

Sinai Jewish Primary School

Shakespeare Drive, Kenton, Harrow, HA3 9UD

Inspection dates 20–21 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders have high expectations and ambitions for the school. They are determined to do what is necessary to achieve the very best for all pupils.
- Leaders, including governors, make sure that the quality of teaching and pupil achievement continues to improve rapidly.
- Teachers enthuse their pupils to want to learn and achieve their best. Teaching secures good progress. In some year groups, pupils make outstanding progress in reading and writing.
- Pupils are articulate, mature and thoughtful learners. They behave well. The school keeps pupils exceptionally safe and secure.
- Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make more progress than all other pupils.
- The early years provision is good. Children are happy, confident and inquisitive learners. Teaching meets the needs of all children. From their starting points, children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- The school's faith ethos promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils are proud to be Jewish. They also enjoy working with pupils from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. They are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing.
- Children in the Nursery class do not make as much progress as children in the Reception classes.
- Middle leaders do not take full responsibility for the quality of teaching and achievement in their subjects and/or areas.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included: information on pupils’ current attainment and progress; improvement planning; the use of pupil premium and sport funding; and the school’s website. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 37 lessons, some of these were observed jointly with senior leaders. They looked at pupils’ work in lessons and sampled some of the pupils’ books separately.
- Inspectors met with three groups of pupils to talk them about their work and what they thought about their school. They also spoke to pupils informally during lessons and at break times. Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A representative from the local authority was also interviewed.
- The team analysed 173 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke briefly with some parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors analysed 45 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Robert Eyre-Brook	Additional Inspector
Alastair McMeckan	Additional Inspector
Peter Lacey-Hastings	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sinai is a voluntary aided modern Orthodox Jewish school. It is much larger than the average primary school. Pupils travel to attend the school from six different local authorities. The school is the largest Jewish primary school in Europe.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much lower than the national average.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The early years has a nursery for up to 60 children and three Reception classes. Most children attend full time.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection. Almost half of the teachers are new to the school. The headteacher was appointed in April 2012, and the deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2014. There have also been changes to the governing body, including a new Chair since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics to raise achievement for all groups of pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils are given the right equipment to support their understanding of mathematical concepts
 - teachers consistently challenge pupils to learn at a fast pace so that no time is wasted and they maintain their concentration
 - pupils deepen their understanding through solving problems in mathematics and in other subjects.
- Strengthen the role of middle leaders by making sure that:
 - they monitor and evaluate teaching and learning more rigorously
 - they are held fully to account for the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make.
- Make sure that the provision in the Nursery matches the high quality provision in the Reception classes, by:
 - specifically planning activities to develop and consolidate key skills when children are learning on their own
 - improving the learning environment so that it better supports children's learning, particularly in their early writing skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy have high expectations. They are outstanding role models for all staff. They have created a school culture where hard work, honesty, care and compassion have secured rapid improvements in the quality of teaching, pupil achievement and pupils' personal development and well-being.
- Both have tenaciously made sure that the quality of teaching has improved. They have created an effective team of teachers. Weak teaching has been eliminated. Teachers' skills have been enhanced and new and talented teachers have been appointed.
- There is a robust appraisal cycle. Teachers are set challenging targets based on the school's priorities, as well as their own individual needs. In the small instances of where teaching requires improvement, leaders implement rapid support programmes to secure sustained improvements. Teachers confidently ask for individualised training to improve their practice further.
- Leaders regularly check on the impact of their improvement work. They use a wide range of evidence which they analyse forensically, to make sure that their judgements are accurate for the quality of teaching and pupil achievement.
- Nonetheless, much of this work rests with the headteacher and deputy as a result of high staff turnover and other issues. Middle leaders do not monitor their areas of responsibility rigorously enough. They are not held fully to account for improving the quality of teaching and pupil achievement. This is particularly so in mathematics. A new appointment to strengthen leadership has yet to impact on teaching and pupil progress.
- Much of middle leaders' work has successfully focused on the implementation of a new curriculum and assessment procedures. This curriculum is well designed. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Specialist teachers for French, music, art and sport, together with good teaching, enable pupils to excel in many academic, artistic and sporting areas. The school has invested heavily in new equipment including a renovated gymnasium, an outdoor multi-use games area and information and communication technology (ICT) equipment.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively. There is a raft of interventions which are tailored to support pupils' specific needs, both academically and personally. The school works closely with external agencies that strengthen provision, and includes training and support for teaching assistants. This individualised attention to meet all pupils' needs secures equality of opportunity for all.
- Sport funding is used to provide specialist teaching, extra equipment and additional sporting clubs. As a result, the pupils gain from a rich and varied range of opportunities and develop their knowledge and skills.
- Pupil's' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. The Director for Jewish Studies leads this area effectively. The school is immensely proud of its Jewish heritage and the part it plays in British culture. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. They work with pupils from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. For example, the school council worked on a world peace topic with another school whose intake of pupils is from a wide multi-ethnic background. There are links with schools internationally where pupils use social media to keep in contact, as well as emailing and writing to one another. There has been a teacher exchange with a school in Ghana. Numerous projects help pupils to become good citizens, developing their sense of democracy. Pupils raise significant amounts of money for local and national charities. They demonstrate open-mindedness and empathy for others. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority has confidence in the school's effectiveness, resulting in a light touch overview.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. They have a good overview of the school's performance, including what progress pupils make. They provide leaders with an effective balance of support and challenge. They too are ambitious for the school. They set rigorous targets for the headteacher which are linked to the school development plan. They support senior leaders to ensure that the quality of teaching improves and that everyone is rewarded appropriately for raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. Governors know how the pupil premium and primary sport funding are used and the impact these have on raising standards. The governing body is fully aware of its statutory responsibilities and makes sure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The revised behaviour policy, together with better teaching, has improved pupils' attitudes to their learning. When teaching is good or better, pupils are engaged in their learning. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration and become restless when activities do not challenge their thinking.
- Pupils say that teachers are fair. They understand and appreciate the consequences of their behaviour because there are clear rewards and sanctions which are consistently applied by all staff.
- The behaviour logs show that behaviour over time is good. There are few incidents, and records show that these are dealt with rigorously. Staff deal consistently well with those pupils with challenging behaviour.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about their work and their responsibilities. They have personal display boards that they have designed to reflect their interests. Each year group has a *Middah* (character trait) to support their personal development.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. Exclusions are low and have reduced over the last two years.
- The school's recent survey, the on-line questionnaire Parent View, and the staff questionnaires reflect parental and staff satisfaction on how the school promotes good behaviour. Most feel that the school deals effectively with the rare instances of bullying, and that good behaviour is promoted well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Site security is highly effective. There are security guards and cameras to monitor the school grounds constantly.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, including when using the internet. They say they feel very safe. The school is highly effective in tackling the rare occurrences of discriminatory language and prejudice-based bullying. Pupils are taught about differences and to respect these.
- Pupils know how to identify and manage risks well. They know the intruder procedures and maturely accept the need to follow this through if required.
- The school is vigilant in all aspects of safeguarding and is in no way complacent. It leaves no stone unturned.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are knowledgeable. They have good subject knowledge. They use this and precise technical language to develop pupils' understanding, particularly in reading and writing.
- Some teaching is outstanding. Pupils understand and use sophisticated language to identify key features of grammar. One pupil explained, 'An independent clause is a group of words that has a subject doing a verb.' He promptly gave an example to exemplify his statement. Pupils learnt a lot in this lesson.
- Pupils are usually keen and enthusiastic to meet the high expectations teachers have for learning and behaviour. There are strong relationships which are based on mutual respect.
- Teachers use assessments well to plan interesting lessons which carefully build on what pupils already know and can do. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own and each other's progress using a checklist. When this is used well, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning. Most marking provides pointers for pupils to improve their work.
- Learning proceeds at a fast pace when teachers continually challenge pupils' thinking. In these lessons teachers ask focused questions to monitor pupils' understanding in lessons. They question pupils regularly to deepen their understanding, to encourage pupils to explain their thinking and to make essential connections in their learning. This moves learning on quickly.
- Basic literacy skills are taught rigorously and systematically. Teachers are skilled in making sure that these skills are practised, refined and applied in meaningful contexts. Pupils read fluently and write for purpose and meaning in a range of different subjects.
- The school has invested in a wide range of reading books. Pupils read widely and often. They develop a love of reading very early on in their school life. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their reading books and favourite authors. The school's concerted effort to raise achievement in literacy has been highly successful.
- Art work is of the highest quality. Pupils work industriously and creatively in the designated art room with the specialist teacher. Their art work is proudly displayed around the school.

- Teaching in mathematics is not consistently good. In some lessons pupils struggle because they do not have the right equipment to support their learning or to develop key mathematical concepts. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and apply their skills in problem solving activities in mathematics and other subjects. Occasionally, pupils' concentration diminishes when teachers do not give pupils harder tasks to make them think hard. As a result, valuable learning time is wasted.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for their age in all areas of learning.
- All groups of learners achieved more than similar groups nationally in the phonic check in Year 1. There is a rising trend in phonics attainment because it is taught regularly and rigorously.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress from their starting points, particularly in reading. By the end of Year 2, attainment is above in writing and just above in reading and mathematics.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils' attainment was well above the national averages in both English and mathematics. Compared to all pupils nationally, pupils were more than a year ahead in writing, over two terms ahead in reading and just over a term in mathematics.
- In writing, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was almost double the national figure. In reading the proportion was 25% above. Although the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics was comparable to the national percentage, less pupils achieved the higher levels in this subject compared to reading and writing.
- School records and work in pupils' books show that, in 2015, these above average standards are being maintained in all year groups. This is the result of the sharp focus on improving achievement in reading and writing through improvements to the quality of teaching. The school is now working to make sure that achievement in mathematics is equally as strong.
- All groups of pupils, including those with English as an additional language and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make at least the same progress as all other groups of learners. In some year groups these pupils make much more progress.
- Progress in mathematics, although good, is slower than in reading and writing. Too few pupils of all abilities make better than expected progress.
- The school rigorously tracks pupil progress. Any pupil at risk of underachieving has targeted support to boost their progress. The effectiveness of interventions is regularly checked to make sure that these pupils catch up.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as all other pupils in school, and sometimes better. In Year 6, in 2014, these pupils made as much progress as all pupils in school in reading, and more than all pupils nationally. This pattern was repeated in writing. In mathematics they made slightly less progress than all pupils nationally. Nonetheless, although there was an in-school gap of a term in reading and mathematics, and half a term in writing, these pupils were over a year ahead of all pupils nationally in writing, a term and a half in reading and just over half a term in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have focused support based on a clear and accurate analysis of their needs. These pupils make rapid progress.
- The most able pupils achieve well, particularly in reading and writing. Occasionally, there is limited challenge in mathematics lessons which slows the progress of the most able pupils. This prevents some pupils from reaching the highest levels of achievement.

The early years provision is good

- Achievement in the early years is good. Progress is particularly strong in the Reception year. In 2014, the proportion of children who attained a good level of development, or exceeded this, was well above the national figures. From typical starting points this represents good achievement, and for some outstanding progress. Children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- The upward trend in achievement is a result of the school's targeted provision to improve children's early literacy and mathematics skills. For example, children make an early and successful start in identifying the sounds that individual letters make (phonics).
- There are very positive relationships between adults and children, with clear and established routines. The

early years classrooms are inviting, calm and harmonious, providing children with a sense of security and making them feel safe.

- Adults model expected behaviour. As a consequence, children behave well. They are polite and well mannered. They play cooperatively together, taking turns and sharing the apparatus.
- Adults plan activities for all seven areas of learning. The range of resources, both inside and outside the classroom, is of high quality. Adults use their observations well to plan children's next steps. Nonetheless, some activities in the Nursery do not always make sure that children practise and develop key skills when they work on their own.
- By contrast, there is a purposeful learning environment in the Reception classes. Every activity has well thought out learning outcomes. Children's natural curiosity and inquisitiveness are channelled into finding out with adults, with each other and by themselves.
- There is an excellent emphasis on writing in the Reception year, with captions and labels for all the displays and resources. For example, children's targets are in speech bubbles to emphasise the function of print. Their work is celebrated and displayed on the 'WOW' work wall.
- The deputy headteacher leads this key stage well. She has taken on this responsibility while the substantive leader is on maternity leave. Her expertise in early years is invaluable. She makes sure that staff work well as a team and that there is a concerted effort to work on what needs to be done next.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101549
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	449716

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	670
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Glassar
Headteacher	Robert Leach
Date of previous school inspection	March 2010
Telephone number	02082041550
Fax number	02089050260
Email address	admin@sinai.brent.sch.uk

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