

Toras Emes

2A Back Hope Street, Salford M7 2FR

Inspection dates 17–19 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils' progress in Chol (secular) learning is much slower than seen nationally in the same subjects.
- Teaching of Chol subjects, including English, mathematics, history and geography, is ineffective.
- The system for checking how well pupils are doing in Chol subjects is underdeveloped. The information from individual teachers' tests is not used to make sure teaching is adjusted to help pupils learn quickly enough.
- Teachers of Chol subjects lack effective training and guidance to help them develop their skills.
- Leadership and management of Chol learning are inadequate. Governors have not been able to appoint a specialist leader for Chol subjects.
- Provision for the early years does not establish children's starting points accurately enough nor build on these well enough.
- Pupils are not safeguarded as well as possible because written references are not always obtained before employing new members of staff. Governance does not follow the statutory guidance concerning safeguarding in this respect.
- Leaders and teachers do not pay particular regard to the full range of people protected under equality legislation in their development of pupils' respect of others.
- Pupils do not have opportunities to learn enough about people of other faiths.
- Self-evaluation is over-generous. Action plans lack important details which would help to drive faster improvement.
- Leaders and governors have not checked carefully enough that the school meets all the independent school standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership and management are effective in ensuring that good teaching and assessment in Kodesh (religious) subjects helps pupils learn well and make rapid progress.
- Engagement with parents enhances children's learning in the early years and in the rest of the school.
- Parents are very happy with the education their children receive and strongly support the school.
- The ethos of the school is one of care and respect. Relationships in the school are good.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. They know about the performance of staff and pupils in relation to Kodesh learning and have taken steps to improve the school.
- Pupils behave well and get on well together. They try hard in class.
- The headteacher is highly valued by pupils, staff and parents. He gives good support to pupils and staff.
- Pupils feel safe. The physical safety of the school buildings is good.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make faster progress in Chol subjects, particularly in English, mathematics, geography and history, to match attainment in other schools so that they are better prepared for the next stage of their secular education, by leaders:
 - establishing a consistent framework for assessment across the school to identify pupils' starting points and track their learning
 - ensuring teachers better use information from assessment to plan the next stages for pupils' learning within lessons and over time
 - ensuring that teachers more closely monitor pupils' progress so that any pupils falling behind can be identified and teaching adjusted to match their needs
 - providing effective support and training to develop the subject teaching knowledge, confidence and skills of all teachers and especially less experienced teachers
 - enabling teachers to learn from and share effective teaching within the school and in partnership with other schools
 - helping teachers to more effectively check that pupils learn as quickly as in other schools nationally
 - more closely monitoring the effectiveness of subject teaching so that additional support and challenge to teachers can be put in place when needed
 - ensuring that the available time for secular education is used as well as possible
 - making sure teachers apply the school's display policy to provide a more stimulating learning environment, with opportunities to recognise and exemplify good learning and to provide an additional teaching resource
 - ensuring that all teachers identify and take opportunities to develop learning in secular subjects when these arise in other subjects and in Kodesh (religious) learning
 - urgently continuing their search to find a suitably experienced coordinator for secular education and, if this continues to prove impossible, identifying other ways of providing specialist overall leadership of Chol subjects.

- Ensure pupils build up knowledge and skills which will equip them for participation in diverse modern Britain, by:
 - paying particular regard to people with the full range of protected characteristics identified in the national equality legislation
 - giving pupils appropriate knowledge about, and experience of, other faiths.

- Ensure governors and leaders review the current statutory guidance relating to the safeguarding of children so that it is rigorously applied to the appointment of staff.

- Sharpen self-evaluation and action planning so that leaders can identify necessary improvement in more detail and ensure that such improvement is sustained.

- Ensure that the early years provision helps children to learn and develop as quickly as possible and gets them fully ready for Year 1, by:
 - providing leaders and teachers with opportunities to visit good or better early years provision to allow them to understand how this can be achieved
 - more rigorously establishing what each child knows and can do when they start at the school and then using this information to check progress and plan their next steps in learning
 - completing systematic checks to make sure that each child progresses as quickly as they can
 - ensuring that children's reading skills are developed systematically from the earliest stages
 - improving the quality of resources available for children and providing better access to play and learning outdoors

- ensuring all early years staff understand how they can contribute to both secular and religious learning and plan for opportunities to do this.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - The standard in this paragraph is met if (paragraph 2(1)):
 - the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and (paragraph 2(1)(a))
 - the written policy, plans and schemes of work (paragraph 2(1)(b))
 - take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and (paragraph 2(1)(b)(i))
 - personal, social, health and economic education which (paragraph 2(2)(d))
 - encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 (paragraph 2(2)(d)(ii)).
 - The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school (paragraph 3):
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught; (paragraph 3(a))
 - involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time; (paragraph 3(c))
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons; (paragraph 3(d))
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils’ work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3(g)).
 - The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school’s own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place (paragraph 4).
 - The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor (paragraph 5):
 - actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; (paragraph 5(a))
 - ensures that principles are actively promoted which (paragraph 5(b))
 - encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equalities Act 2010 (paragraph 5(b)(vi)).
 - The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that (paragraph 7):
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and (paragraph 7(a))
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7(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 (paragraph 34(1)):
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; (paragraph 34(1)(a))
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and (paragraph 34(1)(b))
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1)(c)).

- The school must meet the following statutory requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage:
 - learning and development requirements (apart from where there is an exemption in place).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders have not made sure that all the independent school standards are met including one relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Leaders recognise that the leadership and management of Chol subjects is the weakest aspect of the school. They have been unable to appoint a coordinator for this learning, despite repeated several recruitment rounds. The Chair of the Governing Body, who is also the proprietor, has provided helpful advice to leaders and teachers about secular learning. However, this has not been sufficient to ensure that teaching is good enough to allow pupils to make the progress they should in English, mathematics and other subjects.
- The timetable provides roughly two hours a day for secular learning. Teachers recognise that much of this is needed for English and mathematics work so that previous gaps can be filled at the same time as new learning. This means teaching in other secular subjects including geography, history and science is restricted.
- The school's ethos and curriculum reflect the Orthodox Jewish community's aim. This desire to provide a sheltered learning environment for its children means that pupils have very few opportunities to learn about other faiths. In addition, pupils do not have opportunities to develop awareness of the full range of different people they may meet in their lives. These aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are therefore less strong than those which align more easily to Orthodox Jewish conviction. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught the importance of respecting all people as a fundamental aspect of their Jewish faith.
- Leaders are determined to improve the school. They accurately identify aspects of the school that are strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, formal evaluation is not incisive enough to provide helpful details to fully inform plans to improve the school. The action plans identify broad intentions but lack details to allow those involved to know what steps are planned, when these should happen or how progress will be checked.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school. Those parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, a paper questionnaire during the inspection, or who spoke to inspectors, were very happy to recommend the school. They have full confidence in the headteacher and other senior leaders and recognise how well the headteacher knows and cares about each pupil. There is formal contact with parents each week. This, together with informal conversations and meetings, means that any issues can be picked up very quickly. This enhances the safety and welfare of pupils.
- The headteacher has formal weekly meetings with all teachers. This allows him to monitor their work and to provide support, particularly in relation to their teaching of Kodesh subjects. Leaders provide training to improve teachers' and teaching assistants' skills. These frequently use programmes offered by Jewish educators. The training helps to develop a consistent philosophy of education and teachers' general skills but does not address the need for specific training about the teaching of secular subjects.
- The arrangements for the leadership and management of Kodesh subjects are effective. This ensures that pupils learn well and in a way which meets parents' and the wider Jewish Community's expectations. However, the programme for secular learning is less developed. It includes the key items which pupils are expected to learn in English, mathematics, geography, history and science but there is very little information about physical education and technical and aesthetic subjects. Commercially published schemes are used as a resource for English and mathematics teaching and assessment, but these are not followed systematically.
- Leadership of the early years provision has not ensured that the national framework for early years education is used as well as possible. Expectations of the youngest children's development are not as high as possible.
- The school is currently registered for 17 pupils aged five to seven. The school roll includes 140 children and pupils aged three to 11. The Proprietor had not formally notified the Department for Education (DfE) of the growth of the school and no changes to its registration have been approved. However, this notification was made during the inspection. The school premises are sufficient for the current school roll.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The proprietor is also the Chair of the Governing Body. She leads a small governing body who are all parents of pupils.
 - Governors are ambitious for the success and development of the school. They have overseen its rapid growth over five years. Their ambition is further demonstrated by their recent purchase of new premises for the school. An extensive programme of refurbishment has already started. Planning for the use of the new buildings involves senior leaders, so that educational aspects are taken into account. Other aspects,

such as ensuring that the school entrance gives safe pedestrian and vehicle access, are also actively being considered. The proprietor is aware of the need to seek approval from the DfE before the school moves to its new premises.

- The headteacher ensures that governors know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly for Kodesh subjects. They are provided with some information about the school's Chol work but this has not allowed them to ensure this is effective.
- The school relies on charitable donations, voluntary contributions from parents and fund raising, to fund its activities. Governors manage the available resources well. For example, by allocating additional funds to allow a suitable teacher to improve the quality of the secular teaching for some pupils and extra teaching assistants to help boost pupils' reading.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The school has not required written references to be obtained before any new member of staff is employed. This means that the risk of employing an unsuitable member of staff is not reduced as much as possible. In other respects, the safeguarding arrangements are secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate

- Teaching is inconsistent. Much teaching of Kodesh subjects is highly effective. However, in Chol subjects, teaching and assessment have not ensured that pupils learn quickly enough.
- The teaching arrangements and checks on pupils' achievement in religious learning are well established and ensure pupils progress well.
- Teachers plan and use their own assessment arrangements for secular subjects. There is no comprehensive picture of pupils' starting points or how they progress as they move through the school. Gaps in Year 6 pupils' learning in English and mathematics were not identified or acted upon until they reached this school year. The lack of a common system makes it harder for different teachers to build on pupils' previous learning as pupils move up at the start of each year.
- Marking of pupils' Chol work frequently provides encouragement but does not identify ways to help pupils learn more. Sometimes work which is of a much lower quality than typical from pupils of similar ages is given undue praise. This means teachers' written comments do not always help pupils to do as well as they should. Teachers are not sufficiently aware of the standard of written work pupils do in other schools.
- The school rightly recognises the importance of developing pupils' reading. Additional small group teaching is provided for all pupils as they learn to read Hebrew and English. The breadth of this extra help means that there is no difference in the support received by weaker readers than stronger readers. Extra support is provided for pupils with special educational needs so that they do not fall behind. The special educational needs coordinator carefully tracks the progress of these pupils.
- The school display policy provides useful guidance on how teachers can use wall displays to make classrooms more interesting and to enhance learning. Despite this, teachers have not taken the opportunity to use wall space to celebrate pupils' good work or to provide resources for easy reference by pupils. Many rooms have little relating to secular learning apart from printed copies of multiplication tables and world maps.
- A few more experienced teachers take opportunities to use Kodesh learning to enhance pupils' Chol understanding. An inspector saw this in a Year 2 lesson where pupils' learning was given breadth when the teacher used the biblical account of Noah's Ark to build up pupils' scientific understanding of floating and sinking. The pupils enjoyed the practical activity and willingly played the part of 'the rabbi' in explaining their learning to the whole class. In contrast, in other classes, less experienced teachers do not recognise the contribution that Kodesh teaching could make to Chol learning.
- Pupils say they enjoy their learning. Inspectors saw this in the way Year 1 and Year 3 pupils enthusiastically practised Hanukkah songs ready for this festival.
- While parents very strongly feel their children are taught well, a very small number felt that the school's arrangements for homework are not as good as they could be. The school day is longer than in many schools. Younger pupils are asked to practise their reading and some, but not all, classes receive regular homework in their secular subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- The systems to ensure pupils are as safe as possible are not complete because the lack of written references for all new employees means that the risk of appointing a person who is unsuitable to work in a school is higher.
- The school is characterised by a caring and welcome atmosphere. Pupils are well known to all members of staff. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are good. Inspectors saw pupils playing well together and supporting each other's learning.
- The pupils who spoke to inspectors are aware of the possibility of bullying but say that this happens very rarely, if ever. They know that they can raise any kind of issue with the headteacher or other members of staff and are very confident that any problems will be sorted out. Inspectors saw pupils learning about bullying as part of the school's national anti-bullying week work. This interested pupils and allowed teachers to reinforce how important it is to respect others, including those with disabilities and of different racial backgrounds.
- Pupils have very limited access to modern technology. Only teachers use computers in classrooms and do so to provide learning resources. The school has strict policies relating to the use of mobile phones by staff. Pupils do not have opportunities to develop skills to enable them to understand and manage risks independently.
- The school's positive ethos helps pupils to be confident and happy. They are friendly and were pleased to talk with inspectors about the school and why they like it. Pupils are polite.
- The premises are safe; the arrangements to make sure these are secure are thorough.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Inspectors saw pupils behaving well in lessons and around the school, for example responding to teachers' instructions as pupils line up at the start of school. This enables the start of the day to be calm and unhurried without wasting time and to give a good opportunity to share important messages with all pupils.
- Some pupils said that their classes sometimes behave less well. When this has been identified as an issue, leaders have taken steps to support teachers to apply the behaviour policy and to provide teaching which interests pupils. This approach has contributed to improved behaviour in Year 6.
- The parents who contacted inspectors have no concerns over pupils' behaviour.
- The school keeps records of any behaviour that falls short of the expected standard. These records show that poor behaviour is infrequent.
- Attendance is above the national average. Parents described to inspectors how keen pupils are to come to school. This was further illustrated in descriptions of some pupils wanting to come to school even if they are unwell.

Outcomes for children and learners are inadequate

- While pupils make good progress in their Kodesh learning, their progress in Chol learning is inadequate.
- The standards pupils achieve in English, and particularly writing, mathematics and other secular subjects, are much lower than the national averages. Pupils' writing in English often takes the form of short exercises which do not build up their skills to write at length. In addition, the quality of this writing is lower than typical in other schools.
- The teaching of mathematics has left gaps in pupils' knowledge. While these have been identified for pupils in Year 6, much work still needs to be done to close these gaps.
- While pupils experience secular subjects other than English and mathematics, the relatively short time spent on these means that pupils' knowledge and development of skills is restricted.
- This year is the first in which the school has had Year 6 pupils, so there is no information from national tests or other testing about pupils' attainment when they finally leave the school. However, standardised tests have not been used to routinely track how well pupils are doing in earlier years. Recent testing of Year 6

pupils, using commercially published tests, confirmed the gaps in pupils' knowledge.

- Reading is emphasised in the school. The small group sessions for reading in Hebrew and English help pupils to develop their skills well. However, their starting points are not as secure as possible because the approach to teaching reading in English in the early years is too informal at its earliest stages.
- Additional support is provided for children with special educational needs through extra teaching in small groups and by teaching assistants who work with individual pupils in lessons. Such pupils' learning is very carefully monitored and they therefore make progress at similar rates to others in the school. However, the work planned in lessons frequently fails to take account of different groups of pupils' starting points which leads to the most able not moving forward as quickly as possible.
- Pupils' good development of Kodesh aspects of their learning mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their religious education when they leave the school in Year 6. Pupils told inspectors that their eventual aim is to go to a Yeshivah (Jewish religious further education college) and the school contributes to the early stages of preparation for this. However, the much slower progress of pupils in Chol subjects means that pupils are not properly prepared for future learning in secular subjects.

Early years provision

is inadequate

- The school does not meet the statutory learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The leader of this key stage understands the need to ensure that provision is at least good if children are to be given the best possible start to their education. She has led improvement over the last two years. Many of the staff in the early years are inexperienced and often stay at the school for a fairly short time. This means that much effort is spent in training and support which does not always have the desired effect on children's learning. Staff have insufficient understanding of what fully effective early years learning is like.
- The early years leader visits all children at home or at pre-school before they join the school. This provides useful information about their starting points. However, this information, together with more formal checks once children have settled into the Nursery class, is not used well enough to establish exactly what children already know and can do when they start.
- Teachers' planning focuses more on the age of each child than their learning needs because continuing assessment of these needs is underdeveloped. This then means that the school cannot securely tell whether children have reached a good level of development by the time they move from early years to Key Stage 1. In addition, leaders cannot be sure that each child is as well prepared as possible for this move.
- The formal use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to help children start to read happens later than in most schools. This means that children have to catch up later on.
- The classrooms are shabby and the resources available do not promote learning which children can decide for themselves. Outside play is restricted because of the need to use the school playground for breaktimes and for physical education sessions for all pupils.
- Early years teaching, particularly in Reception, has a focus on religious aspects in the morning and secular aspects in the afternoon. Sometimes opportunities for children's overall development are missed because teachers see the two aspects being separate.
- Staffing levels are appropriate with children being well looked after and closely supervised. Children's physical safety is considered, for example in the use of finger protectors on doors and careful attention to handwashing when needed.
- Teachers ensure that children interact with each other and play cooperatively. This adds to the development of their social skills and their enjoyment of learning.
- There is good communication between the school and home about how well children are getting on.

School details

Unique reference number	136503
Inspection number	10004161
DfE registration number	355/6058

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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 faith school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Number of part time pupils	1
Proprietor	Mrs S Guttentag
Chair	Mrs S Guttentag
Headteacher	Rabbi S Roberts
Annual fees (day pupils)	Key Stages 1 and 2 – N/A, Early Years – charges vary
Telephone number	0161 792 1368
Website	www.torasemes.co.uk
Email address	torasemes@live.co.uk
Date of previous school inspection	31 January–1 February 2012

Information about this school

- Toras Emes is an Orthodox Jewish independent school for boys in the Salford area of Manchester.
- It currently has 140 pupils aged 3 to 11 although its registration with the Department for Education is for up to 17 pupils, aged 5 to 7.
- No pupil has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school opened in March 2011.
- The school aims to 'provide an excellent education guided by and giving over the principles of a true Toradik Chinuch' (Torah education).
- The school was last inspected at the end of January 2012.
- The school has a Nursery class as part of its early years provision. This was previously registered and inspected separately from the school. The registration of the Nursery class changed earlier in 2015 and it is now inspected as part of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in Kodesh and Chol lessons.
- Inspectors toured the school's current premises accompanied by senior staff and were shown, by governors, the buildings currently being refurbished.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed throughout the school day.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator, the early years manager and other members of staff. They met formally with two groups of 16 pupils in total and had informal conversations with others.
- Inspectors met with the Chair of the Governing Body, who is also the proprietor, and another governor.
- There were 11 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also reviewed the responses made by 49 parents to a paper copy of the same questions. Separate letters received from a small number of parents were read. Questionnaires returned by 22 members of staff were also considered.
- School policies and other documentation provided by the school were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards, and to provide other inspection evidence. Records including those relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour were also reviewed.
- The school's information on pupils' progress and attainment was considered.
- Inspectors examined pupils' exercise books.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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