Pupils greatly enjoy their learning and love coming to school. This is endorsed by the extremely positive responses to the questionnaire completed by parents and carers who particularly value the way in which every child is treated as a unique individual. Pupils' attendance is high and they arrive in school on time. Pupils say they feel extremely safe and confirm there are no incidents of bullying. Pupils spoken to during the inspection explained that they are extremely proud of their school.

Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and participate with great enthusiasm in lessons. Pupils' behaviour is at least good and often outstanding. There are excellent relationships between pupils and staff, and between pupils themselves. Pupils show great respect to their teachers and to one another, as shown during prayer time for the youngest children when they participated in greetings to one another, showing great kindness and consideration. The school does much to promote pupils' self-esteem and confidence, and pupils know their views and ideas are valued. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are happy and settled in school and are able to choose and participate in activities independently. They also cooperate extremely well together, such as when a group of children worked together to complete a large floor jigsaw. The school has weekly *Middos* (character traits) projects to help to develop pupils' social skills and interaction with one another. Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong as this is emphasised in their *Kodesh* studies. Pupils develop their spirituality through the daily prayer sessions, in the *Kodesh* curriculum and through opportunities to express their ideas and feelings through music, drama and art. They show great empathy for others, for example when discussing the plight of people in the Ukraine. Pupils were very excited about celebrating *Purim* (festival of lots) and Reception children participated very well in drama and role-play associated with the story of the festival. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community through fundraising for charity and the school choir performs for people in the community.

Pupils are well-prepared for life in modern, multicultural, democratic British society. They showed their understanding of those from other cultures in their literacy topic on 'Handa's Surprise' and through their topic work on China. When participating in a project about Jewish sages from around the world, they learned about the different cultures and countries where they lived. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England. This is shown by work during a literacy topic when pupils readily discussed lie detectors and this led to a discussion about the work of the police and courtroom procedures. They have visitors into school, such as the police, members of the fire service and Jewish emergency medical staff. There is no evidence that pupils are taught issues of a political nature in an unbalanced way.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good, enabling pupils to make good progress. There are particular strengths in the teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in *Kodesh* studies. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are interested and engaged in their learning because of effective interaction with adults. Adults assess children's learning effectively and identify appropriate 'next steps' to help them improve their knowledge, skills and understanding in all the areas of learning. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those which children choose for themselves. The particular interests of individual children are followed-up and catered for well. For example, children learned about mechanical vehicles, such as cars and diggers, and were keen to follow-up their interest in activities outdoors when playing with wheeled toys.

The quality of teaching in *Chol* is more variable. Teaching in mathematics and science shows that pupils engage in a range of investigative and practical activities as well as developing their skills well in calculation and number work. Pupils are making good progress in their reading and are able to talk about a wide range of books they have read. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length, particularly in Key Stage 1, and are not developing their writing skills as well as they should. Teachers do not always ask probing questions to promote pupils' thinking skills. While teachers provide effective oral feedback on how pupils can improve their work, the quality of written marking and feedback is more variable. There are some examples of effective marking, but pupils are not always given information on how they can improve their work or given time to respond. Teachers assess pupils' work through regular tests and keep records of their progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given specific targeted work and support to enable them to make similar progress to their peers.

The quality of teaching in *Kodesh* is good, with some that it is outstanding. The Principal has expert knowledge and has ensured that all *Rebbes* (teachers) are also very secure in their subject knowledge. They provide very good role models for pupils to follow. *Rebbes* use skilful questioning to move pupils on in their learning. There are excellent relationships between pupils and *Rebbes*, and pupils are extremely enthusiastic when responding to learning. The Principal has a timetabled session to test each class orally on a weekly basis in their *Kodesh* studies. He keeps detailed records of each pupil's achievement in individual files, including monthly assessments carried out by *Rebbes*. Any pupils who are underachieving are promptly given one-to-one support to help them improve. The Principal uses assessment information very effectively to instruct *Rebbes* on how to plan and deliver their lessons.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good, enabling pupils to achieve well. The curriculum is divided into two parts: *Kodesh* (religious studies) are taught in the morning and *Chol* (secular studies) in the afternoon. There are effective links between the *Kodesh* and *Chol* curricula; for example, aspects of personal, social, health and citizenship education are taught discretely as well as being woven through the curriculum. There are particular strengths in the *Kodesh* curriculum, reflecting the Jewish ethos of the school. The *Kodesh* curriculum includes all of the subjects appropriate to the needs of the pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils

demonstrate a very good knowledge of *Gemara, Mishna and Chumash*. Many aspects of secular learning, including literacy, history, geography and music, are integrated within *Kodesh* studies. Practical subjects, such as art, design and technology, physical education, music and drama, are taught alongside academic subjects through the *Chol* curriculum. There is an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy, including developing pupils' communication skills. Pupils spoken to indicated that they find their work in science particularly interesting. There are policies, plans and schemes of work, including published schemes of work, for these subjects; however, they are currently being revised. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are limited as pupils are transported to and from school by bus. However, there are opportunities to participate in a school choir and in activities in the community. There are a range of visits and visitors into school. Pupils have visited South Shields beach to learn about the parting of the Red Sea as part of their Bible studies and have also visited local parks, museums and the library. The quality of the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities provided for children and there are good opportunities for children to follow-up their own interests. The curriculum is well planned and meets the needs of children well.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding and all the independent school regulations are met. Safeguarding arrangements are securely in place and ensure that pupils are exceptionally well cared for. All the required checks on the suitability of staff are completed prior to appointment and are recorded as required on a single central register. Staff have a very good understanding of their roles in ensuring the safety of pupils and all staff have been fully trained, with designated officers receiving enhanced training, in child protection procedures. Pupils say they feel very safe and appreciate the part played by staff, for example when staff travel on the bus with them to and from school and ensure that they are carefully passed into the care of their parents and carers. Pupils are adamant there is now no bullying as the Principal has promptly dealt with any incidents of bullying which used to occur. They are fully aware of bullying in all its forms, including that based on prejudice or intolerance, and know that this is never acceptable. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and ensures there is no discrimination.

All essential policies and procedures are firmly in place, including those for health and safety, educational visits, the prevention of bullying, discipline, first aid and safeguarding. The school has successfully undertaken all the required risk assessments, including making sure that fire regulations are met and that the school environment is safe and secure. All leaders and staff implement the procedures very effectively. Pupils fully understand the process of rewards and sanctions, and know that staff have high expectations of behaviour. There have been no exclusions. Pupils naturally show kindness and consideration towards one another and demonstrate great respect for others. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of keeping healthy and know they should eat and drink healthily.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good and ensures that pupils achieve well. Leaders and governors share their vision for the school with staff, parents, carers, pupils and the wider community. There is a very positive ethos within the school that fosters pupils' good academic achievement and outstanding personal development. Staff morale is high, as shown by the extremely positive responses to the staff questionnaire. Staff are proud to work in the school and feel fully supported by leaders and governors. The Principal and headteachers are highly visible in and around the school and take an active role in classroom activities.

The leadership of the *Kodesh* department and the Early Years Foundation Stage are strong. The Principal and the headteacher of the Early Years Foundation Stage regularly and effectively check the work of all staff and ensure that they are supported to improve their practice through good opportunities for training and development. They give targets for improvement and these are followed-up to ensure they have been met. The leader of the *Chol* is new to her role and is

developing her skills in checking and evaluating the work of the school. She is currently closely involved in revising the *Chol* curriculum.

The governors are highly committed to the success of the school and are closely involved both strategically and in the day-to-day running of the school. The school's overall self-evaluation and action plans are currently being revised and governors demonstrate they know the school well. They have a very good knowledge of the strengths and areas to be improved and ensure that any concerns or issues are promptly addressed. The self-evaluation for the Early Years Foundation Stage is accurate and there are effective plans in place to improve practice further. Leaders have taken positive steps to form good relationships with parents and carers. They are invited to parents' meetings and an annual report is provided on their child's progress. The responses to the questionnaire distributed to parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and the impact of leaders and managers in improving the outcomes for pupils.

The premises and accommodation are safe and well-maintained, creating a suitable learning environment for pupils. Parents, carers and others are provided with all the required information about the school through the school prospectus and parents' handbook. The complaints policy fully meets requirements. Governors, leaders and managers have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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 the quality of education has serious weaknesses. |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136000 |
| Inspection number | 422818 |
| DfE registration number | 390/6008 |

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.

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| Type of school | Jewish Primary School |
| School status | Independent School |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Boys |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 112 |
| Number of part time pupils | 18 |
| Proprietor | Mr Joseph Schleider |
| Chair | Mr Avrohom Rabinowitz |
| Principal | Rabbi M S Roitenbarg |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13–14 October 2010 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £2,800 |
| Telephone number | 0191 469 0630 |
| Email address | admin@thecheder.co.uk |

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