

Beis Aharon School

83-95 Bethune Road, London, N16 5DT

Inspection dates

4 June 2015

Overall outcome

Independent school standards not met

Context of the inspection

- This unannounced progress monitoring inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- At the time of the school's last full inspection in November 2014, the school failed a significant number of independent school standards in Part 1, Quality of education provided; Part 2, Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils; Part 4, Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; Part 5, Premises of and accommodation; and Part 6, Provision of information.
- In February 2015 the school submitted an action plan to address these unmet standards. This was judged to require improvement.
- This present inspection was conducted to establish how well the school had implemented its action plan to meet the previously unmet independent standards.
- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in three lessons. These lessons were jointly observed with a headteacher.
- Inspectors undertook a joint premises walk with a headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils, school leaders and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors examined key documents relating to the curriculum, safeguarding, health and safety, and staff training.

Main findings

The quality of education

- The previous full inspection in November 2014 raised concerns about the quality of the curriculum. It found that pupils did not have sufficient time to study a broad range of subjects. There were no plans for teaching some areas of experience, including history, geography, art, physical education (PE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- English was not taught until Year 4. Pupils were not able to develop fluency in reading, writing and spoken English. The majority of the school day was taken up with Jewish studies, which were taught in Yiddish. Although English was introduced well in the early years, and some children developed the confidence to use some English words and expressions, this was not continued in Years 1 to 3. Secular studies, including English and mathematics, were only taught for one hour four times a week. The school did not teach a broad and balanced range of subjects. As a result, pupils did not achieve as well as they should in secular subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement was inadequate because they were not given the opportunity to develop the full range of knowledge and skills required. Learning in the secular studies was judged to be inadequate. There were no plans to ensure that pupils received adequate teaching in PSHE. Year 7 and 8 pupils did not receive any careers guidance and were not adequately prepared for the responsibilities of adult life.
- In its action plan, the school indicated that all subjects now had schemes of work and were being implemented. The school did not respond in their action plan to indicate how they would ensure that younger pupils would be taught English; how PSHE would be taught; or how it would

effectively prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

- This progress monitoring inspection established that the school's curriculum policy has recently been revised. The policy states that the curriculum is now broad and balanced, and includes both religious and secular studies. It outlines literacy skills and numeracy skills, but does not refer to all the areas of experience, including history, geography, art or PE. The head of secular studies provided evidence for the schemes of work being used in history, geography, science and citizenship. However, to date, only older pupils are studying these subjects. There are no schemes of work for technology, art, music, PE or PSHE. School leaders insist that younger pupils will not be taught English until Year 4 because 'it is not what the school wants, not what the parents want, and not the community wants ... therefore it is not going to happen'.
- The work in pupils' books confirms that the implementation of the schemes of work is not consistent in all subjects or in all year groups. The time allocated for secular studies also remains unchanged. Pupils are at least three years behind national age-related expectations in all subjects and in all year groups. The quality of teaching is not good enough to secure accelerated progress in order to close significant gaps between what pupils are currently attaining as opposed to what they are capable of achieving. Levels of attainment remain exceptionally low in all subjects, including in English and mathematics. Teachers do not use tests to set work at the right level of difficulty. This slows progress for all ability groups within lessons and over time. Furthermore, the school is unaware of what pupils are expected to achieve for their age. As a consequence, the school has exceptionally low expectations. Tests do not enable leaders to compare how well pupils are doing in relation to the national norms. This inspection found that a significant number of independent school standards in this part remain unmet.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- The previous inspection established that leaders did not actively promote fundamental British values. There were no planned approaches to teaching pupils about public institutions and services, promoting pupils' understanding and appreciation of different cultures or enabling pupils to learn about and respect the differences between people and their cultures. The school leaders claimed that a revised curriculum would ensure that most of these aspects would be addressed. However, they proposed no action to ensure that pupils would be encouraged to respect people who are different to them.
- The school told inspectors that it has no intention of teaching pupils about different cultural traditions, or to encourage respect for specific differences as outlined in the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act, such as gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief or sexual orientation. They also confirmed they do not teach sex education.
- Pupils talk confidently and knowledgably about the British monarchy, Parliament, aspects of law and order and the functions of hospitals, libraries and the police. The recent work to develop pupils' understanding about public institutions and services has been effective. Nevertheless, pupils have a limited understanding or appreciation of different cultures, faiths or beliefs. The majority of pupils told inspectors that girls 'cook, help in the home and look after the children'. Pupils' lack of understanding about differences between people results in a narrow and biased view about society. Most of the independent school standards in this part remain unmet.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- At the time of the last inspection, serious concerns were raised about the school's ability to keep pupils safe and secure. Leaders did not make sure that pupils did not come to any harm from child abuse. The school was not thorough in implementing the safeguarding policies, particularly in the early years. Procedures to make sure that children and pupils were safe were not carried out properly. Policies designed to keep pupils safe from harm from an accident or abuse were not fully implemented. The child protection policy did not provide staff with the information they needed to keep pupils safe.
- The school's action plan proposed up-to-date training for all staff, but at that time only 70% of staff had received the required training. The school provided no information as to whether the

child protection policy had been updated in line with the latest safeguarding guidance. School leaders had undertaken safer recruitment training.

- The school has updated the safeguarding policy in line with statutory requirements. All staff have received safeguarding training, including enhanced training for the designated and deputy safeguarding officers. They have also undertaken safer recruitment training. Discussions with staff confirm that they are aware of the safeguarding procedures. However, staff do not have any formal method of recording any concerns or disclosures.
- At the time of the last inspection, the behaviour policy, including sanctions and rewards, was unclear and confusing. Staff were not clear about the school's procedures and what they should do if issues arose. The school's action plan indicated that the behaviour policy had been updated and shared with staff. A log book had been put in place, including sanctions.
- The school has now updated the behaviour policy, which includes sanctions and rewards. This is being implemented effectively. Pupils rate behaviour highly. There are no recorded incidents of serious misbehaviour.
- The previous inspection found that although pupils stated that there was no bullying, their knowledge of the ways they could be hurt by bullying was limited. There were no opportunities for pupils to become aware of prejudiced-based bullying. The school's action plan indicated that the anti-bullying policy had been updated, which included a reference to prejudice-based bullying. The anti-bullying policy has been updated, but pupils could only tell inspectors about verbal and physical bullying. Their limited understanding of different forms of bullying leaves them vulnerable and unable to protect themselves effectively from potential bullying behaviour.
- The last inspection established that there were a number of health and safety hazards. Pupils were not protected from the risk of fire in the school buildings. The school had not acted on the findings of a fire risk assessment. The school has updated the health and safety policy. There are regular health and safety checks, including fire drills and risk assessments. The school has addressed the weaknesses identified in the fire risk assessment, including fire safety training for several staff.
- The previous inspection identified that the school did not deploy the correct number of staff to ensure proper supervision of pupils, particularly in relation to the ratio of qualified staff to supervise the children in early years. The school's action plan outlined improved supervision for children in the early years. Despite the increase in staffing levels, too few staff have the required child care qualifications. Furthermore, this inspection was unable to establish whether the early years provision is registered separately from the main school, and how many children the early years is legally registered to admit.
- The last inspection found that the admission register, which records the names of pupils enrolled in the school, to be inaccurate. The attendance registers were not always filled in. The school was not able to be sure when pupils were in school. The school intended to address these shortcomings. Admission and attendance procedures have now been reviewed and are filled in accurately. Although the school has addressed some previous weaknesses, there remain other unmet standards as noted above, potentially jeopardising children and pupils' safety and welfare.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- It was noted at the time of the previous inspection that leaders did not undertake the required checks to make sure that staff were suitable to work with children. Records were not completed or recorded properly. The school's response to this was that all vetting checks had been carried out.
- This inspection confirmed that some significant gaps in the vetting of staff remain, including prohibition checks. The school does not record on the single central record of checks what identity checks have been carried out or evidence of checks of staff's previous employment history, and there is no evidence of checks to ascertain if staff have the right to work in the UK. The school does not take up references to assess whether adults are suitable to work with children and pupils. Furthermore, the school has not assessed whether staff working with children have been suitably vetted. The school fails a number of the statutory requirements for early years. This, together with the outstanding unmet independent school standards, means that children's and pupils' safety and welfare continue to be at risk.

Premises and accommodation

- The previous inspection found that the current location of the medical room was not suitable for treating sick or injured boys. The school's intended response was a treatment room with washing facilities. This has been completed. The school now meets this standard.

Provision of information

- At the time of the last inspection the school did not provide all the required information to parents and carers. The school's action plan indicated that the prospectus had been updated to include all the required information, and that this information had been provided to parents.
- The school's updated safeguarding policy is made available to parents on request. However, although the prospectus includes the required information regarding contact details, no details are provided to parents and carers for the school's curriculum, the academic achievements of pupils, details of the complaints procedure and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year. Moreover, this inspection flagged up further omissions, these being: the school does not have a copy of the report following an inspection under section 108 or 109 of the 2008 Act published and maintained on the school's internet website, and provided to parents of each registered pupil; and an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught provided to the parents.

Quality of leadership and management of schools

- The proprietor and leaders have failed to make sure that a significant number of independent school standards are met since the previous full inspection, in Parts 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Those persons with leadership and management responsibilities are still not demonstrating the required skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that all the independent school standards are met. They do not actively promote the well-being of the pupils in the school. This includes failure to promote pupils' well-being, including protection from harm and neglect.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

- The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provide for matters specified in sub-paragraph (2), is drawn up and implemented effectively (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a))
- Ensure that the curriculum includes subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils (paragraph 2(1)(b)(1)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age a full-time education with experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative (paragraphs 2(2), 2(2)(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that as the principal language of instruction is a language other than English, the school must provide lessons in written and spoken English (paragraph 2(2)(c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the curriculum includes personal, social and health education which reflects the school's aims and ethos and which encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (paragraph 2(2)(d)), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the curriculum includes appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education (paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress (paragraph 2(2)(h)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the curriculum provides effective preparation of pupils for the

opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society (paragraph 2(2)(i)).

- The proprietor must ensure that pupils are able to acquire new knowledge and make progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught (paragraph 3(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and that information from that assessment is used to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that there is a framework in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly, and that information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 4).
- The proprietor must actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (paragraphs 5, 5(a)).
- The proprietor must promote further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures (paragraph 5(b) (v)).
- The proprietor must encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act (paragraphs 5(b), 5(b)(iv)).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that there is an effective anti-bullying strategy in place and is it being implemented (paragraph 10).
- The proprietor must ensure that school staff are deployed to ensure the proper supervision of pupils and, in particular, that the correct ratio of suitably qualified staff is available to supervise the early years children (14); Early Years statutory requirements: ensure that at least half of all other staff must hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification (3.23).
- The proprietor must ensure that all the required checks to ensure the suitability of staff members to work with children are carried out (paragraphs 18(2) to 18(2)(d) inclusive, 18(3)); early years statutory requirements: ensure there is a system in place to manage any potential disqualification of staff (3.14–3.18).
- Ensure that further checks are carried out where a criminal record is not adequate to show that a staff member of member of the proprietorial body is suitable to work with children because they have only recently arrived in or returned to the United Kingdom (paragraphs 18(2) (e), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(iii)).
- Ensure that the single central register of checks contains the information about all the checks that are required to check that staff members and members of the proprietorial body are suitable to work with children (paragraphs 21(1), 21(2)).
- Ensure that the single central register records the checks made to show that a staff member of member of the proprietorial body is suitable to work with children because they have only recently arrived in or returned to the United Kingdom (paragraph 21(6)).
- The proprietor must ensure that particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations are made available to parents of pupils (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(b), 32(3)(e)).
- The proprietor must ensure that there is a copy of the inspection (following an inspection under section 108 or 109 or 87(1) of the 1989 Act) report published and maintained on the school website, and provided to the parents of each registered pupil, by any date specified by the body who conducted the inspection (paragraphs 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school provides an annual written report of each registered pupil's progress and attainment in the main subject areas taught to the parents of that registered pupil except that no report need be provided where the parent has agreed otherwise (paragraph 32(1)(f)).
- The proprietor must ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities

demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1) (a)); they fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1) (b)); and they actively promote the wellbeing of pupils (paragraph 34(1) (c)).

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clementina Olufunke Aina

Additional inspector

Information about this school

- Beis Aharon is an independent orthodox Jewish boys' day school, located in North London. It is owned by the Beis Aharon Trust.
- The school is registered for pupils aged from three to 12 years of age. The school admits pupils who are 13 years of age, meaning that the school is in breach of its registration. There are currently 342 pupils on roll, including 91 children who attend the early years provision on a full-time basis. The school did not provide information for the number of early years children they are registered for. The early years provision is not on the same site as the main school and has a different address. The school could not provide evidence as to whether the early years provision is registered separately or under the school's registration.
- Most of the pupils belong to the local orthodox Jewish community and speak Yiddish as their first language. They attend school for six days a week, from Sunday to Friday. The majority of the school day is taken up by Jewish religious studies, which are taught in Yiddish.
- At the time of the last full inspection, English was not taught until pupils were in Year 4. Many pupils are at the early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. A small number of pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school opened in 1981 and moved into its current premises in 2009. It was last inspected in November 2014, when a significant number of independent school standards were unmet.
- At the time of the last inspection, four headteachers took responsibility for the different areas of the school, with none having overall leadership of the school. This remains the case.
- The school aims to 'educate our children in the very same way our parents were taught, carrying forward Jewish tradition and Jewish values to the next generation'.

School details

Unique reference number	131170
Inspection number	464903
DfE registration number	204/6398

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Type of school	Jewish orthodox
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Beis Aharon Trust Ltd
Chair	Mr J Lipschitz
Headteacher	Rabbi Twerski Rabbi Greenfeld Rabbi Bransdorfer Mr Pomerantz
Date of previous school inspection	18-20 November 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,860
Telephone number	020 8800 7368
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