

# Yeshivah Ohr Torah School

28 Broom Lane, Salford, Lancashire. M7 4FX

<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–27 March 2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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	Adequate	3
Leadership and management	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### This school is good because

- Students' achievement in *Kodesh* (religious studies) is outstanding. Achievement in *Chol* (secular subjects) is good.
- The *Chol* subjects are good. These subjects provide students with a broad and balanced education. The *Kodesh* learning activities are outstanding.
- Staff provide students with superb guidance and support. Consequently, their behaviour and personal developments are outstanding.
- The trustees, headteacher and other managers have improved the school since the last inspection. As a result, teaching is good with much that is outstanding and achievement is good.
- Parents, staff and other members of the local community are extremely supportive of the school, as are previous students and those who currently attend.

### It is not yet outstanding because

- Students make good progress in their learning in English and mathematics but teachers' systems for checking the effectiveness of the learning activities on offer and students' progress over time are not sufficiently robust.
- All of the regulations are met but the trustees and school managers do not fully demonstrate understanding of the independent school standards, such as in respect of the staff training required for safeguarding.

### 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

- This inspection was carried out with one day’s notice. The inspectors observed nine lessons, given by four teachers, including one in late evening.
- The inspectors looked at students’ work and held meetings with the trustees, headteacher and teachers. Discussions with students occurred during lessons and breaks.
- The inspectors looked at teachers’ planning and their records. They scrutinised policies and other important documents.
- Parents’, carers’ and staff views were gathered through their returned questionnaires. Meetings were held with five parents. The views of two previous students were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Terry McKenzie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Glickman

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Yeshivah Ohr Torah School provides a Jewish faith-based education for boys aged 11 to 16 years. Currently, students begin their education here around the age of 13. Situated in a residential district of Salford it serves the local Jewish community from which all of the students come. It was opened in 1995.
- The school is currently at capacity with 39 students. No student has a statement of special educational needs but a few are identified as requiring additional help in their studies.
- Yeshivah Ohr Torah aims 'to enable our pupils to reach their maximum potential as productive members of society within the guidelines of traditional Jewish observance and family values'. As a *yeshivah* (a form of Talmudic college) the aim is to prepare students for moving on to continue this form of education at a higher level in this country and abroad, particularly in Israel.
- The school is closely associated with the Chassidic community. The parents and carers who send their children here rather than to other local Jewish schools do so because they desire the particular faith-based education that the school provides. Students spend much more time each week at the school than they would in mainstream schools. For example, some lessons operate in the evenings and at weekends.
- The school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2010.

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

- Teachers must enable students to demonstrate the best possible progress in *Chol* by:
  - ensuring that the subjects of English and mathematics are planned in more detail to show how teachers can get the best out of their students
  - devising and implementing systems to check more closely the attainment and progress of students in English and mathematics.
- The trustees and other managers should put in place systems for gaining and showing they have a fully accurate view of the school's performance in meeting the independent school standards.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

**Good**

Students' achievement is good overall but in *Kodesh* it is outstanding. Achievement in secular subjects is good because teaching is good in that regard and there is much strength in the subjects offered by the school. All groups of students achieve equally well over the passage of time. Students are committed to doing their best. They work closely together, often in pairs, to support each other in learning. Students often make very rapid progress in their understanding of Jewish texts and commentaries. Their analyses of the texts is tested when they provide their own interpretations to the whole class. This way of learning helps students to develop advanced skills in 'thinking on their feet' and speaking publicly. Students are encouraged to challenge teachers in the lessons that resemble lectures. Again, this way of learning encourages students' debating skills and helps ensure accuracy in their understanding. Occasionally, students are required to investigate something that is unfamiliar to them, to research it and provide a short lecture to the class. This was observed by an inspector when a student spoke about the science of electricity, demonstrating that his research was meaningful and accurate.

Many aspects of secular learning are intertwined with *Kodesh*. For example, in a religious education lesson seen the theme was Passover. However, much of the content was devoted to aspects of personal, social and health education and how people should relate to others. Students' achievements are not outstanding overall because too little is known about their attainment and progress in English and mathematics in relation to all other students of a similar age. However, the evidence from observations by inspectors of teaching and learning in these subjects indicates that students generally make good progress. School records indicate that students make exceptional progress in religious studies. The skills students demonstrate in the reading and speaking of a variety of languages are profound. They slip seamlessly between English, Yiddish and Aramaic. Parents and carers report that they are delighted with their children's achievements in *Kodesh*.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

**Outstanding**

The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of students are outstanding. In most classes students demonstrate an unrelenting determination to succeed. This is particularly evident in *Kodesh*. Here, students are paired to encourage each other and work closely together. They demonstrate very high standards of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provision in these regards is very effective. The school behaviour policy identifies rewards and sanctions that could be used but these are hardly ever required because students are so well behaved and self-motivated. During the inspection students were extremely polite and respectful to the visitors, demonstrating curiosity about the inspection process and volunteering positive information about the school and their experiences of it. Students said that they greatly enjoy coming to school, even during the evenings and weekends. This is because they appreciate the care of the teachers and camaraderie of their classmates. Through the subjects of study they learn how to deal with potential bullying and harassment, and how to keep themselves safe outside of the local environment in which they live. The rate of attendance is very high and unauthorised absence almost unknown.

Parents and carers report that the highly effective nurturing environment of the school is instrumental in preparing students for moving on. Some said that they could not wish for a better school because of the opportunities it provides for their children. Personal development is outstanding. The themes of *Kodesh* and *Chol* remind students constantly of their moral responsibilities. Students learn to respect the views of others and gain tolerance and understanding of people from other backgrounds. They learn about their own religion and heritage and gain information about others from different backgrounds in this country and abroad. Charitable ventures are undertaken outside of school. Within their own community students are

encouraged to work for the benefit of all by, for example, preparing meals for the whole school to enjoy and inviting people from outside to join them. Students engage with members of the wider world when they go swimming or visit shops and commercial centres as part of their studies. Other trips such as the recent visit to Anglesey help to widen the horizons of students and bring them into direct contact with others from outside their community. The school maintains links with centres of learning in other countries such as in Israel. Through the subject of personal, social, health education and citizenship, students learn about the public institutions and services in England. There is an emphasis on maintaining balanced political views and extreme notions are not tolerated in the school. Consequently, students are prepared well for playing their part in a multicultural and democratic country.

### Quality of teaching

**Good**

Teaching is good overall, with much that is outstanding, particularly in *Kodesh*. This makes a strong contribution to the learning and achievement of all groups of students. Students receive high quality support from the adults to sustain their concentration throughout long hours of study. The staff ensure that students have as wide a range of opportunities as possible to learn and make progress. For example, teachers provide lessons during the evenings and weekends and accompany students on residential holidays. Teachers prepare interesting and appropriate lessons designed to stimulate and challenge students. They demonstrate excellent subject knowledge in all areas of *Kodesh*. As a result, the progress made by students is always at least good and often outstanding. In every lesson, teachers provide opportunities for students to strengthen their skills in literacy, and on occasions they introduce aspects of numeracy. As a result, students' linguistic skills are excellent and teachers ensure they have opportunities to work proficiently in a number of different languages associated with their Jewish studies.

Students very much respect the adults with whom they work and appreciate the excellent spiritual and moral values they disseminate. The close professional relationships between staff and students are instrumental in helping students to learn and make progress. The teachers know the students extremely well and have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each. Arrangements are always made to provide additional help for any that require it, including through the effective direction of learning support assistants. As a result, all students have opportunities to demonstrate success in their religious and secular studies. The regulations are met but teachers have not implemented a full range of assessment systems and as a consequence they know too little about students' progress in English and mathematics. Consequently, it is not currently possible to be certain that all students are making appropriate degrees of progress in these subjects in comparison to others of a similar age in other schools.

### Quality of curriculum

**Good**

The good quality of subjects and activities offered by the school cover all of the required areas of learning and are instrumental in encouraging students' excellent personal development and helping them to achieve well. Teachers include many aspects of learning through religious education and the study of Jewish history, thus helping students to gain in self-confidence and self-esteem as their general knowledge of the world grows. Learning in this way includes science, geography, art and music. Much thought is given by teachers to how they will include aspects of secular learning in their religious education lessons and they skilfully incorporate these. As a result, students are provided with valuable experiences throughout their time in the school and this helps them to prepare for the future. For example, during the inspection students showed how they had gained knowledge, skills and understanding in design and technology through manufacturing models of the Ark of the Covenant and by repairing worn copies of the Talmud. English and mathematics are taught as specialist lessons. The regulations are met, but the work being done to ensure the content of these courses is fully meeting the needs of students is incomplete. All physical education takes place offsite at a local swimming baths where, in accordance with the school's risk assessments, arrangements are made to provide facilities for students to change and to have

showers. There are many learning activities for students to enjoy during the normal school day. Nevertheless, students spend a great deal of time at the school during evenings and weekends undertaking productive activities such as making things or playing music.

The close relationship with the local community enables students to take advantage of the expertise of business people and others who provide opportunities for students to gain experience of the world of work. Often, people come to school from the community to talk with students and share their expertise with them. Careers advice is provided so that students and their parents or carers remain fully aware of the future pathways open to them.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Adequate**

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is adequate. All of the regulations are met. Students report that they feel very safe here and this view is strongly supported by parents, carers and members of staff. Bullying and harassment are virtually unknown in the school. Students are provided with good information on how to keep themselves safe, for example, by dealing with risks associated with bullying. The policy for the safeguarding of students explains clearly how staff should deal with any incidents relating to child protection. The school has a very effective policy in place for the prevention of bullying. The school's policy regarding managing students' behaviour including the use of rewards and sanctions is clearly explained to everyone. Risk assessments are produced when educational trips and visits are undertaken. All staff have received training in child protection and the safeguarding of students. However, at the beginning of the inspection the training for the designated person for safeguarding was not up to date. The appropriate training was booked for renewal before the end of the inspection and the inspectors were satisfied that the designated person has maintained an appropriate degree of knowledge and experience in safeguarding matters. The school follows the latest government guidance relating to the recruitment of staff. All of the required checks are recorded in a single central record.

The school's health and safety policy meets the requirements but two issues of health and safety were brought to the attention of the trustees. They dealt with the matters immediately and the regulations were met. Sufficient staff have been trained at the appropriate level for first aid. All of the requirements for fire safety are met including having an appropriate fire safety policy and risk assessment in place. Regular fire drills and evacuations by the whole school are undertaken and contractors regularly visit to test the electrical and fire safety equipment. The admissions and attendance registers are maintained correctly. Staff supervise students at all times when they are on the premises, including during the evenings and weekends.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Good**

Leadership and management are good. The trustees are members of the local community and represent it very effectively to the school. Consequently, they enjoy the trust and confidence of parents, carers and others. The headteacher and managers are reflective of the work of the school in respect of teaching and learning, particularly with regard to *Kodesh*. As a result, the teaching and achievement in these lessons are often outstanding. The headteacher ensures that important aspects of the broader learning activities are contained in *Chol*; in particular, students have opportunities to gain skills in English literacy, alongside the other languages spoken and written. *Kodesh* courses of study particularly meet the needs of the students and prepare them very well for moving onto the next stages of their lives and into higher levels of study. The school's leaders give excellent attention to the personal development of students and, as a result, students demonstrate maturity in their relationships and a strong commitment to the values and aims of the school.

The school self-evaluation by leaders and managers does not extend sufficiently to the consideration of the independent school standards. Consequently, while all of the regulations are met, the school is currently unable to show how and why it meets the regulations and this leads to

occasional weaknesses in implementing important practices. Parents and carers are extremely enthusiastic about the school and highly supportive of it. Their views are supported by the staff and students. All of the required information is provided to parents, carers and others, including a suitable complaints procedure. The premises and accommodation are suitable and safe for learning and all of 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 the quality of education has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130287
<b>Inspection number</b>	422716
<b>DfE registration number</b>	355/6031

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>	Jewish Faith School
<b>School status</b>	Independent School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	39
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Ohr Torah Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Neuwirth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rabbi Y Wind
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	No fixed fees
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7921230
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