

Beis Ruchel Girls School

11 Norton Street, Salford, Greater Manchester, M7 4AJ

Inspection dates 25–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school because

- Students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress from their starting points in *Kodesh* (religious studies) and secular studies. Particularly impressive is the progress made in mathematics, art, history, *pirkei avos* (ethics of the father), *tefillah* (prayer) and Yiddish. The proportion of students who gain five or more A* to C grades at GCSE is above the national average.
- The quality of teaching and the curriculum is good. This is because staff engage students well in their learning and develop excellent relations with them, which encourages them to become very well motivated learners.
- Students' impeccable behaviour contributes to the very positive atmosphere in school and helps them to achieve well. They feel very safe because of the school's continuing efforts to ensure their welfare.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's nurturing approach towards personal development helps students to mature into thoughtful young citizens who demonstrate excellent British values, as supported by the Torah ethos of the school.
- The leadership, management and governance of the school are good, and have had a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching, and an exceptionally big impact on improving behaviour to outstanding.
- The outstanding pastoral care for students provided by the senior leadership team, and their warmth, empathy and compassion ensure that the work of the former head of *Chol* (secular studies), continues. The governors have ensured that procedures for the safety of students are outstanding.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always present lessons which match the needs of all students, to ensure that they can always give their best performance. Furthermore, guidance through marking does not always tell students how they can make improvements.
- Leaders and managers checking the quality of teaching and learning do not always give teachers clear guidance on how to make their teaching outstanding.

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 inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 15 lessons and scrutinised samples of students' work in many subjects.
- Discussions were held with governors, the headteacher, head of *Kodesh, Chol* curriculum coordinator, the special education needs coordinator and a representative group of students.
- School policies, documents and records were scrutinised and discussed, including those relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of surveys from 42 staff and 22 parents

Inspection team

Jonathan Yodaiken, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jo Sharpe	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Beis Ruchel Girls School was established in 1996 and is situated in the heart of the Jewish community in Salford, North Manchester. It is an independent *Charedi* (strictly orthodox) Chassidic Jewish school and caters for girls between the ages of 11 and 16.
- Most of the girls belong to the Satmar Chassidic community, although a considerable number come from other Chassidic groups or Litvish and Sefardi backgrounds. The large majority of students come from Yiddish speaking homes and speak English as an additional language. *Kodesh* is taught in Yiddish and *Chol* is taught in both English and Yiddish.
- The Satmar principles and customs underpin the educational provision of the school and it offers both a *Kodesh* and a *Chol* curriculum. Most *Kodesh* lessons provide a cross-curricular input whereby many *Chol* curriculum targets are reinforced.
- The school is founded on the principle of preparing the girls for their long-term roles as fully-functioning, contributing members of the community who care for and show respect to others. It aims to nurture the best qualities in each student and to guide them in a way to maximise their potential, embedding the best in British values, as supported by the Torah ethos of the school.
- The school was last inspected in January 2010. Currently there are 119 students on roll, of whom four have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is in the process of restructuring its leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers' planning and lessons always give students of differing levels of ability the opportunity to learn and achieve as well as they can
 - ensuring that marking in workbooks always provides students with clear and specific guidance on what they must do to make their work outstanding.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that checks on teaching throughout the school provide teachers with a clear view on how to further improve their teaching.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good and enable the students to learn and achieve well.
- Under the enthusiastic and supportive leadership team, which includes both senior and middle leaders, the school has devised a detailed school development plan which identifies the areas in need of improvement. The school's view of its own performance is accurate and links well with its development plan to give a clear focus on ways to drive the school forward.
- All staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire were very positive and are proud to be working at the school. Those parents and carers who contacted the inspectors or completed questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its impact on their children's lives.
- The school is in the process of restructuring its senior leadership team. A *Chol* curriculum coordinator has been appointed who in time will take over the vacant position. The school is housed in a purpose-built state-of-the-art building which provides a safe and well-maintained setting for students' successful learning.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is effective and meets the specific learning needs of the students. The headteacher, head of *Kodesh* and *Chol* curriculum coordinator, along with the senior leaders, have high expectations for students' achievement and personal development. They share a vision for the school and their warmth, kindness and calmness have been pivotal in creating the high morale of staff.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. The school has highly sophisticated systems in place to support the personal development of each and every student. Impressively, after every lesson the teacher evaluates each student's behaviour, engagement and social interactions. This information is then analysed and checked to see if there are any patterns where behaviour or engagement has changed which could trigger the need for interventions. As a result, students' behaviour is outstanding and the students demonstrate an ability to reflect on issues and care about others.
- Students truly value and appreciate the way staff care for them and respond to their needs, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain. School leaders have been proactive in ensuring that students understand the diversity of the local and wider communities. Leaders also take positive steps to ensure that partisan political views are not promoted in school. They ensure that a balanced approach is taken to the teaching of any political issues in order that students can form their own opinions.
- Discussions with parents and letters received from them confirm that the school works effectively with parents and carers. It is also clear that parents and carers have a high regard for the work of the school. The information provided to parents, including bi-annual reports and regular newsletters, are impressive and the complaint procedure is effective.
- The school works well with outside agencies. These include educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, social workers and experts working for the Salford local authority. These experts help to support students with statements of special educational needs and help train staff to deliver intervention programmes.
- Leaders and managers regularly check the quality of teaching and this helps to maintain the good quality of teaching. Procedures are in place in this regard. However, these procedures are not always rigorous enough in giving feedback to teachers on how to make their teaching outstanding.
- Students are encouraged to consider and reflect upon possible career options. For example, Year 11 complete a questionnaire which focuses upon their career aspirations. This information is then used by staff to offer advice and guidance on students' future career choices.

■ The governance of the school:

Governors know about students' achievement. They are very supportive of the school and highly committed to making the school even better. Governors act as 'critical friends' and are determined to hold it to account effectively. Their commitment, perseverance and innovation in developing the present highly conducive learning environment are a great achievement.

Governance is successful in ensuring that all of the independent school standards are met including in relation to safeguarding, welfare, health, safety, the premises, information and complaints.

Governors have worked effectively with the headteacher regarding the introduction of performance management and pay matters. They are very knowledgeable about the quality of teaching and how well students are progressing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are outstanding**

- The behaviour of students is outstanding because of their thirst for knowledge and their drive for individual excellence. There is a strong desire and willingness to learn. Students hold staff in high regard and really appreciate the care staff show to them. One girl commented 'staff treat us like family'. Students are courteous to, and respectful of, each other. Behaviour in class and around the school is outstanding.
- Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is outstanding. Students throughout the school take on responsibilities, such as, organising shows, end of year activities and *Rosh Chodesh* (first day of the Jewish month) collective prayer sessions. Their self-esteem and confidence are strongly promoted throughout all aspects of school life, but particularly when they are encouraged to lead prayers, speak publicly and express their feelings in discussions during lessons.
- Students develop their spirituality exceptionally well throughout the *Kodesh* curriculum, *davening* (prayer) and through art, music, drama and all the extra-curricular events which take place at the school. These include activities linked to the *yom tovim* (festivals) such as Chanukah (Festival of Lights) and Purim (Festival of Lots) and which teach them to know the difference between right and wrong.
- Respect and tolerance are very effectively promoted and no discrimination is tolerated. Students are taught to understand that there are different faiths and cultural traditions outside of their own community and that those with other beliefs and cultures must be equally valued.
- Students attend regularly and are punctual to lessons. They express great enthusiasm about some of the activities they are involved in, such as regular *Rosh Chodesh* programmes and the charity work which they do for the school.
- Political issues are dealt with in a very balanced way and extremism is not tolerated. Students know about the main British institutions through their studies in history and citizenship, both subjects in which girls' achievements at GCSE level is good.
- Students are presented with a range of opportunities to promote British values, as supported by the Torah ethos of the school. For example, in the whole school *middos* (good character) building programmes and in *Kodesh* and citizenship lessons. Display throughout the school demonstrates the high priority which the school places on this important area.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. The school's anti-bullying policy is very effective. Students demonstrate a clear understanding of different types of bullying and say bullying is not a problem in the school. They feel very safe and know what to do if they feel anxious or worried about anything.
- Students confirm that they have developed high levels of awareness about keeping safe in different situations. For example, they say that they have learned a great deal about issues around safety and security when travelling abroad. Although they do not use computers they have effective awareness regarding cyber-bullying and how to avoid it.
- The school has fully implemented all of the necessary policies and procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of students. Arrangements for the recruitment of staff are effective, with all the required checks being carried out and meticulously recorded in the single central register. All other safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- Staff are vigilant and supervision in and around the school is good. Entry to the school and visitors are monitored by cameras and a buzz-in system.
- Parents and carers confirm that their children feel very safe and that the school treats safeguarding as a top priority.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching is good in *Kodesh* and *Chol* and as a result, students make good progress based on their individual starting points. The quality of relationships and the interventions that take place to support individual students are significant factors in the good teaching and a key factor in the students' success. Parents and carers informed the inspectors that their daughters enjoy their lessons. One commented 'my daughter feels safe and cared for at school and this gives her the space to learn and grow'. Students who spoke with inspectors stated that learning activities are interesting and enjoyable.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it effectively to inspire students. Highly effective teaching of *pirkei avos* leads from the teachers' own knowledge of the subject, which facilitates high-level analysis, as demonstrated by the students' high-quality written work, which compares and contrasts the different teachings of the great Rabbis. Teaching assistants and learning support assistants work closely

with teaching staff and are deployed effectively.

- Basic skills in literacy are taught well and students are given many opportunities to develop their reading, writing and communication skills in both *Kodesh* and *Chol*. Teachers know their students well and the school provides effective care and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both within and outside the classroom. This support includes specialist input in speech therapy and other therapies, all of which have a very positive impact on students' progress. Systematic teaching and deep learning are evident in students' imaginative writing and the research based cross-curricular projects in which students are involved every year. These projects include themes on *pirkei avos* and *hashkofo* (Jewish philosophy).
- The *Kodesh* curriculum covers a wide range of subjects, for example, *parsha* (weekly portion of the Torah), *tefillah*, *halochah* (Jewish law), *hashkofo*, Yiddish, *pirkei avos* and *yediah klolis* (general knowledge), all of which are well taught, with *halochah*, *tefillah*, *pirkei avos* and Yiddish being taught exceptionally well. This is because the school has developed an outstanding curriculum and assessment system for these four subjects called *mesiloh* (the way). This programme is now being used throughout the world and is the brainchild of the chair of governors. It has been piloted and adapted in the school.
- In addition, the *Kodesh* curriculum incorporates many elements of the required areas of learning, such as mathematics, science, history and geography. A good example of this cross-curricular work is seen in Year 7 where students practise their writing skills in project work focusing upon the importance of speaking with dignity.
- The *Chol* curriculum is good and leads to students achieving qualifications in a range of subjects including mathematics, English, art, food and nutrition, history, citizenship, science, geography, sewing and typing. Teaching in all these subjects is good. Leaders acknowledge that teaching in physical education is not as good as it is in other subjects. Leaders are now in the process of developing plans to make teaching stronger in this regard to ensure that students' physical development and well-being is promoted as well as their academic development.
- Teachers often give verbal feedback to students on the quality of their work and on ways to improve still further. However, the quality of marking is not consistently good in giving written feedback to students in their books by identifying what they need to do to improve their work so that it becomes outstanding.
- Although teachers generally plan lessons well and know their students' level of attainment, they do not always present lessons in a way which meets fully their level of understanding and skills. As a result, in a few lessons not all students' needs are always fully met.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' achievement is good. This is shown in the quality of work in their books, observations of their learning in lessons and through the school's own information about each student's progress. This good progress from their starting points is as a result of good teaching, a rich curriculum and students' outstanding attitudes to learning.
- Typically, students enter the school with levels of attainment which are below-average for their age and well –below-average in English. Students' work shows that they soon begin to bridge the gap and make good progress in developing their writing skills and reading comprehension. In addition, students' speaking and listening skills are enhanced through regular opportunities for debating issues and expressing their opinions. For example, girls were involved in a debate comparing the level of anti-Semitism in Russia during the time of the Tsar compared to nowadays and what can be done to improve the situation. Staff have high expectations and students respond positively in lessons, joining in discussions with confidence. Students are encouraged to read at every opportunity and they learn to read with understanding in English. Students' mathematical skills are developed well. Their mathematical work is complemented by activities within the *Kodesh* curriculum.
- Older students go on to attain high standards in their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. This is particularly so in art, food and nutrition, history and mathematics, where outcomes are above the national average.
- Students who have a statement of special educational needs are well supported by carefully devised education plans, which set realistic targets for them, and which are regularly reviewed. Intervention strategies are effective and as a result these students make good progress. Accurate information is gathered by all the professionals involved with this group of students and staff are fully aware of their level of attainment and needs. However, this information is not centrally filed so that all staff can easily access it.
- More-able students make good progress in all subjects because of the good quality of teaching and the rich curriculum. These students are well challenged and are given ample opportunities to reflect and

analyse.

- Discussions with students confirm that the school prepares them well for progressing to seminaries (religious study colleges).

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	136086
Inspection number	443452
DfE registration number	355/6057

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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	Orthodox Jewish
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Beis Ruchel School Limited
Chair	Rabbi B Krausz
Headteacher	Mrs E Krausz
Date of previous school inspection	January 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3140.80
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