

# Ateres Girls High School

Willow Grove, Felling, Gateshead NE10 9PQ

## Inspection dates

7–9 June 2016

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The proprietor, together with other leaders and managers, has not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders and managers do not demonstrate the necessary skills to drive improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. They do not hold a sufficiently deep understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. Consequently, their plans for improvement are underdeveloped.
- Leaders have insufficient information about pupils' progress and attainment over time. As a result, some teachers' planning does not adequately meet pupils' differing needs, particularly in key stage 3.
- The quality of teaching is variable. Inexperienced and unqualified teachers do not have enough guidance or access to training to improve their practice. Curriculum planning in a number of subjects does not provide a good framework for progression.
- Pupils in key stage 3 make no better than expected progress and many of the most able pupils in the school are not making the progress they should.
- Pupils' behaviour, over time, has not been good enough. Recent changes to policy and the management of behaviour have begun to have a positive impact, but some disruption to learning continues and pupils do not take enough pride in their work.
- Some aspects of the curriculum are narrow. Pupils cannot fulfil their full potential because they have limited access to technological and scientific learning and no access to the internet.
- To date, pupils have had limited access to careers information, narrowing their choice of possible routes when they leave school. The information they have received has not done enough to challenge stereotypical and traditional female roles.
- Although pupils develop sound reading skills, the absence of a school library undermines efforts to promote reading.

### The school has the following strengths

- The *kodesh* curriculum makes a positive contribution to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Rich discussion and debate linked to the study of traditional texts help pupils to be respectful, tolerant and appreciative of other cultures and faiths.
- Arrangements to safeguard and protect pupils are well developed. Staff are caring and vigilant. Security of the site has a high priority.
- As pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, bullying is very rare and there is no derogatory language. The school is a close and caring community.

### 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 associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to improve pupils' progress by ensuring that:
  - teachers make effective use of information about pupils' prior attainment, so that lessons better meet the needs of pupils of different abilities
  - the work provided for the most able pupils is sufficiently challenging
  - marking and feedback have a more consistently positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Improve the standard of behaviour and pupils' conduct by:
  - ensuring that teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently in lessons
  - raising expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and challenging presentation that falls below the expected standard
  - managing behaviour more rigorously and ensuring that pupils are always well supervised at social times.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that leaders at all levels have the necessary skills and knowledge to accurately evaluate and drive improvements in the quality of teaching
  - developing appropriate schemes of work in all subjects that provide a suitable framework from which teachers can plan lessons that support good progress
  - enhancing existing assessment systems, so that leaders have a thorough overview of pupils' progress and can target additional support to those pupils that are making slower progress
  - broadening the curriculum, so that pupils are able to develop a broader range of technological and scientific knowledge and understanding
  - developing a thorough and impartial programme of careers guidance that allows pupils to make informed choices as to their next steps.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
  - Ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, is drawn up and implemented effectively (Standard 2 and 2(1)(a)).
  - Ensure that the curriculum policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an education, health and care plan (Standard 2(1)(b)(i)).
  - Ensure that pupils receiving secondary education have access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that is presented in an impartial manner (Standard 2(2)(e) and 2(2)(e)(i)).
  - Ensure that careers guidance enables pupils to make informed choices about a broad range of career options (Standard 2(2)(e)(ii)).
  - Ensure that careers guidance encourages pupils to fulfil their potential (Standard 2(2)(e)(iii)).
  - Ensure that the teaching at the school 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 (Standard 3 and 3(a)).
  - Ensure that teaching at the school involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time (Standard 3(c)).
  - Ensure that teaching at the school 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 (Standard 3(d)).
  - Ensure that teaching at the school ensures good knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught (Standard 3(e)).
  - Ensure that teaching at the school 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 (Standard 3(g)).
  - Ensure that teaching at the school utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (Standard 3(h)).

- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (Standard 34(1) and 34(1)(a)).
- Ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (Standard 34(1)(b)).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The principal and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2015, following a period in which the school's leadership capacity had been under severe pressure. During this period, the proprietor and governors had failed to ensure that leadership capacity developed in line with the growing demands of the increasing school population. Since their appointment, the principal and deputy headteacher have begun to raise aspirations of staff and pupils. They have reviewed most school policies and have started to introduce much-needed leadership systems. They have begun to improve behaviour and introduce better approaches to assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- Leaders do not, however, demonstrate the necessary skills and understanding to lead improvements in the quality of teaching. Systems to evaluate the quality of learning need development, and plans to support and develop teaching lack detail and coherence. Training opportunities for teachers have been limited. The quality of careers guidance pupils receive is also underdeveloped. Together, these weaknesses have a negative impact on pupils' progress and personal development. As a consequence, leaders have failed to ensure that the independent school standards are fully met, and concerns raised in a complaint to Ofsted are yet to be addressed.
- Middle leaders' skills are underdeveloped. In some subjects, curriculum planning lacks detail and does not provide a suitable framework to guide teachers' planning. As a result, some teachers do not plan lessons that build pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills sequentially. Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring that assessment information is accurate and reliable. Curriculum planning is better at key stage 4 than in key stage 3 because middle leaders make use of course information published by awarding bodies.
- The school has no information on the progress and attainment of pupils prior to this academic year. Leaders have now begun to gather assessment information, although systems to manage data are in their infancy. As yet, governors are unable to drill down into this information in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. Leaders are investing in a new data management system, but recognise that much more needs to be done to ensure that teachers have the necessary skills to assess pupils' progress accurately.
- The curriculum encompasses a sufficiently broad range of secular subjects together with the *kodesh* curriculum, which covers the study of traditional texts and aspects of Jewish law. Pupils engage well with the *kodesh* subjects and benefit from good opportunities to discuss and debate the relevance of traditional texts to life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of British values and become spiritually, morally, socially and culturally aware. For example, pupils have a good understanding of topics in the news. Pupils are taught to be respectful and tolerant and to uphold British laws. Some aspects of the secular curriculum are narrow, however. Opportunities to learn within scientific and technological subjects are limited. For example, school policy prevents pupils from using the internet. Computing resources are limited and there are no opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications in separate science disciplines or develop technological skills beyond cooking and sewing. Consequently, pupils' full potential in these areas is not being realised.
- Leaders have taken steps to ensure that the unmet independent school standard from the previous inspection has been addressed. Pupils who receive physical education now have access to suitable changing accommodation and a shower.
- Checks on the school premises found the school heating system to be in working order.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have failed to ensure that the independent school standards are met. They have recruited a relatively high proportion of part-time, unqualified teachers, of which a number are inexperienced and have limited subject knowledge. Levels of staff absence have also been relatively high across the last year. As a result, leaders face a significant challenge to improve the quality and consistency of teaching.
  - Governors have a clear vision, which they communicate effectively to the community. A large majority of parents express satisfaction with the quality of education being provided. In particular, governors have ensured pupils' personal development, safety and welfare needs are well met.
  - Governors have opened the school up to external scrutiny and do draw support from external partners. However, almost all links with external partners are from within the wider Jewish community.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The proprietor has ensured that the safeguarding policy is up to date and meets statutory requirements. The designated safeguarding leader is suitably trained and ensures that all other members of staff have received the necessary training. Members of staff are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern. The school carries out all the required checks to make sure that only suitable adults work with pupils, including when visiting speakers visit the school. The security of the school site is well maintained. Leaders ensure that all members of staff are aware of current safeguarding issues such as radicalisation and extremism by directing them towards appropriate training. Although pupils may not use the internet in school, they are taught about the potential risks when online. Pupils demonstrate a mature response to their learning about risks, and trust staff to deal sensitively with any concerns they might raise.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable and a proportion of teaching, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9, does not lead to good progress. Some teachers have low expectations and do not do enough to ensure that pupils take pride in their work.
- As curriculum plans in some subjects are underdeveloped and provide insufficient guidance for inexperienced teachers, they are over-reliant on commercially produced schemes and photocopied worksheets that do not develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding progressively. As a result, some key aspects of subjects are not covered and connections between topics are not made effectively.
- In the best lessons, more practical activities engage pupils effectively and they show a good level of independence, sustained concentration and good technical skills. For example, pupils demonstrated excellent painting and drawing skills when developing their natural-form compositions in art. In the *kodesh* curriculum, pupils concentrate well and show a degree of fascination with the texts they study. There are good opportunities for them to express their ideas through extended writing and to develop their communication skills through philosophical discussion and debate.
- Most teaching in Years 10 and 11 is better planned and accurately matched to pupils' needs and starting points. However, some teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to ensure the learning activities match pupils' needs. In particular, too much teaching at key stage 3 does not stretch or challenge the most able pupils.
- The school does not have a marking and feedback policy. Consequently, the impact of marking is variable. Some teachers mark effectively and pupils make improvements in response to comments. In some subjects, however, opportunities are missed to correct misconceptions and to deepen pupils' understanding. Poor presentation and some graffiti in books are not routinely challenged.
- Most teachers manage behaviour effectively, but in some lessons, some pupils drift off task and do not pay attention when they are required to listen for lengthy periods.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** requires improvement

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident. They enjoy discussions in lessons, and where teaching is strong, pupils fully apply themselves to their learning. They enjoy collaborating on tasks and projects. The intellectual demands of religious aspects of the curriculum in particular help pupils to build resilience in their learning. In practical subjects, they have well-developed skills and good levels of craftsmanship.
- As pupils commence their GCSE courses of study, they apply themselves more and work hard because they want to succeed.
- Pupils are open-minded. They have a well-developed understanding of diverse cultures and world faiths, and in discussions, demonstrate tolerance and respect. They reflect on a range of tricky philosophical and political issues. For example, they show a depth of understanding about potential conflicts between religious law and British law. Pupils say that they feel safe to ask questions about their faith and other issues which may concern them.

- Weaknesses in the amount and impartiality of careers guidance, and narrowness in some aspects of the curriculum, do not help pupils to broaden their horizons in terms of the choices available to them when considering their next steps into further education, employment or training. Pupils have not received enough information about the range of career options available to them in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have been taught about and understand the potential dangers of the internet and social networking. However, because school policy prevents the use of the internet in school, they lack opportunities to assess and manage risk for themselves.
- Pupils show respect for each other and develop strong friendships. Bullying is very rare. Pupils are confident that where they have concerns about relationships, they can confide in an adult. They do not use aggressive, derogatory or stereotypical language.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- A small number of parents express concerns about behaviour in the school and some members of staff report that the behaviour of some pupils is challenging. Behaviour has improved over time as leaders have begun to take effective action through the introduction of a new behaviour policy. Pupils generally conduct themselves well around the building, at social times and between lessons. However, there are occasions when the pupils are more boisterous and things are less orderly, for example when waiting occasionally unsupervised in classrooms for their teacher.
- Pupils are not always supervised sufficiently at social times. By the end of the day, some classrooms are untidy and litter has built up in social areas.
- Where teaching is less interesting or challenging, the behaviour of some pupils, particularly in key stage 3, is less positive. This is reflected in poor presentation in workbooks and minor disruptions to learning such as talking over the teacher, swinging on chairs and generally not paying attention. Teachers do not, as yet, apply the new behaviour policy consistently.
- Attendance is above the national average and few pupils are persistently absent.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Leaders have only a partial picture of pupils' attainment when they enter the school and consequently use their own baseline tests early in Year 7 to establish pupils' starting points. These indicate that pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment.
- As yet, only a very limited number of pupils have completed externally validated examinations. Around half of the current Year 11 pupils sat GCSE mathematics examinations last year. All of these pupils attained a GCSE grade C or better. GCSE examinations in other subjects are being taken for the first time this summer. It is therefore too early to judge whether pupils are prepared with the necessary qualifications to take their next step into further education, employment or training.
- Leaders cannot provide any assessment information showing pupils' progress and attainment beyond this academic year. While leaders have begun to gather assessment information across subjects and year groups, they know that this data remains limited and its accuracy is untested. This information shows that around 80% of pupils in the current Year 11 are on course to attain five or more GCSE at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics.
- However, the work in pupils' books indicates that pupils are not making strong and sustained progress in a number of subjects, particularly at key stage 3. The most able pupils are making less than expected progress in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, because teaching is not tailored to stretch and challenge them sufficiently. Key stage 4 books show that progress accelerates as pupils develop more mature attitudes and focus on doing their best in examinations. In addition, the quality of teaching at key stage 4 supports better progress as teachers' planning is aligned more tightly to the requirements of GCSE examinations.
- The absence of a library and the restriction on the use of the internet limit pupils' opportunity to research and read more widely to support their learning.
- Some pupils identified as making slower progress receive additional support through the school's learning centre. This support focuses on helping pupils to develop a positive mind-set and helps them to develop strategies to address anxiety. Leaders are yet to evaluate the impact of this support on pupils' progress.

- There are 15 pupils who have special education needs or disability, of which nine have an education, health and care plan. The experienced special educational needs coordinator ensures that their progress is monitored regularly and that they receive good support, both within lessons and through well-planned one-to-one sessions. Specialist qualified teachers with primary expertise provide effective support to help pupils develop reading and writing skills. Their progress is slower than that of other pupils in the school because of cognitive barriers to learning, but all are making incremental gains because of good assessment and well-focused teaching.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138118
<b>Inspection number</b>	10010408
<b>DfE registration number</b>	390/6000

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Jewish secondary
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	215
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Mr Anthony Morgan
<b>Chair</b>	David Schleider
<b>Principal</b>	Rabbi M Y Katz
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	Parental voluntary contributions
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 469 2969
<b>Website</b>	N/A
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@ateres.org.uk">info@ateres.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–7 March 2013

## Information about this school

- Ateres Girls High School, situated within the Jewish community in the Felling area of Gateshead, provides independent secondary day education for orthodox Jewish girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years.
- The school endeavours to instil in its pupils good character traits and an awareness of God, coupled with a practical understanding of the Bible and oral laws.
- A very large proportion of pupils enter the school from a local independent orthodox Jewish primary school.
- The school has expanded considerably since the previous inspection in March 2013, when it only had pupils in Years 7 and 8. The school now has pupils across all year group in key stages 3 and 4.
- Very few pupils have, as yet, taken externally validated examinations.
- The principal and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2015.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 part-lessons, of which a number were undertaken jointly with senior leaders. During lesson observations, inspectors sampled pupils' books and talked to pupils in order to evaluate the quality of their current work. Inspectors also attended prayers and form time, and undertook a number of shorter visits to lessons to gauge the climate for learning and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors also scrutinised a further sample of pupils' books covering a broad range of subjects in order to assess the progress pupils had made across the year.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school site during break- and lunchtimes and during the transitions between lessons.
- Meetings were held with the principal and deputy headteacher, other leaders, a group of teachers and the special educational needs coordinator. Further meetings were held with the proprietor, who is also a governor, and two other governors.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including school policies, assessment information, records of checks on the quality of teaching and the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plans. The minutes of governing body meetings, minutes of staff meetings and a range of safeguarding information were also scrutinised in order to assess the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspection team took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 23 responses to the staff survey and 63 responses to the school's own parent survey.
- Inspectors checked that the school now met the following independent school standard, which was unmet at the time of the previous inspection:
  - Provide suitable changing accommodation and showers for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education (paragraph 23(1)(c)).
- The timing of this inspection was brought forward at the request of the Department for Education following a complaint to Ofsted that raised concerns about the quality of teaching, the management of behaviour and supervision of pupils, and problems with the school heating system.

## Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Philip Riozzi

Her Majesty's Inspector

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