

Mechinoh School

13 Upper Park Road, Salford, Lancashire, M7 4HY

Inspection dates 25–27 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate school

- Many regulations for independent schools are not met.
- Many of these regulations were also not met at the time of the previous inspection. Improvement has been too slow.
- Leaders have not ensured that provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good enough.
- The proprietorial and governance arrangements for the school have not included challenge to senior leaders concerning students' welfare, health and safety.
- The arrangements to ensure that students, staff and visitors are safe should there be a fire are inadequate.
- The safeguarding checks required before staff are employed are neither complete nor properly recorded.
- Some security arrangements are inadequate.
- The premises are not maintained well enough; some repairs needed to ensure student's safety have not been completed. Risks from hazards in the building have not been reduced.
- No hot water is available for students when washing. The facilities for any students who may be unwell do not meet the required standard.

The school has the following strengths

- Students' behaviour is good.
- There has been recent improvement; for example, in behaviour, the teaching of *Chol* (secular) subjects, and in improved security.
- The education provided by the school is valued by students, parents and the wider community.
- Students' achievements allow them to make an effective transition to a *yeshiva* when they leave the school

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school 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

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by 10 teachers. They scrutinised samples of work from students in each year of the school and looked at other exercise books in lessons.
- Inspectors observed the conduct of students throughout the school day, including at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors met the Principal and vice-principal and administration officer and talked with other members of staff. They met formally with 17 students in three groups and talked informally with other students in lessons and around the school.
- An inspector held a meeting with the sole representative of the proprietorial body who is also the school's governor.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents, including the schools' safeguarding records, policies, procedures, and records of attendance, achievement and teaching.
- No responses to Ofsted's on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were made.
- Inspectors considered 17 returns made by parents to a paper questionnaire. Eight returns made to a staff questionnaire were also considered.
- This inspection was conducted with no notice to the school at the request of the Department for Education. In addition to conducting a full inspection of the school, the Department for Education asked inspectors to consider the progress the school had made in responding to the issues identified in the previous standard inspection.

Inspection team

David Selby, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Drew Crawshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Glickman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Mechinoh School was opened in 1982 and is situated in Salford, North Manchester. It offers secondary education for up to 73 orthodox Jewish boys, aged between 11 and 16 years with provision for both religious and secular studies.
- There are currently 62 students on roll. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs. A very small number of students speak English as an additional language.
- The school aims 'to provide a comprehensive religious education for its students and to prepare them for entry into *yeshivas* (Talmudic Colleges) to further their religious education'. In addition, it aims 'to equip students with the basic skills required for adult life, such as literacy, numeracy and general knowledge, whilst placing great emphasis on developing a high standard of ethical behaviour'.
- On leaving school, all students continue their education in *yeshivas* in the United Kingdom.
- The school's last standard inspection was in November 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders and the proprietor are fully aware of the requirements of the independent school standards and the most up-to-date statutory guidance from the Department for Education, so that students are safe and secure, and can work in premises which are suitable.
- Urgently ensure that a suitably qualified person completes a full fire risk assessment with immediate compliance to any subsequent recommendations.
- Increase the governor's scrutiny of key aspects of the school's work, where necessary referring to the independent school standards and the guidance available from Ofsted.
- Ensure that policies accurately set out the approach and procedures to be used in the school.
- Develop ways to learn from effective practice in other schools and share resources in order to improve teaching and learning, and the efficiency of day-to-day management.
- Systematically improve the quality of teaching and therefore raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons which allow students of different ability, including the most- and least-able, to make rapid progress
 - using teachers' understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses to adjust learning as it progresses
 - ensuring that teachers identify when any students lose concentration and adjust their teaching in response.
- Confirm the school's entry policy for GCSE in mathematics and physics to ensure that students' motivation in these subjects remains high.

■ The school must meet the following independent school standards:

The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (paragraph 7 and 7(a)) and, such arrangements must have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7(b)).

The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on compliance with relevant health and safety laws is drawn up and effectively implemented (paragraph 11).

The proprietor must ensure that the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[1] is complied with (paragraph 13).

The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on first aid is drawn up and implemented (paragraph 14).

No person appointed as a member of staff may be barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006[2] or carry out work, or intend to carry out work, at the school in contravention of any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act[3] or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction (paragraph 19(2) and 19(2)(a)).

The proprietor must carry out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each member of staff–

(paragraph 19(2)(b))
their identity; (paragraph 19(2)(b)(i))
their medical fitness; (paragraph 19(2)(b)(ii))
their right to work in the United Kingdom; (paragraph 19(2)(b)(iii))
and, where appropriate, their qualifications (paragraph 19(2)(b)(iv)).

In the case of any member of staff for whom, by reason of them living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining a criminal record check is not sufficient to establish their suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and (paragraph 19(2)(d)).

The checks referred to above as paragraphs 19(2)(b) and 19(2)(d) must be completed before a member of staff's appointment (paragraph 19(3)).

The proprietor must keep a register which shows the information referred to below as paragraphs 22(3) and 22(4) including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained (paragraph 22(1)).

For each member of staff appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether (paragraph 22(3))
their identity was checked; (paragraph 22(3)(a))

a check was made to establish whether they are barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 or are subject to any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction; (paragraph 22(3)(b))

checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that they had the relevant qualifications; (paragraph 22(3)(c))

an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained for them; (paragraph 22(3)(d))

further checks were made on any member of staff for whom, by reason of them living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining a criminal record check is not sufficient to establish their suitability to work in a school (paragraph 22(3)(e))

and, a check of their right to work in the United Kingdom was made (paragraph 22(3)(f)).

For each member of staff in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007, whether each check referred to in paragraph 22(3) was made and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraph 22(4)).

The proprietor must ensure that suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education. (paragraph 23A(1) and 23A(1)(c)).

The proprietor must ensure that that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraph 23B(1) and 23B(1)(b)).

The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 23C).

The proprietor must ensure that toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water (paragraph 23F(1) and 23F(1)(b)).

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Senior leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards relating to students' welfare, health and safety, the suitability of staff and the premises are met. This has a negative impact on students' welfare, health and safety.
- Many of these regulations were also not met at the time of the previous inspection. Improvement has been too slow.
- Leadership has been strengthened by the recent appointment of a vice-principal. Improvement has started, for example, in the security arrangements for the building and in students' behaviour. The Principal and vice-principal are responsible for all aspects of the administration of the school. This is in addition to their key responsibilities for the education offered and means that they have to make difficult decisions to decide on the most important priorities.
- Leaders have not given sufficient priority to important tasks such as recording any accidents and ensuring policies relate to the school's practice and procedures.
- Leaders are not sufficiently aware of the most recent statutory guidance relating to safeguarding students, or the requirements relating to safety from fire. This means that students are not properly protected.
- The curriculum includes *Kodesh* (religious) and *Chol* (secular) work. The school aims for the *Kodesh* subjects to give students the skills, breadth of knowledge and perfection required for an orthodox Jewish way of life. The National Curriculum is broadly followed in English, mathematics and physics.
- The curriculum promotes tolerance and the acceptance of other cultures within the wider community. Students are encouraged to debate and question the viewpoints of others. This contributes to their preparation for life in modern Britain. Leaders promote fundamental British values such as democracy and the rule of law by ensuring there is teaching about these aspects. The ethos and expectations of the school lead to a continual emphasis on the importance of mutual respect.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching of *Kodesh* studies through the regular testing of students' understanding. However, the systems to monitor teaching of *Chol* subjects have only recently started to be developed.
- One of the reasons parents choose the school for their children is because they want them to continue their religious study at a *yeshiva* (Talmudic college) when they leave the school. The school prepares the students well for this next stage of their education, for example, in the content of the *Kodesh* curriculum and in the increasing independence expected in students' learning as they get older.
- The parents who responded to the questionnaire were happy with the experience the school provides for their children.
- **The governance of the school:**

The proprietorial and governance arrangements for the school have not included challenge to senior leaders concerning students' welfare, health and safety.

The sole governor, who is also the sole member of the proprietorial body, demonstrates continuing and long-term commitment to the success of the school. However, his role is not linked firmly enough to the expectations set out in the independent school standards.

The governor does not have an identified responsibility for the review of safeguarding matters. Oversight of the safeguarding of students has been insufficient.

The governor relies on the Principal and vice-principal for the leadership of the school. He values the school's contribution to education within the community. However, governance has not ensured that students are as safe and secure as they should be.

The governor is relatively distant from the day-to-day life of the school which limits his awareness of the quality of teaching and how this contributes to students' achievement.

The governor works with other members of the community to secure additional voluntary funding on which the school relies.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

- **The behaviour of students is good.**
- Students are polite to their teachers and other adults. They value their achievements and recognise how

the school helps them to learn.

- Students were keen to talk with inspectors. They were open and honest when doing so.
- Students' behaviour in lessons is good. They typically concentrate hard and ask and answer questions with enthusiasm. However, inspectors saw instances when a small number of younger students who were less involved in their learning lost their focus, leant back on their chairs and fiddled with equipment.
- A new rewards system was introduced earlier this year. Students say that this motivates them to behave well and that, in consequence, their behaviour has improved.
- Students get on with each other very well. They enjoy their social time, playing football or other games, or quietly talking together. The good relationships between all members of the school community reflect the school's ethos and the way students value and respect others.
- Students generally look after the school building. Inspectors saw little litter, but the existing writing on many desks fails to discourage further graffiti.
- A student who spoke to an inspector said 'there really is no bullying' and other students agreed. They were, however, confident that if any concern arose it would be quickly resolved by their teachers.
- Students said they felt safe in school and the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed.

■ **The schools' work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate.**

- Not all of the independent school standards relating to students' welfare, health and safety are met. This has a negative impact on students' welfare, health and safety.
- The arrangements to ensure that students, staff and visitors are safe should there be a fire are inadequate. There are significant risks because escape routes are not clear of obstacles. The maintenance of equipment and other checks have not been systematic, and there are particular hazards in little-used parts of the building.
- Some of the checks required before staff may be appointed have not been completed. The single central record of these checks does not include some of the essential details, and omits the most recently appointed members of staff.
- While students' security has been increased by the recent installation of a closed circuit television system, some other security arrangements are insufficient.
- The premises are not maintained well enough; repairs needed to ensure students' safety have not been completed, for example, a broken fan lodged high on a wall could fall on someone, and damaged plastic wall coverings with sharp edges have not been replaced. Risks from hazards in the building have not been reduced. Electricity and gas supplies are not secured so that students cannot gain access.
- While a hot water system has been installed in the medical room, no hot water is available for students when washing elsewhere. The facilities for any students who may be unwell do not have easy access to a toilet.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inspectors observed some teaching which led to rapid progress. However, this is not consistent and so students' progress is sometimes slower. Inspectors saw no teaching which led to inadequate learning.
- There is little difference between the quality of teaching in the *Kodesh* and *Chol* classes. This indicates that teaching in the *Chol* subjects has become more effective since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is aimed at the middle ability students in the school. It does not ensure that opportunities are taken to meet the range of learning needs in each class. This means that, on occasion, some students do not engage fully in their learning because the work is either too easy or too hard for them.
- Students' books, particularly for their *Kodesh* studies and in English and mathematics, confirm that students are making continuing progress. In English, for example, Year 9 students are beginning to extend their writing by using more complex sentences. Also in English, Year 10 students use skills developed in their *Kodesh* work to present their own arguments such as in their writing of persuasive letters about Jewish customs related to food. In other lessons, where the writing expected by teachers is for students to copy longer pieces of text, students make less progress. Students' reading of Hebrew is regular and frequent in their *Kodesh* work. It is supported well by their teachers. However, students' reading in English is more limited.
- The assessment of students' *Kodesh* work is regular and systematic. However, teachers do not use the findings from these assessments as they plan teaching, and so do not ensure that all students learn as effectively as possible. Assessment systems for the *Chol* work are being developed, but are at an early stage. Expected outcomes for students' learning have not been set for these subjects, and this makes it

harder for teachers to ensure that students are making rapid progress.

- Marking is beginning to help students to improve their work. In English, it lets students know how well they have done and sometimes supplies guidance on how to improve. This good practice needs to be developed further, so that it is consistently well applied in English and seen in other subjects. Samples of students' work indicate that teachers' expectations of the presentation of students' work vary. Some teachers settle for slapdash presentation, while others demand much higher standards.
- Leaders do not routinely make an overall evaluation of the quality of teaching. However, the vice-principal has worked closely with the teacher of mathematics to ensure that there is progression throughout the school in this subject. In general, teachers' evaluation of their own effectiveness is at an early stage.
- The recently introduced strategies to manage students' behaviour are applied consistently by teachers to help students learn more effectively.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The appropriate balance between *Kodesh* and *Chol* subjects contributes to students' steady progress in all aspects of their learning. However, teaching lacks the consistency needed to ensure that achievement is as high as possible.
- Leaders report that students' achievements allow them to make an effective transition to a *yeshiva* when they leave the school. Students are confident that this is the case.
- Leaders' regular testing of students' *Kodesh* work checks that students' achievement is in line with the school's requirements. However, there is no standardised or external testing of students' *Kodesh* or *Chol* learning to confirm whether students are meeting local or national expectations.
- The school has recently started to follow GCSE courses for older students in mathematics and physics. Students say that this has increased their progress and motivation as the work has a definite target. This good motivation is not fully secure because school leaders have not yet determined whether examination entries will be made this year.
- Students say they make progress, learning new things in all their subjects. For example, they said that they learn well in physics because the teacher uses things like quizzes and video clips to make lessons exciting and interesting.
- The direction of teaching towards middle-ability students means that the most able and the least able do not always learn as much as possible.
- Leaders' systematic records of the work covered in lessons show that students make progress through more demanding topics as each year progresses. This is also the case from one year to the next.

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	105999
Inspection number	444495
DfE registration number	355/6020

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	Jewish faith school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mechinoh School
Chair	Rabbi M Kupetz
Headteacher	Rabbi N Baddiel
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	Not applicable
Telephone number	0161 795 9275
Fax number	Not applicable
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