

Lubavitch Senior Girls' School

107–115 Stamford Hill, London N16 5RP

Inspection dates	11–12 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has worked with determination and vision to tackle the areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. She knows the school and its community very well and has been able to drive forward change at a considerable pace.
- Governors have responded effectively to address the issues raised by the review of governance. They have brought in new governors with a high level of knowledge and experience. Governors understand their role in providing support but also challenge. They are ambitious for the school's future.
- Pupils achieve well in the majority of subjects at the end of Year 11. The progress in mathematics and modern foreign languages is particularly strong.
- Teaching is well planned and there are clear routines and expectations for all staff. Challenging questioning was a particular feature of the lessons observed. Pupils spoke positively about the developments that have taken place in the way that they learn.
- The successful expansion of the GCSE curriculum means that pupils now take examinations in the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects.
- Pupils have high standards of behaviour and work collegiately both with each other and staff. They are confident and articulate and engage in a range of extra-curricular activities organised by the school which support their preparation for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The provision in the sixth form is not as good as it should be.
- There are not sufficient opportunities for the pupils to read a range of literature widely and often.
- The key stage 3 curriculum requires further development in order to meet the national curriculum requirements for music and information communication technology.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the sixth form by:
 - developing the range of courses on offer
 - ensuring that progress is strong across all subject areas
 - establishing appropriate entry requirements so that students are taking suitable courses
 - expanding the extra-curricular opportunities for sixth formers, particularly the careers information advice and guidance programme.
- Develop the school's reading culture by:
 - expanding the range of books available for pupils to read
 - establishing a clear expectation about the importance of reading and the frequency with which pupils should read.
- Ensure that the planned development of the key stage 3 curriculum takes place and gives sufficient time to music and information communication technology, so that it meets all the requirements of the national curriculum.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior team have grasped the nettle of change and transformed the way the school works since the last inspection. At the root of this improvement is a strong partnership between the local authority (the Hackney Learning Trust) and the school's leadership, which has enabled expertise from the borough to add extra capacity to school resources, which are inevitably limited by its size.
- There are clear and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching at the school. The school leaders have fostered a culture of openness about lesson observations and 'book looks'. They know individual staff's strengths and areas for improvement well.
- Performance management arrangements are effective and where staff performance has been less than the required standard, leaders have taken firm action to support improvement or to move staff on.
- The headteacher has expanded the leadership team by employing new heads of department from outside the school. Consequently, there has been a further influx of ideas which are also contributing to school improvement.
- Departmental meeting time has been prioritised and this is important given the large number of part-time teachers on the staff. Consequently, leaders have improved the planning of the curriculum and achieved far greater consistency in expectations and standards across the school.
- Leaders have made good use of the government's additional pupil premium funding for the relatively small number of pupils who receive it. Interventions such as additional tutoring in core subjects have had a demonstrable impact.
- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and made changes to the subjects on offer at key stage 4 to ensure that pupils do the full range of English Baccalaureate subjects. Additional option subjects have also been added to the curriculum to give greater choice within the limitations of the small number of staff.
- At key stage 3, the school plans are at the final stage to include discrete music and information communication technology in the curriculum for teaching from September 2016. This is so that it complies fully with the requirements of the national curriculum. These subjects are not currently taught.
- The school has a strong focus on promoting values through its assembly programme and its Jewish studies curriculum. There is an explicit focus on tolerance and respect for both the school community and for those of other faiths and cultures. Pupils have the opportunity to explore their faith and their place in modern Britain under the leadership of the principal who provides spiritual guidance and also emphasises the importance of reflection and questioning.
- Opportunities to enrich learning are a regular feature of school life. Pupils researched the recent London mayoral elections, invited campaigners from the parties into school to present their views and held a mock election. Similarly, the pupils have held talks with the local member for parliament and engaged with a range of speakers, for example a female GP to discuss careers in medicine.
- Opportunities for volunteering are a significant part of the school's culture. Leaders encourage and support pupils in this, for example by organising visits to elderly residents in local care homes.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The committee of the governing body which serves the girls' school has transformed the way it works as a result of the review of governance. Improvements in the way assessment information is collected and presented in school has supported a much higher degree of scrutiny by governors. Minutes of meetings indicate that there is a now a high level of challenge regarding the quality of teaching and academic standards.
 - Governors have not shied away from tackling issues that are potentially sensitive to the school's religious community, for example the teaching of aspects of the Equality Act. The governors also acknowledge that 'the world has changed' in their approach to careers education and they have developed the school's offer, for example by bringing in work experience. They have succeeded in making these changes by working closely with the parent body.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records are robust and the governors take an active part in checking that safer recruitment procedures are followed. The designated officer for child protection and the headteacher work closely with the local authority regarding any concerns. Staff and governors have completed relevant training, including for the government's 'Prevent' duty to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation.

- Parents spoke highly of the school leadership and the quality of education and support provided by the school. One wrote, 'There is always someone from senior management to talk to and address concerns.' This was a common theme of the significant number of written replies received during the inspection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Teachers plan for lessons carefully and have a good understanding of starting points and target grades for their pupils. In lessons this ensures that there is a high degree of attention to individual progress.
- There is a new momentum for developing teaching and learning in the school. The partnership with the local authority has led to significant collaboration with a number of local schools, for example to develop new courses and to moderate pupils' work. This has been very constructive in generating ideas and to drive the desire for improvement among the staff. A number of teachers and teaching assistants have engaged in further professional development through the local authority and achieved certification for courses completed.
- The school has placed considerable emphasis on developing feedback to pupils. Books show detailed written comments from teachers; pupils are beginning to develop their responses to this. Similarly, some teachers are skilled at questioning and giving 'thinking time' to pupils so that they can solve problems for themselves or with a partner. This culture is particularly evident in mathematics where pupils in Year 8 were excited about a paired activity on probability.
- Vertical setting across Years 10 and 11 in mathematics and across Years 9 to 12 in Jewish studies has supported the level of challenge for the most able pupils. Similarly, the new emphasis on practical lessons in science and the addition of English literature GCSE has emphasised a culture of higher expectations.
- Homework is set regularly in most subjects and pupils have good routines for using their homework planner to record what is required. Greater thought in planning the tasks pupils do would add valuable learning time to the tightly packed curriculum, so that pupils are adding to and deepening learning rather than completing activities.
- The school is highly inclusive and experienced teaching assistants encourage pupils who have special educational needs or disability to access the curriculum. However, greater collaborative planning between teachers and teaching assistants in some lessons would mean that tasks were broken down for individuals and hence there would be greater progress for this group.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils have a strong sense of community and enjoy being at school.
- A programme of workshops and speakers support the pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain. Pupils were able to talk about keeping themselves safe online and there are clear reminders about British values and the school's intolerance of bullying both around the school and in pupils' books.
- The quality of artwork is very high and modules of work in each year group on art from other cultures illustrate the school's desire to research and celebrate a diverse range of traditions.
- Pupils are confident and encouraged to explore their own beliefs. Older pupils tackle challenging essay questions such as 'Traditional Jewish marriage is out of date. Discuss this statement.' The principal, who is a highly respected rabbi in the community, provides leadership and a sense of openness about the importance of asking questions.
- There are a range of extra-curricular activities for pupils to get involved in, including charity fundraising, volunteering and sports activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons and around the school, pupils are courteous and polite to staff and each other. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and their uniform.
- Although some pupils travel significant distances to get to school, punctuality is good. Attendance has improved and is in line with the national average.
- There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. However, the school is clear about what will not be tolerated and uses sanctions for breaches of the behaviour policy, including fixed-term exclusion.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress in mathematics has been particularly strong with pupils exceeding the national average from different starting points.
- In a number of other subjects, pupils achieved better results than pupils nationally, specifically in English and modern foreign languages in the latest GCSE examinations.
- The progress and attainment of pupils who have special educational needs or disability were below those of their peers in the 2015 examinations.
- Current assessment information indicates that pupils are on track to exceed last year's performance. The whole-school progress figure is predicted to be positive across the government's new measure of eight subjects including English and mathematics.
- Two thirds of the pupils are expected to achieve the English Baccalaureate this year and a high number of most able pupils are on track to achieve 5 or more A or A* grades.
- Across the school, most year groups are making good progress in relation to starting points. The exception is the current Year 10, which is a group of fewer than 10 pupils. However, the school is monitoring their progress tightly and is using interventions to redress the gaps.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are making expected progress across the current year groups according to the special educational needs coordinator's tracking information.
- The school is developing its focus on literacy and reading. World Book Day events and involvement with the Young Writer's Club are initiatives which have been introduced by the new head of English. However, pupils do not yet read widely and often, and the school library has very limited stock to engage and develop pupils' reading.
- The school did not have any pupils not in education, employment or training last year. All pupils stayed on into the sixth form.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- In the most recent examinations, outcomes were good at AS level with the percentage of A and B grades above the national average.
- Progress for current students is good in photography, business studies and Hebrew. However, it is less strong in other subjects.
- The school uses external target-setting software to establish ambitious targets for its students. The tracking of progress is effective and teachers increasingly use this information to inform their lesson planning.
- The sixth-form leader understands the challenges that being such a small provision presents, and has been proactive about seeking advice and support from outside the school. There is a real spirit of innovation for improving the overall offer, but the financial challenge of small numbers means that expansion is a priority.
- The very limited range of courses on offer forces some students to follow subjects or levels of study that are not appropriate. The school is tackling this by establishing clearer entry criteria and working in partnership with a local school to offer a greater range of courses.
- Students appreciate the work the school does to provide individual support and guidance to secure college and seminary places, and to help them with careers information and guidance. However, this aspect of the school's work requires further planning and development if it is to be as good as the rest of the school's provision.

School details

Unique reference number	138143
Local authority	The Hackney Learning Trust
Inspection number	10005773

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hindy Lew
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Mrs Helen Freeman
Telephone number	020 800 0022
Website	www.lubavitchseniorgirls.com
Email address	admin@lsgs.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 June 2013

Information about this school

- Lubavitch Senior Girls' School is a smaller than average Jewish faith comprehensive.
- There is a very small sixth form offering a limited range of A-level and vocational courses.
- The proportion of pupils supported with additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well below the national average. This funding is provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals and for looked after children.
- Pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a little above the national average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is a little above the national average and those with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is twice the national average.
- The school does not use any off-site provision.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school's curriculum is divided into Jewish studies and secular studies. However, significant parts of the national curriculum are delivered through Jewish studies and this has been carefully mapped out by the school.
- The school works in close partnership with the Hackney Learning Trust.
- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons across a range of departments, some paired with the headteacher and senior leaders. Books were scrutinised as part of these lesson observations. In addition, a separate scrutiny of books for Years 8 and 11 was carried out.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in the corridors and play spaces at breaks and lunchtimes and attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with the principal, headteacher and senior leaders, members of the governing body, middle leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and representatives from the local authority.
- Formal meetings were held with groups of pupils from Year 7 and Year 12. Informal conversations with pupils took place in lessons and around the school.
- A large number of documents were scrutinised including the school's self-evaluation, information on the current progress of pupils, reports from the Hackney Learning Trust, behaviour logs, attendance and punctuality information, governing body minutes and policies and procedures, including for pupil premium spending, the curriculum and social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The single central record and safer recruitment procedures were checked.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 35 text comments from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Victoria Linsley, lead inspector

Jill Thomas

Seconded Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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