

Etz Chaim School at the Belmont

89 Middleton Road, Crumpsall, Manchester, M8 4JY

Inspection dates	24–26 June 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

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

- Leaders do not check welfare, health and safety matters regularly or frequently enough to assure themselves that students' safety is never compromised.
- The school does not have a written self-evaluation which can be used to improve and develop its work.
- Leaders do not systematically check the quality of teaching to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve outstandingly.
- Teachers' marking of students' workbooks does not always tell students how well they are doing and about the next steps they must take in order to improve their work.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong teaching ensures that students achieve well in Kodesh (religious studies) and Chol (secular studies). Teachers use their good subject knowledge in Kodesh and Chol to support learning effectively.
- Students' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning and the pleasant atmosphere in school. Students feel safe and say that bullying is rare. They enjoy coming to school and attend regularly.
- The school nurtures good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This ensures that students develop their self-confidence well, know the difference between right and wrong and show respect for all manner of people in the wider community.
- Leaders and managers have successfully maintained several strong features of the school since the last full inspection including teaching, achievement and personal development.

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 took place with no notice.
- The inspectors observed eleven lessons taught by eleven members of staff and scrutinised samples of students' work in many subjects.
- Discussions took place with senior leaders including the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, middle managers, teachers and students.
- There were no responses to the online Parent View survey but parents' views expressed in correspondence to the school were considered. Questionnaire responses from five members of staff were also considered.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including policies and procedures, and records of students' progress. Inspectors also undertook a tour of the school's premises, indoors and outdoors.

Inspection team

Saleem Hussain, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paul Rafferty	Additional Inspector
Nathaniel Lieberman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Etz Chaim School was established in 1993 in North Manchester as a strictly orthodox Jewish secondary day school for boys, serving a particular strand of the local Jewish religious community. It is located in a large Victorian building on a main road in Crumpsall, Manchester.
- There are currently 137 students on roll, aged 11 to 16 years, all of whom speak English and are of White British heritage.
- The school admits students of differing abilities, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, a small number of whom currently have statements of special educational needs.
- The school does not employ teaching assistants.
- The school's aim is 'to provide religious, personal and academic education, in order to prepare students for a full religious life in accordance with the religious outlook of their community, whilst forming upright citizens who will be able to give to the community at large'. To achieve these aims 'emphasis is mainly on cultivating enthusiasm and love for Jewish studies, practice and ethos, which prepare students adequately for their next institution, whilst concurrently providing a basic secular education to GCSE level, an understanding of the natural world and the world around them, and some skills which will be of economic use to them in their future'.
- The school's last full inspection was in January 2011. An unannounced emergency inspection took place in October 2012. This found that there was a health and safety hazard relating to unrestrained windows in upper-floor classrooms. A progress monitoring inspection was undertaken in February 2013. This found that some windows still posed potential hazards. A second progress monitoring inspection was undertaken in June 2013. This concluded that the school had not attended to all the health and safety issues it was required to at the previous inspection visit. A third progress monitoring inspection took place in January 2014. That inspection concluded that there were three regulatory failures relating to health and safety. The Department for Education (DfE) requested a focus during this full inspection to check the school's progress in implementing its action plan to address the issues identified in January 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders regularly and frequently check the school's arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students to satisfy themselves that students are not exposed to any dangers. 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.
- Develop a written self-evaluation which sets out the school's strengths, weaknesses and the actions to be taken in order to improve its work further.
- Ensure that leaders systematically check the quality of teaching to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that comments in teachers' marking of students' workbooks always tell students how well they are doing and the next steps they must take in order to improve their work.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
 - Ensure that the designated officer for child protection successfully completes training to the required level (paragraph 7).

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Good

- All of the evidence indicates that achievement is good because teaching is strong. Teachers provide a good level of support and guidance in different subjects. Students say that they find the learning activities on offer both interesting and enjoyable.
- The great majority of students start school with standards of attainment which are sometimes below what is expected for their age.
- All groups of students, including those with a statement of special educational needs and the most able, make good gains in their knowledge and understanding in most subjects during their time in school. Evidence in students' workbooks confirms this.
- Progress across year groups in English and mathematics is consistently good because basic skills in these subjects are taught well. Based on their starting points, the majority of students make rapid progress with reading, writing and mathematics.
- Students are often encouraged to read widely and this helps them to attain well. Students are provided with good opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and writing skills in different subjects as well as in English. For example, teachers plan for this in subjects such as science and mathematics.
- Students leave school once they have completed their studies in Year 10. They go on to other Jewish schools or institutions to complete their education. School records indicate that students are being well prepared for the future. They are entered for GCSE examinations early in Year 9 or 10 and a good number are achieving good grades including in English, mathematics and science.
- Achievement in Kodesh is good. For example, students make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of Jewish history. A good number of students gain high GCSE grades in Biblical Hebrew, which they study as part of the Chol curriculum.

Quality of teaching

Good

- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently good. Consequently, students make good progress and achieve well during their time in school.
- When students start at the school, their basic skills in key areas of learning are assessed using the available information. The quality of record keeping regarding the progress students make as time goes on has improved considerably in recent years. Middle managers have worked closely with teachers to ensure that records of progress are clear and accurately reflect students' progress. Teachers are increasingly using this information to good effect, especially in developing challenging learning targets for students.
- There is a good level of subject expertise among teachers. This is well used to plan lessons which challenge students of all abilities, including the most able, to deepen their knowledge and develop a range of skills in different subjects.
- Teachers have high expectations of students. They encourage students to use their time productively in learning and to do their best with homework tasks.
- Teachers carefully observe how students cope with the work in different subjects and skilfully question them to ensure that they understand key points.
- Basic skills in English and mathematics are taught well. This ensures that students develop their skills well. There are good opportunities in English and other subjects for students to develop their reading, speaking, listening and writing skills. For example, in science students are encouraged to record their experiments using good descriptive and evaluative writing.
- Students enjoy good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. For example, complicated mathematical formulae are carefully explained to students so that they can understand how to apply these in practical problems.
- Teachers mark students' workbooks regularly. However, teachers' comments in marking do

not always tell students how well they are doing and the next steps they must take in order to improve their work to make it outstanding. As a result, a valuable opportunity to raise standards is missed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Requires improvement

- Students' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good. These factors make a positive contribution to their learning and progress.
- Students attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. They are well-mannered and polite. Good behaviour in lessons and around school makes a significant contribution to the pleasant atmosphere in school. While students can occasionally get a little boisterous around school, this is not a significant issue. School records indicate that serious incidents of misbehaviour are rare.
- Students say that they like the system of rewards for good behaviour and achievement, adding that this motivates them to work hard.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students well. Assembly themes and several Kodesh subjects make a strong contribution to personal development. Students often lead prayers and this helps them to develop their self-confidence very effectively. A good range of themes are discussed with students to support their understanding of right and wrong.
- Social development is good. Students make a valuable contribution to the wider community by raising funds for good causes, supporting a local elderly persons' home and providing community entertainment during religious festivals.
- There are a number of opportunities for students to learn about their own and other cultures. Furthermore, students show respect and tolerance towards different cultures. They learn well about the importance of equal treatment, justice and fairness. Students respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is effective. Students report that bullying is not a significant issue and say that they are confident in approaching staff if they experience any problems.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement. Previous inspections have identified several regulatory failures relating to health and safety. The school has now remedied these matters. However, a small number of minor weaknesses in the premises and accommodation were identified during this inspection. These were resolved immediately by the school.
- This inspection also found that the designated officer for child protection is not trained to the required higher level. Inspectors judge that, nevertheless, the officer is sufficiently experienced and plays an effective role in child protection. The school had made arrangements for two senior managers, including the designated officer, to receive the appropriate level of training prior to this inspection. This is due to take place in July 2014. Arrangements for the recruitment of staff and other safeguarding requirements are met.

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have maintained the good quality of teaching and continued to ensure that students achieve well since the last full inspection, including in developing their skills in literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains good overall and the school has maintained a positive climate for learning where good behaviour is the norm.
- Leaders ensure that the number and range of learning activities offered are effective and enjoyable. Learning through the different subjects provided is organised well. Students like the balance between the teaching in Chol and Kodesh subjects such as gemoro (Talmud), chumash/rashi (Bible with commentaries), mishna (Mishnaic studies), halacha (Jewish Law) and nach (Prophets), Hebrew and Aramaic. Improvements since the last full inspection

include learning about healthy eating and lifestyles.

- Leaders communicate high expectations regarding teaching in several ways. They check the quality of teaching in school through observing lessons and discussions with teachers. However, the school does not systematically check the quality of teaching to ensure that students achieve as well as they can and a system is now being developed.
- The proprietor and governors manage financial resources effectively and see to it that students benefit from their educational experiences. The information for parents and others, and the school's complaints procedure meet requirements.
- Leaders do not have sufficiently robust systems for regularly and frequently checking the school's arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students to satisfy themselves that students are not exposed to any dangers. 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.
- The designated officer for child protection, although well-experienced has not received the higher level of training required by the regulations.
- Leaders have now remedied the issues identified at previous inspections. Leaders acknowledge that aspects of safety relating to the premises have been resolved too slowly since they were first identified. This is because leaders have not been well enough involved in carrying out checks and ensuring that issues are addressed promptly, leaving this to other staff instead.
- Leaders have a general awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses including the quality of teaching; how well the school is doing; the arrangements for staff training and appraisal. However, the school does not have a written self-evaluation of its work which outlines strengths and weaknesses, and identify what actions it needs to take to bring about improvement. This limits the school's ability to make further improvements.
- In their responses to the inspection questionnaire, staff expressed much support for the leadership of the school and the quality of what the school provides for students. Correspondence from parents which is held in school indicates that they are pleased with the school's work.

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	131015
Inspection number	442960
DfE registration number	352/6053

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 faith, secondary boys' school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr M Halpern
Chair	Mr Y Reich
Headteacher	Rabbi Eli Cohen
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	Voluntary donations
Telephone number	0161 740 0300
Fax number	0161 740 0301
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