

Beis Aharon School

85–95 Bethune Road, London N16 5DT

Inspection dates

14 January 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards not met

Context of the inspection

- Ofsted conducted this announced progress monitoring inspection 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.
- It was the school's second consecutive progress monitoring inspection.
- 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 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.
- In June 2015, Ofsted conducted a first progress monitoring inspection to establish how well the school had implemented its action plan.
- The first progress monitoring inspection found that the school continued to fail a significant number of the 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 6, Provision of information; and Part 8, Leadership and management.
- The purpose of this second consecutive progress monitoring inspection was to check the school's progress in meeting the independent school standards that it failed to meet at the first progress monitoring inspection. Inspectors also checked whether the school continued to meet standards that were met at the first progress monitoring inspection.
- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in seven lessons and scrutinised pupils' work. Some of these lessons were jointly observed with a headteacher or senior leader.
- The lead inspector undertook a premises walk with a headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked to pupils, school leaders and a group of teachers and the chair of the Beis Aharon Trust Ltd.
- Inspectors examined key documents relating to the curriculum, safeguarding, health and safety, and staff training.

Main findings

- Senior leaders have taken some actions to meet standards that were unmet at the previous inspection. The school's actions include the purchase of commercial curriculum resources and assessment materials for the secular curriculum, and the employment of a curriculum manager. However, the school continues to fail a significant number of the independent school standards.
- Senior leaders still do not make sufficient time available for the implementation of the secular curriculum. They continue to allocate only one hour per day to the secular curriculum. This is inadequate to meet the school's own curriculum policy aim of a 'broad and balanced curriculum' or to meet the required standards.
- Senior leaders continue to prioritise the ethos of their faith over the requirements of some of the independent school standards. For example, senior leaders continue to preclude teaching

awareness of some of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, for instance sexual orientation. Therefore, leaders still do not encourage respect for other people by paying particular regard to the protected characteristics.

- The social and cultural development of pupils still does not promote fundamental British values. While pupils are polite to visitors, they are still unable to show mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs because their knowledge of how people are different and of other faiths is very limited.
- The school continues not to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Pupils continue to hold very narrow views about the role of women in society.
- Senior leaders now include the teaching of English in the curriculum for younger pupils. However, the quality of teaching is poor and the time allocated for this is insufficient. Younger pupils still struggle to speak English.
- The school has improved its administration systems relating to pre-appointment checks of staff and record keeping since the last inspection. However, significant gaps remain and senior leaders still do not ensure that the required checks to safeguard pupils take place. Therefore, the school's safeguarding practice still does not meet requirements.

The quality of education

- The school continues to have a written curriculum policy. However, the policy remains limited in scope because it does not include the range of required subjects and senior leaders do not implement it effectively.
- The school has recently purchased a significant number of commercial curriculum resources for English, mathematics, science, history and geography. However, senior leaders still allocate insufficient time for the delivery of the secular curriculum. Classroom resources in use are of poor quality and limited in range. For example, pupils colour in worksheets in science and fill in photocopied 'times tables' test sheets in mathematics.
- Pupils have sparse teaching in history and geography, and technology is solely delivered in preparation for Jewish festivals, for example by making candles. Physical education provision remains limited to playing football, running and stretching exercises.
- All pupils who spoke to inspectors demonstrated very restricted understanding of secular subjects. Older pupils were able to mention history and geography; however, their knowledge and understanding of these subjects is basic. Pupils still have no experience of aesthetic and creative subjects.
- Activities in lessons still lack sufficient challenge and work does not meet the needs of different ability groups. Teachers do not plan for progress in pupils' learning. Lessons remain poorly structured and do not take account of the learning needs of the pupils. As a result, some pupils do not pay attention and many are not engaged in their learning. Pupils report that the work is 'not hard'.
- There is still no framework in place to assess pupils' progress. The school has recently purchased a commercial product which provides an assessment framework. However, assessment information relating to pupils' progress is not gathered by the school. Leaders accept that pupils' work remains well below age-related expectations. The work in pupils' books remains of poor quality, showing basic responses across a limited range of subjects.
- The school now has a policy for personal, social and health education. However, this policy does not meet requirements because there is no provision for early years or for older pupils appropriate to their needs. The policy is not implemented. As a result, pupils still do not learn or make progress in this aspect of the curriculum. Senior leaders now deliver some aspects of citizenship through a monthly assembly programme. However, pupils' knowledge of these areas remains poor.
- The narrow curriculum continues to result in pupils having limited, if any, understanding of democracy and individual liberty. While pupils understand the general concept of respect, they are unable to demonstrate mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This is because the majority of pupils do not know of the existence of different faiths.

- The school now includes English in its curriculum planning for Years 1 to 4. However, the time allocated is minimal. As a result, younger pupils' knowledge and understanding of spoken and written English remains poor and they struggle to recall the alphabet. Older pupils speak English more confidently. However, all pupils' speaking, listening and literacy skills remain below age-related expectations.
- The proprietor and senior leaders continue to preclude any teaching or reference to certain of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. Senior leaders' rationale for this is that to do so would be contrary to the precepts of their faith. Therefore, the school's planning still does not encourage respect for other people.
- The school continues not to prepare pupils adequately for adult life in British society. Senior leaders prevent pupils having access to images of everyday life in modern Britain, which leaders consider to be immodest according to the ethos of their faith. For example, leaders obscure any images in reading books of women and girls with short sleeves or of children swimming.
- In discussions, the majority of pupils still express views about the roles of women and men that indicate that the school does not prepare them for the reality of life in modern British society. Pupils universally consider that the role of women is to 'look after children, clean the house and cook', while men 'go to work'.
- A careers policy is now in place. Its stated aim is to give pupils careers choices to suit their interests, skills and strengths. However, senior leaders do not implement this policy. The school still does not ensure careers guidance or information about possible jobs or career pathways is available to secondary-aged pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- The school still does not actively promote fundamental British values. Pupils' social and cultural development remains very weak. Pupils have limited knowledge of British law and democracy and pupils could not talk with any confidence on these topics. Pupils demonstrated very limited understanding of different faiths.
- The school still does not promote knowledge of or mutual respect for different faiths. For example, the word 'Christmas' was crossed out whenever it appeared in a reading book being used in a Year 4 lesson.
- This inspection found that pupils were unable to demonstrate a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England.
- Senior leaders continue to insist that no reference is made to certain of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. Senior leaders believe that to do so would contravene the ethos of their faith. Therefore, the school continues to fail to actively promote principles which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics. Senior leaders accept that, in this respect, they prioritise the precepts of their faith over the requirements of the independent school standards.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The school's systems to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils have improved since the last inspection. Staff are now aware of the duty to report and record any issues.
- However, the school's systems to safeguard pupils still do not meet requirements. Appropriate checks are not made prior to appointment and, in some cases, not at all. For example, the school does not undertake checks for some of the trustees. The school does not have regard to the latest statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State and references out-of-date guidance in its policies.
- The school's procedures omit references to children missing from education and a link to the 'Prevent' policy. Details of how the proprietor and senior leaders evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding practice are not evident.
- The school's anti-bullying policy remains limited in scope, as it does not refer to prejudice-based bullying. Pupils continue to have very limited understanding of all forms of bullying. Therefore, the school's anti-bullying strategy still does not meet requirements.
- The ratio of staff available to supervise the early years children now meets requirements. However, it remains the case that too few members of staff have the required qualifications.

Therefore, requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage are still not met.

- The school's admission and attendance registers continue to meet requirements.
- The admission register does not contain information relating to the destination of leavers. However, up-to-date information on leavers' destinations is held by the school and will be incorporated into the admission register as a priority.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- Senior leaders have made recent improvements in record keeping relating to the appointment and vetting of staff. The single central record now records identity checks, which are correctly dated.
- Leaders still do not ensure that all the required pre-appointment checks are made and that references are taken up consistently for new employees. Required checks on trustees are still not included on the single central record. Therefore, the school still fails to meet requirements relating to checking the suitability of staff.

Provision of information

- The school prospectus and information pack now refers to all relevant policies and information. The school now reports the academic achievements of pupils to parents at least annually, although these reports contain minimal detail.
- The complaints policy, which is available to parents, is now up to date, available to parents and reports the number of complaints received each year.

Quality of leadership and management

- The proprietor still does not hold senior leaders to account effectively. Consequently, a significant number of the independent school standards remain unmet.
- The proprietor and senior leaders continue to prioritise the precepts of their faith over compliance with some of the independent school standards. They accept that, as a result, standards remain unmet. The chair of the Beis Aharon Trust Ltd says that if the requirements of the standards are in conflict with the school's ethos, leaders will 'try to come around, but what can we do about it? We are doing the best we can.'
- The proprietor and senior leaders still do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the curriculum requirements of the independent school standards to ensure that these are met. Pupils still do not have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils remain unprepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- The proprietor and senior leaders still do not ensure that the school follows its own curriculum policy to provide a 'broad and balanced curriculum' or that teaching is effective. Senior leaders continue to allocate insufficient time to the secular curriculum. As a result, senior leaders prevent the recent investment in curriculum materials from having any positive impact on the quality of education for pupils and pupils do not make sufficient progress.
- Leaders consider they have already taken action to improve the quality of education at the school. However, they acknowledge that much still needs to be done to meet the requirements of the independent school standards.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

- Ensure that there is a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and it is implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a)).
- Ensure that the curriculum includes subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils (paragraph 2(1)(b)(i)).
- Ensure that the written policy, plans and schemes of work do not undermine 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 2(1)(b)(ii)).
- 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 (paragraph 2(2), 2(2)(a)).

- 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)).
- Ensure that the curriculum includes appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education (paragraph 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i)–(iii)).
- Ensure that where the school has pupils below compulsory school age, the curriculum includes a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills (paragraph 2(2)(f)).
- Ensure that where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, the curriculum includes a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs (paragraph 2(2)(g)).
- Ensure that the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress (paragraph 2(2)(h)).
- Ensure that the curriculum provides adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society (paragraph 2(2)(i)).
- Ensure that pupils 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, 3(a)).
- Ensure that teaching in the school fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to learn and think for themselves (paragraph 3(b)).
- Ensure that teaching in the school involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (paragraph 3(c)).
- Ensure that teaching in the school shows good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensure that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 3(d)).
- Ensure that teaching in the school demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subjects being taught (paragraph 3(e)).
- Ensure that teaching in the school utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range (paragraph 3(f)).
- Ensure that there is a framework 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 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).
- Ensure that the school 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, 5(a)).
- Ensure that principles are actively promoted which enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence (paragraph 5(b), 5(b)(i)).
- Ensure that principles are actively promoted which enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England (paragraph 5(b), 5(b)(ii)).
- Ensure that principles are actively promoted which enable pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely (paragraph 5(b), 5(b)(iii)).
- Ensure that principles are actively promoted which enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England (paragraph 5(b), 5(b)(iv)).

- Ensure that the school furthers 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), 5(b)(v)).
- Ensure that the school actively promotes principles which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 (paragraph 5(b), 5(b)(vi)).
- Ensure that principles are actively promoted which encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England (paragraph 5(b), 5(b)(vii)).
- 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 (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- Ensure that there is an effective anti-bullying strategy in place and it is implemented (paragraph 10).
- 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; with respect to the Early Years statutory requirements, ensure that at least half of all other staff hold at least a full and relevant level 2 qualification (paragraph 14; Early Years statutory requirements 3.23).
- 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)).
- Ensure that further checks are carried out where a criminal record is not adequate to show that a staff member or 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 (paragraph 21(1), 21(2)), 21(3)).
- 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)).
- 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; that they fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and that they actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

Inspection team

Vanessa Ward, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's 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 13 years of age. There are currently 347 pupils on roll, including 104 children who attend the early years provision on a full-time basis. The early years provision is not on the same site as the main school and has a different address.
- 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. Limited provision is now made to teach English to younger pupils. These pupils remain at the early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those 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. Its last standard inspection was on 18–20 November 2014, when a significant number of independent school standards were unmet. It received an unannounced progress monitoring inspection on 4 June 2014, which also found a significant number of the 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 arrangement remains in place at the time of this inspection.
- The underlying values of the school in the school prospectus are stated to be 'concerned with the development of an outward looking attitude, underpinned by strong religious values'.

School details

Unique reference number	131170
Inspection number	10010418
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	347
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Beis Aharon Trust Ltd
Chair	Mr J Lipschitz
Headteachers	Rabbi Twerski Rabbi Greenfeld Rabbi Bransdorfer Mr Pomerantz
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2015
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,860
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