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Rabbi Yitzchak Freeman  
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Dear Rabbi Freeman

### **Short inspection of Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You responded promptly and productively to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You wisely identified the aspects of leadership and teaching that needed to be more effective. You expanded and strengthened the leadership team to include a deputy headteacher, the early years leader and an inclusion manager. This has led to further improvements in the quality of teaching across all age groups in the school. Provision in the early years has developed substantially so that the achievement of children in the Nursery and Reception classes has improved.

You have also given careful thought to restructuring middle leadership and have successfully introduced the faculty system. Every member of staff is linked to a faculty that encompasses a range of curriculum subjects. This initiative has provided valuable leadership development for teachers who oversee the quality of teaching and curriculum planning in their faculty. It has also nurtured a sense of collective responsibility so that everyone makes a contribution to ensuring that high standards are maintained. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and jointly run a range of popular extra-curricular activities for pupils, for example mathematics and art clubs.

The Orthodox Jewish faith is integral to the ethos of the school. You devote half of the pupils' timetable to Jewish studies but you are alert to the importance of pupils

studying a broad and balanced curriculum. You have high expectations that lessons covering the subjects of the national curriculum are used productively. They are characterised by good teaching and enriched with cross-curricular links. Teachers routinely apply Jewish studies to topics in history, geography and science. Overall, pupils make good progress in a wide range of subjects.

Leaders, including governors, recognise the benefits to your staff of working with colleagues from neighbouring schools, for example to ensure that their assessments are accurate and to share good practice on attendance policies. Leaders carry out valuable work with the local authority, acting promptly and effectively to focus on areas identified as needing improvement.

You communicate frequently and positively with parents, producing weekly newsletters and organising events. As well as meetings about the curriculum and pupils' progress, the school holds coffee mornings and information evenings about, for example, the importance of e-safety. Parents regard you and the other staff as approachable and value their close contact with the school to ensure that their child is happy, settled and successful.

Pupils are polite and well behaved. They are responsive to their teachers' expectations for good manners and conduct. They play cheerfully together at breaktimes and are sociable, respectful and welcoming to visitors.

Pupils gain knowledge of faiths and cultures other than their own through the curriculum and assemblies. They take part in activities such as mock elections to learn about democracy. Lessons in Jewish studies and the national curriculum encourage them to be reflective on the impact of their actions on others and to be respectful and tolerant. They gain from meeting those from different backgrounds, for example through members of the school council getting together with pupils from another school. Leaders acknowledge that more opportunities like these are needed to reinforce the school's promotion of British values.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders, including governors, ensure that the school site is secure. There are stringent procedures for entry onto the site, with security staff on duty at the gate. Pupils are kept safe and say there are no areas in the school where they feel unsafe.

Leaders enable all members of staff to understand and fulfil their responsibility to safeguard all pupils. Leaders make sure that all safeguarding arrangements are in place. Detailed records show that required checks are made of staff and that their training is up to date. All staff have received training in the 'Prevent' duty and so are clear on the risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Teachers use the behaviour policy effectively and pupils say that it works well to help improve behaviour. Incidents of poor behaviour such as bullying or name-calling are rare and resolved quickly. Pupils say they always have an adult they can talk to in school if they have any worries or to help them to resolve any problems quickly.

Leaders are clear on the importance of pupils being alert to any risks, both within and outside their home and school communities. Pupils have opportunities through the curriculum to identify risks. They know how to keep safe, for example when working online.

## **Inspection findings**

- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the strengths and areas of improvement in the school as reflected in the school's self-evaluation. They frequently review pupils' progress and have judged accurately when the quality of teaching has needed to improve. Leaders have put in place suitable professional development opportunities for staff to ensure that their high expectations are met.
- Leaders have acted decisively so that the early years provision has improved since the last inspection. Leadership development and improvements to the quality of teaching have led to the proportion of children achieving a good level of development increasing to above the national average. Adults carefully check children's achievements and provide them with specific guidance so that children do further work on those tasks they find most difficult.
- Extension to the outdoor area enables children in the early years to move freely, both outside and indoors. Additional resources mean that there is a wide range of opportunities for children to develop their skills. Children make productive use of the many opportunities they have to practise mark-making and writing. Close communication between the Nursery and Reception classes means the children move smoothly between the two. Parents value their contact with school before their children start, including home visits from the key worker, so that children settle quickly in the Nursery.
- Pupils have regular and frequent opportunities to complete pieces of extended writing in different subjects. Teachers' consistent use of the assessment system across the year groups helps pupils to recognise ways in which they need to improve their work. Pupils routinely act on feedback from their teachers and reflect on their work, making faster progress as a result.
- Teachers provide helpful resources that pupils use confidently to improve their writing and use of technical vocabulary. The Jewish studies curriculum is used effectively to promote these skills and makes helpful cross-curricular links to reinforce pupils' learning.
- Leaders recognised rightly when some groups of pupils were not making the progress of which they are capable. Teachers know individual pupils well and, in regular meetings about pupils' progress, identify precisely what extra support they need. Leaders have put in place a range of effective strategies so that pupils who are at risk of falling behind catch up.
- The schools' own assessment information indicates that the additional support given to pupils last year led to pupils from all starting points making better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This support was especially effective for the most able pupils in most year groups and for pupils in Year 6 in mathematics. Leaders have rightly built on the good practice identified to apply this to reading and writing this year.

- Pupils have regular opportunities to read aloud in school and talk about ways in which their reading has improved because of the extra help their teachers have given them. Staff training in guided reading has improved the effectiveness of these sessions. The most able pupils gain from opportunities to read in assembly and to present to audiences.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have received training to develop pupils' writing skills. As a result, they are using questioning well to extend pupils' verbal responses, which in turn has boosted pupils' confidence and resilience in completing longer pieces of writing. As one pupil said, reflecting the attitude of others, 'you just keep going until you get it right'.
- Pupils speak enthusiastically about visiting speakers in assemblies who have inspired them to aim towards a range of professions.
- You recognised rightly when you needed to extend the specialist support for increasing numbers of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language. You responded by appointing the inclusion manager. She works with the pupil support worker to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The recently appointed inclusion manager has put in place additional training for staff to develop support for pupils with reading. This includes preparatory work for pupils who speak English as an additional language to extend their vocabulary so that they are ready for a new topic. Further developments, including in the revision and review of programmes to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are at too early a stage to demonstrate sustained impact.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- check that the new systems for supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are having the desired impact
- provide more opportunities for pupils to gain direct experience of working with those of other faiths and cultures than their own.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Brent. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

The inspector agreed to prioritise the following areas with the school at the start of the inspection:

- actions taken by the school to improve pupils' achievement in reading and writing, with particular regard to groups of pupils
- improvements to the early years since the last inspection
- the development of leadership since the last inspection.

The inspector carried out the following activities to explore these areas during the inspection:

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of the governing body. She had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. She toured the school accompanied by the deputy headteacher and the principal, visiting all classes.
- The inspector observed the behaviour of pupils in and out of lessons and held informal conversations with staff and pupils. She met formally with a group of pupils and listened to two pupils read. The inspector also met with a group of parents who were attending a coffee morning organised by the school. She met with the school secretary to review the single central record. She evaluated a range of school documents.