

Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School

98 Clapton Common, Clapton Common, London, E5 9AL

Inspection dates

15 July 2015

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to report on the school's compliance with the whole or specified parts of Parts 1, 2, 3 and 8 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- The inspection focused on the following parts of the Independent School Standards: Part 1: Quality of education provided, paragraphs 2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(i) and 3(i); the whole of Part 2: Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; Part 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils, paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b) particularly focusing on the wording of the school's safeguarding policy; the whole of Part 8: Quality of leadership and management.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.

Main findings

- Safeguarding procedures are in place but are not sufficiently robust. The member of staff responsible for safeguarding has been appropriately trained and knows what to do if any concerns arise. The school has a policy for safeguarding. However, issues such as child sexual exploitation, faith abuse, forced marriage and preventing radicalisation are not considered in the policy. The policy is out-of-date in a number of other respects, including making reference to the latest government guidance. This means that a compliant safeguarding policy is not made available for parents. Leaders acknowledge that the school's policy and practice for preventing radicalisation is undeveloped. The school does not promote pupils' safety and well-being well enough.
- The school's admission register does not contain all the required details. The dates when pupils join or leave the school are not recorded. Leaders told inspectors that all pupils go on to further studies in Israel when they leave the school, but this information is not recorded. This lack of information means that the school does not know if pupils are safe or missing. This is a serious safeguarding concern.
- The school's ethos identifies its founding principle as 'unconditional adherence to the Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish law)'. Leaders are aware that this disregards the protected characteristic of sexual orientation within the 2010 Equality Act.
- The school offers a Kodesh (Jewish studies) and a Chol (secular studies) curriculum. The curriculum policy makes reference to linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative education. However, in practice, curriculum coverage is, at best, variable. Leaders do not consider how all curriculum areas should be developed and taught. For example, they assert that English tuition beyond Key Stage 3 is provided at home.
- Teaching in the early years is underpinned by short and medium term plans that consider children's needs satisfactorily. Medium and long-term planning in other key stages lacks depth. Leaders acknowledge that schemes of work do not adequately identify or provide for a broad and balanced curriculum.

- Pupils show respect for each other and to others in their community. However, they do not gain a deep enough understanding about different faiths or beliefs. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils know about Jewish faith celebrations, but they could not identify similar events for other religions.
- Personal, social, health and economic education is included as part of Jewish studies. 'Mussar' (character building) is developed across the school. It recognises fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and advocates respect and tolerance of those with different faiths. Torah ideals are applied to the Jewish faith and to the law of the country. However, in practice, pupils are taught very little about other faiths and beliefs.
- Careers guidance provided to pupils is limited. It focuses only on steering boys towards continuing with their academic studies in religious institutions. Leaders are considering providing advice about a wider range of occupations. At present, however, no provision is made for boys who may wish to progress with other careers.
- Because a significant number of independent school standards were found to be unmet, including those for safeguarding, inspectors judged that the school was also failing to meet the standards relating to leadership and management.

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 is drawn up and implemented effectively; and that the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account progression from one year to the next across different key stages (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii)).
- The proprietor must ensure there are detailed plans focused on practical skills and appropriate resources to ensure pupils experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education elements of the curriculum (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), (paragraphs 2(2)(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the personal, social, health and economic education encourages respect for people, paying particular regard to those who may have protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 equality Act (paragraphs 2(2)(d) and 2(2)(d)(ii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that secondary education pupils access accurate, impartial, up-to-date careers guidance which helps them to make informed choices about a broad range of careers; and encourages them to fulfil their potential (paragraphs 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school actively promotes respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; and enables them to contribute more widely to society through an appreciation of other cultures, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act (paragraphs 5,5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(iii), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi)).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7,7(a),7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15).
- The proprietor must ensure that accurate particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 (as above) are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request (paragraph 32(1) (c)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge relevant to their role, and fulfil these responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and they actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b),34(1)(c)).

Inspection team

John Lambern, Lead Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School is an independent Charedi (strictly orthodox) Jewish boys' school, founded in 1973 and situated in the Jewish community in Hackney, North London.
- Most boys belong to the Belz Chasidic community and the majority speak Yiddish as their first language with Kodesh (Jewish studies) taught in Yiddish. Chol (secular studies) is taught in Yiddish, but supported by English. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, boys are taught through a combination of English and Yiddish.
- The school is open six days a week, from Sunday to Friday, with the majority of time being devoted to the teaching of Kodesh studies. These lessons provide cross-curricular input, to which elements of the Chol curriculum are linked.
- The school is guided by the principles of Torah (Jewish law) and the ethos of Torah values. The school's ethos has an unconditional adherence to the Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish law) and has an emphasis of respect and tolerance.
- The school was last inspected in November 2014. A material change inspection took place in May 2014. The school was granted registration for 520 pupils between the ages of three and 16 years of age.
- There are 533 pupils on roll. Eight pupils have statements of special educational needs. There are 76 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school's main premises are at 98, Clapton Common. Pupils in the top three classes within Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are taught at the Lampard Grove site. The school is undertaking a major building project which, when completed, will provide 27 purpose built classrooms. In the interim, some pupils on the Clapton Common site are being taught in temporary units.

School details

Unique reference number	100294
Inspection number	465133
DfE registration number	204/6331

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	Orthodox Jewish
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	533
Proprietor	Moreshet Hatorah Limited
Chair	Rabbi J Baumgarten Rabbi A Klein
Headteacher	Rabbi C Silbiger
Date of previous school inspection	4–6 November 2014
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