

Mechinoh School

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

Inspection dates

10 September 2015

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in ensuring it meets all of the Independent School Standards it failed to meet at the last monitoring inspection in June 2015.
- The specific regulations that inspectors were asked to report on were parts 3, 4, 5 and 8 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- In March 2015 The Department for Education (DfE) issued a decision to Mechinoh School to remove the school from the register of independent schools. The school has appealed against the decision.
- The school had submitted a number of documents to the DfE as evidence of the actions they have taken following the inspection in June 2015. These included copies of references received for new members of staff, an updated single central register and an updated health and safety policy, among others. These documents were evaluated as part of this inspection.
- The inspection was announced to the school on the afternoon prior to the day of inspection. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors spent one day in the school to conduct this inspection. They both have a background in education, including in inspecting independent schools.
- Inspectors toured the school site and examined in detail fire evacuation arrangements. They held discussions with the headteacher and deputy Menahel (deputy headteacher) relating to recruitment practices and other steps leaders have taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. One inspector spoke to a group of pupils, selected at random, to check that they all understood these arrangements.

Main findings

■ Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The previous monitoring inspection, conducted in June 2015, found that school leaders had not rectified some of the failings identified during the full inspection of November 2014. Fire evacuation procedures were unsafe and insufficient members of staff were trained in first aid to ensure that basic first aid cover was always available when pupils were on site.

Leaders have acted effectively to remedy these failings and the standards relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils that were checked at this inspection, are now met.

The fire door in the basement now has a push bar to enable immediate exit from the building in the event of an emergency. The bolts, formerly on this door, have been completely removed. The exit is well signposted and is clear of any obstacles. In discussion with inspectors, it was clear that leaders' risk assessment of this exit is thorough and further improvements are planned, such as installing a handrail to the external steps in order to make them easier for pupils to use in an emergency.

The fire door on the second door is locked with a key. This key is kept in a glass box alongside the door with an attached hammer so it can be removed quickly. Members of staff also have duplicate keys. This door is now signposted. All teaching rooms have clear instructions displayed, reminding pupils about fire evacuation procedures. All staff, including new members of staff, have been trained and one fire drill has already taken place this term. The deputy headteacher has received

fire marshal training from an external organisation that is approved by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPRA). Pupils know the fire evacuation procedures well. Both fire exits were used in the recent evacuation and pupils could identify which exit point to use from each classroom and where the fire assembly point is located.

Leaders have updated the school's health and safety policy to reflect the fact that the school now has five members of staff with first aid training, one of whom also has paediatric first aid training. Consequently, leaders have ensured that basic first aid cover is available at all times when pupils and staff are on site. When asked, pupils could identify the staff who were first aid trained and could describe what actions to take in the event of needing help.

Leaders have continued to update the school's security systems and to improve the general school environment since the previous monitoring inspection. The school grounds were clear, and pupils were able to play a game of football under proper supervision in the school yard. Internally, the school remains clean and tidy; consequently the learning environment is pleasant. Inspectors went into some disused rooms in the basement and found that these were clean and empty of any clutter. At the time of this inspection, leaders had increased security at the school entrance gate through the appointment of a full time security guard.

■ Part 4. Suitability of staff and proprietors

The previous monitoring inspection in June 2015 found that school leaders had not ensured the suitability of all teachers because they had not completed prohibition from teaching checks, or qualification checks. Consequently, the single central record did not meet requirements, and pupils were not adequately safeguarded as all pre-employment checks had not been conducted.

The school has now registered with the Employer Online Access Service and all teaching staff, including those two new teachers appointed from September, have been checked to establish whether they have received prohibition orders. These are now recorded on the single central register. The register records that no member of staff, currently working at the school, is required to have a professional qualification. Leaders understand that should they need to appoint a qualified teacher, for example in the event of having on roll a pupil who is disabled or has special educational needs, they would have to record their professional qualification on the register. This system is appropriate, given the context of the school and fulfils statutory guidance to 'verify professional qualifications, as appropriate' (*Keeping Children Safe in Education*, July 2015).

Leaders have an improved understanding of safer recruitment practice. For example, two new members of staff, for whom disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks are awaited, have been checked against the barred list and for prohibition orders. These teachers are being appropriately supervised by senior staff while they are engaged in regulated activity. Leaders now request at least two independent references prior to the appointment of staff. They interview prospective members of staff and only employ them following a one-month probationary period to ensure they have the requisite skills and experience to teach at the school. However, leaders' centralised record-keeping of these arrangements requires improvement in order to enable them to clearly and quickly satisfy themselves of the thoroughness of these checks.

■ Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

The previous monitoring inspection in June 2015 found that the changing, washing, showering and toileting facilities for students were inadequate. This was because there were no showers on site for pupils to use following a physical education (PE) lesson, and the medical room was not positioned near to a suitable toilet.

Leaders have taken effective action to install an electric shower in one of the toilet areas. This is in a cubicle with a curtain and is adjoined by a private, curtained off changing area. This provides for suitable privacy. While leaders report that it is unlikely to be used, given PE only takes place at the end of the day, this facility now ensures the regulation is met.

Leaders have recently installed a portable, manual flush toilet in the first aid room. It has a high capacity waste tank and is designed for emergency healthcare. Any waste is sealed in a holding tank, which allows for hygienic use and disposal. Inspectors deemed this to be suitable for

emergency use as, even if a pupil were suffering from extreme sickness, this facility would enable them to remain comfortable if they were unable to move to one of the other toilets located in the school.

Part 8. Quality of leadership and management

This standard is met as leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the welfare, health and safety of pupils at the school are secure, that suitable checks on staff are made and that the premises and accommodation of the school are now suitable. The capacity of the leadership team has been considerably strengthened by the appointment of the deputy headteacher. Leaders demonstrate a commitment to improving their skills and knowledge further by attending training and drawing upon external expertise in order to meet the independent school standards. They are now in a position to focus on developing teachers' skills in the classroom, as evidenced through their attendance at recent training events. Consequently, leaders now fulfil their responsibilities effectively, in relation to the standards that remained unmet at the previous monitoring inspection.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

Inspection team

Philippa Darley, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Nixon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Mechinoh School 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 65 students on roll. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and welfare plan. 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'.

School details

Unique reference number	105999
Inspection number	10007595
DfE registration number	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.

Type of school	Jewish faith school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	65
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mechinoh School
Chair	Rabbi M Kupetz
Headteacher	Rabbi N Baddiel
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	Not applicable
Telephone number	0161 795 9275
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	mechinoh@gmail.com

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