

# Mechinoh School

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

## Inspection dates

16 June 2015

## Overall outcome

**Independent school standards not met**

## Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.
- The school received a standard inspection in November 2013.
- In January 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) formally notified the school that it must respond to the weaknesses identified at that inspection. The school submitted an action plan responding to the weaknesses identified in the inspection in November 2013. This was submitted in the form of a letter to the DfE in February 2014. The evaluation of the plan found that it required improvement with most proposed actions and timescales not being reasonable. The rejection of the action plan was confirmed to the school by the DfE in February 2014.
- The school received a standard inspection in November 2014. A progress monitoring inspection was carried out on day 3 of the standard inspection. Standards relating to parts 3, 4 and 5 of the appropriate Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, were not met.
- In March 2015 the DfE issued a decision to Mechinoh School to remove the school from the register of independent schools. The school has appealed against the decision.
- This progress monitoring inspection was commissioned by the DfE on 22 May 2015 in order to ascertain whether or not the school has rectified the failings and the extent of the progress made. Specific regulations that inspectors were asked to report on were parts 3, 4, 5 and 8 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- The school has not submitted an action plan responding to the weaknesses identified in the inspection in November 2014.
- One of Her Majesty's Inspectors was in school for one day in order to conduct the present inspection. The inspector had a background in education including independent schools.

## Main findings

### ■ Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The inspection of November 2014 found that the school's leaders had not been robust enough in their attempts to ensure arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of students at the school were strong. Consequently, standards relating to the well-being of students were not met.

Leaders' actions to ensure that students, staff and visitors are safe have not been effective enough since the last inspection. The inspector found that the basement fire escape route remained blocked by a bolted door. Fire evacuation procedures make provision for the basement fire escape door to be opened by an adult in the case of an emergency. This is unacceptable. Leaders are not in a position to guarantee that a teacher will always be present in the basement to open the door for students. Also, one of the bolts is positioned at the top of the door and the other at the bottom, these could be difficult to find, reach and/or open for some students, especially in an emergency. Leaders acted swiftly, during the inspection, to reinstate a second floor emergency exit route as a means of escape in case of fire on or near the stairs around the first floor. However, this escape

route has not been recorded in the fire evacuation procedure and staff and students have not been trained in its use.

Leaders have reviewed the first aid policy, which previously had a number of omissions. The policy now includes clear guidance on the actions to take if a student is injured or is ill. However, leaders are not in a position to guarantee basic first aid cover at all times because only one member of staff is trained in first aid.

Leaders have taken some appropriate steps to improve the welfare, health and safety of the students in the school since the last inspection. Leaders have undertaken, or commissioned, considerable work to rectify many of the faults relating to the maintenance of the grounds and building, identified at the last inspection. The perimeter fence is now secure with an electronic entrance gate through which the entrance of all visitors can be monitored. Where possible, the school grounds have been tidied and trip hazards removed. External safety lighting has been checked and repaired and in a few cases, such as around the basement fire escape, improved. The school building is much cleaner than at the time of the previous inspection. Cracked windows, along with plastic wall cladding, have been replaced, broken furniture has been removed and the basement floor has been cleaned and is now fit for use as a play area. Leaders have authorised extensive electrical testing and repair which has made electrical systems and appliances safe. Leaders have also sanctioned an extensive review and repair of the fire safety system and equipment. Many additional smoke alarms have been fitted while empty fire extinguishers have been refilled or replaced. A robust fire safety equipment monitoring system has been put in place by leaders. Leaders' records show that the fire alarm system is tested frequently. These actions are contributing to the well-being of students. However, the standard relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils is not met.

#### ■ Part 4. Suitability of staff and proprietors

The inspection of November 2014 found that leaders had not ensured the suitability of all teachers because checks had not been thorough enough, record keeping was inadequate and the latest guidance in relation to keeping children safe in schools had not been followed systematically.

The standard relating to the suitability of staff and proprietors remains unmet. Leaders have not yet taken action to register with the Employer Online Access Service nor have they completed prohibition from teaching checks for each teacher employed at the school. This means that students are inadequately safeguarded because appropriate pre-employment checks are incomplete.

Not all of the required pre-employment checks, for example prohibition from teaching checks and qualification checks, have been carried out and recorded in the single central record by leaders. Therefore, the single central record does not meet requirements.

The single central record includes the facility to record all the relevant pre-employment checks along with the dates they were carried out. All teachers working at the school are included in the single central record. Leaders have sought and received retrospective references for all teachers employed at the time of the last inspection. A significant minority of these references are of poor quality because they do not include sufficient detail about teachers' background, character and skills to enable leaders to make informed judgements about a teacher's suitability to teach. Leaders have introduced a school reference request form. This means that, for example in the case of the teacher most recently employed, leaders receive much more detailed information about the prospective member of staff than they did before the last inspection.

Leaders have carried out medical fitness checks on all teachers working at the school. Leaders have obtained information to satisfy themselves that the contract cleaner has been checked thoroughly by his employers. However, leaders have not included this member of staff on the single central record.

#### ■ Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The inspection of November 2014 found the school's provision of changing, washing, showering and toileting facilities for students was inadequate and that maintenance and cleaning standards were poor.

This remains the case overall because actions taken by leaders to improve the changing, washing

and toileting facilities for students have not been effective. Students do not have suitable on-site changing and showering facilities should they need them following a physical education lesson. As reported at the last inspection, the medical room is still not positioned near enough to a suitable toilet.

Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure that all washrooms have an adequate supply of hot and cold running water. Leaders have installed electric water heaters in each washroom used by students. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Leaders have taken appropriate action to clear the disused chemical lab of all chemicals. While the area remains unfit for use by students, as reported at the previous inspection, the risk posed by stored chemicals has been eliminated.

All fire escape routes identified by leaders are free from clutter and rubbish such as broken furniture. The school's electrical supply fuse box has been encased in a locked cupboard and the gas supply is now housed in a locked room which is free from debris. Leaders use a daily health and safety check list to identify potential maintenance issues and take action to rectify problems. For example, all fire extinguishers have been refilled or replaced and none have been tampered with because of leaders' increased vigilance.

## ■ Part 8. Quality of leadership and management

This standard is not met. Leaders do not take appropriate action to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school are secure. Leaders' checks to ensure the suitability of staff are not robust enough. The premises and accommodation at the school are not adequate because facilities for changing, showering and toileting are not appropriate. Although leaders have taken action to make improvements in Parts 3, 4 and 5 of the regulations, gaps remain in each area.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–	7
arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and	7(a)
such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.	7(b)
The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.	11
The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.	12
The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy. (previously numbered 14)	13
The standard in this paragraph is met if– (previously numbered 19(2))	18(2)
no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction; (previously numbered 19(2)(a))	18(2)(b)
where appropriate, the person's qualifications; (previously numbered	18(2)(c)(iv)

19(2)(b)(iv)	
The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment. (previously numbered 19(2))	18(3)
The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question. (previously numbered 22(1))	21(1)
The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is– (previously numbered 22(3))	21(3)
in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether– (previously numbered 22(3))	21(3)(a)
a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction; (previously numbered 22(3)(b))	21(3)(a)(iii)
checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications; (previously numbered 22(3)(c))	21(3)(a)(iv)
in relation to each member of staff ("S"), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed. (previously numbered 22(3)(b))	21(3)(b)
Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–. (previously numbered 23A(1))	23(1)
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. (previously numbered 23A(1)(c))	23(1)(c)
The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including– (previously numbered 23B(1)(a))	24(1)
accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and (previously numbered 23B(1)(b))	24(1)(b)
The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–	34(1)
demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;	34(1)(a)
fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and	34(1)(b)
actively promote the well-being of pupils.	34(1)(c)

## Inspection team

Drew Crawshaw, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## 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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105999
<b>Inspection number</b>	465033
<b>DfE registration number</b>	355/6020

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Jewish faith school
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	62
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mechinoh School
<b>Chair</b>	Rabbi M Kupetz
<b>Principal</b>	Rabbi N Baddiel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2014
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	Not applicable
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 795 9275
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	mechinoh@gmail.com

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