

Beis Malka Belz Girls School

401 Bury New Road, Salford, M7 2BT

Inspection dates

8–10 July 2014

Overall effectiveness

Achievement of pupils

Quality of teaching

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Requires improvement

Requires improvement

Good

Requires improvement

3

3

3

2

3

Summary of key findings

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

- Not enough students make good progress in written English.
- The most able and least able students are not set work which enables them to achieve to the best of their abilities.
- Teachers do not consistently mark pupils' work in a way that shows them what they need to do to improve.
- The resources for outside learning do not allow children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make best use of their learning time.
- Younger pupils are not taught enough about the sounds that letters make.
- Leaders and managers have not yet implemented changes which would enable improvements in teaching and learning to take place more quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are happy to come to school and are considerate and caring towards one another.
- Staff enjoy good relationships with the pupils and model courtesy and thoughtful behaviour.
- Behaviour in lessons and at all other times is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and enabled to make progress in line with their peers.
- Performance management structures have been put in place for all staff.
- A range of internal and external training opportunities are offered to staff to enable them to gain recognised qualifications.
- Leaders and managers work extremely hard to ensure that all staff and pupils are well supported.

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 days notice.
- The inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by 10 teachers, many jointly with a member of the senior management team. They examined pupils’ work, listened to them read, and scrutinised school records and policies.
- The inspectors spoke with staff, pupils and proprietors. They took into account responses from five staff and 30 parents to Ofsted questionnaires distributed during the inspection. There were no responses on the Parent View website, as families within this community do not access the Internet.
- The Department for Education (DfE) asked the inspection team to consider the school’s request for a material change to increase the number of pupils for which it is registered from 110 to 250, using additional areas of the building which it currently occupies.

Inspection team

Michael Glickman, Lead inspector
Joanna Sharpe

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Beis Malka Belz Girl's School is an independent primary day school for orthodox Jewish girls, located in the centre section of a large Victorian terraced building in Salford, North Manchester.
- The school plays an important role in catering for the growing Chassidic community of North Manchester. Its aim is to 'instil in pupils a wide breadth of knowledge in both kodesh and secular subjects and help them develop good character traits and be spiritually, socially, emotionally and culturally well-developed.'
- There are currently 152 pupils between 3 and 11 years of age on the roll, of whom 59 are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has a high turnover of staff. Supply teachers are recruited directly by the school and supply agencies are not used.
- Pupils study kodesh (religious studies) in the morning and chol (secular studies) in the afternoon.
- The school was last inspected in May 2011, when it was judged to provide a satisfactory quality of education. There were a number of regulatory failures relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the provision of information to parents and carers, which were resolved by the time of the monitoring inspection in January 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils, particularly in written English, and the quality of teaching by
 - using lesson planning and teaching methods that ensure that activities match the abilities of all pupils, especially the most and least able, so that they are able to achieve to the best of their abilities
 - giving all pupils, particularly the most able, more opportunities to write creatively and at length
 - improving the teaching of reading in younger classes by the consistent use of phonics (the sounds that letter make)
 - ensuring that staff consistently mark pupils' work in a way that supports progress by showing them how to improve their work and the next steps they should take in their learning.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' learning by
 - further developing the outside learning environment by increasing the quantity and quality of resources available for pupils, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - successfully and effectively implementing the proposed new management structure.
- An external review of governance is highly recommended to be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Requires improvement

- Kodesh is taught in Yiddish and chol in English, although nursery classes are conducted entirely in Yiddish with English language teaching commencing in the Reception. As a result, pupils rapidly become fluent speakers of both languages.
- School records show that children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy at or slightly below those expected. When they leave, the Reception class they remain below the expected level in reading and writing, but have reached the expected level in numeracy and communication skills.
- The school uses national tests to assess pupils. Although data is incomplete, it, together with pupils' work, indicates that as pupils move up the school, their progress in reading and mathematics approaches that expected nationally. However, progress in written English remains below average. In science, some pupils make more than expected progress.
- The school encourages individual reading in English. However, in the younger classes, phonics (the sounds that letters make) are not used to support reading and pupils' skills develop slowly. Throughout the school, pupils are given few opportunities for extended creative and imaginative writing.
- In kodesh, emphasis on translation and in-depth understanding of the Bible means that pupils develop good knowledge of classical Hebrew vocabulary and grammar, as well as learning Jewish history and ethics. They undertake art and design and technology projects themed around festivals or religious teachings.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported through the use of teaching assistants in class or by being withdrawn for individual tuition. As a result, they make progress in line with the rest of their class.
- The most able pupils are not enabled to progress at a faster rate and achieve higher results because all of the class is set the same work. Much of it is based around worksheets which do not enable them to give extended answers or write at length. In some lessons, there is no additional work prepared for them once they have completed the set task.

Quality of teaching

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement as it does not enable all pupils, including the most able to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Teachers in both kodesh and chol enjoy a good relationship with their classes. In discussion, pupils said that they enjoyed school, but were sometimes vague about what they had actually learned in the lesson.
- Where teachers use a variety of techniques to engage pupils, they participate well and are eager to answer and express their ideas. A range of methods are sometimes employed to maintain the attention of pupils of different abilities and with different ways of learning. However, there are occasions when activities are not as interesting, and some pupils appear bored and uninterested.
- Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and are realistic when evaluating them afterwards. They recognise which strategies are more effective in exciting pupils and making them eager to participate. However, they do not all consistently employ these strategies throughout their teaching.
- Teachers can accurately identify the most able and least able members of their class. This enables them to target questioning appropriately during oral parts of lessons. However, all pupils are given the same written work. This prevents the most able pupils from achieving their full potential and also means that the least able pupils are sometimes unable to complete their work.
- Although the school has a recommended marking strategy, this is not widely used by teachers and most marking consists of ticks and sometimes praise. As a result, pupils are not shown how

they can improve their work and how their learning can progress. Teachers do not always correct technical errors or comment on poor presentation.

- Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils identified as having special educational needs or disabilities. Where appropriate, they withdraw pupils from lessons to give them extra support or work with them in the classroom. Several parents identified this support as a particular strength of the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- Behaviour is good. Pupils are well behaved at all times and say that behaviour in the school has always been good. Although not all pupils are quick to offer answers or participate in lessons there is no disruptive behaviour in lessons, even from pupils who are not thoroughly involved in their learning
- The school makes clear its expectations for good behaviour but staff are not always consistent in enforcing rules. Although pupils feel that they have a good relationship with staff, there is no formal structure for them to make suggestions or express their opinions.
- Staff model polite and caring behaviour and pupils are quick to emulate this. They spontaneously help one another, for example, quickly offering a tissue to a classmate who sneezes or clearing waste from another desk as they pass on their way to the bin. In a nursery class, two children playing together welcomed other children who joined their game. In the playground, pupils from different classes played together and no pupil was left out.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they always feel safe in school. They say that there is no bullying and that they know that they can speak to a teacher if they have concerns. The school has been quick to identify potential issues and has instituted programmes in both kodesh and chol to encourage unity and friendship.
- The school has a child protection policy which complies with requirements. All staff have received appropriate child protection training and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about a child. The school has begun to promote a 'good touch – bad touch' campaign through posters in every classroom.
- Attendance is good, with no unauthorised absences recorded. The school recently identified that lateness was becoming an increasing problem. They initiated a policy of sending reminder notes to parents and as a result lateness markedly declined.
- Pupils learn about other cultures through both kodesh and chol. For example, the development of Christianity in Britain is covered in history while Hinduism is studied as part of a geography unit on life in India. In kodesh, pupils are taught that Judaism mandates obeying the law of the land and treating everyone with respect. A fire appliance recently visited the school as part of a lesson on 'people who help us' and local democracy and environmental issues are studied in geography. Pupils collect for charity and put on an annual show for the entire community.
- The school has clear policies that ensure that extremist views are not promoted to pupils and does not permit outside speakers to address pupils until they have been appropriately vetted by management.

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have carried out a thorough self-evaluation and have accurately identified areas for improvement. However, the school has undergone rapid expansion over the last year and, as a result, some senior managers carry a very high workload and are unable to give adequate attention to all areas of their remit. This has delayed staff and curriculum development and slowed the improvement in pupil performance. The proprietor and senior managers have begun work to restructure the management team to ensure that responsibilities are more equitably distributed.
- The school has a performance management system in place for all staff. Lessons are regularly observed and areas for improvement fed back to staff. Regular in-service training sessions are

organised and staff are encouraged to take advantage of external courses. As a result, all teachers, both kodesh and chol, have gained or are working towards recognised qualifications.

- Parents receive reports twice per year and a weekly contact book is used to keep them informed of their child's progress. Parents are very supportive of the school.
- Certain elements of the curriculum, particularly the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and some areas of history, are covered well through kodesh, Although literacy and numeracy are taught within the chol curriculum pupil achievement in these areas requires improvement.
- The school has ambitious plans for the development of the outdoor learning area and has already purchased a number of outdoor toys and other resources. However, the range of resources remains limited and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are unable to have free access at all times as the area is also used as a playground by older pupils.
- The school recognises that the rapid turnover of staff unsettles pupils and has taken steps to minimise the disruption it causes. This includes ensuring complete documentation of all class activities to ensure continuity and arranging for substitute teachers to observe lessons of the teacher whom they are replacing. This has resulted in an improvement in learning.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that all independent school regulations, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils and premises, have been met. Where potential health and safety issues were brought to the attention of the school in the course of the inspection, they were immediately and effectively resolved.
- The proprietor liaises closely with the senior management team and is well informed about the performance of the school, including quality of teaching, pupil achievement and staff development. However, he has not yet ensured the implementation of the proposed restructuring of the senior management team necessitated by the rapid expansion of the school.
- The proprietor has made a request to the Department for Education (DfE) to expand the number of pupils for which the school is registered from 110 to 250, using additional areas of the current building. The inspection team considers that the playground facilities are inadequate for this number of pupils. There is sufficient outdoor space for 160 pupils using the current arrangement for separate times for Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor learning activities and school breaks. Therefore an increase to this number is recommended.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	136117
Inspection number	447240
DfE registration number	355/6006

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	Jewish Independent
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	152
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr Y Luftig
Headteacher	Mrs E Fried
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	Voluntary contributions
Telephone number	0161 792 2323
Email address	admin@beismalka.co.uk

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