

Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School

1 Belz Terrace, Clapton Common, London E5 9SN

Inspection date

15 February 2017

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii) and 2(2)(d)

- The second progress monitoring inspection in May 2016 identified that schemes of work were not fully in place for all year groups and subjects. They also did not take sufficient account of pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs. In the school's action plan, leaders indicated that they intended to produce revised schemes of work that took account of pupils' abilities and skills. They also stated that they intended to make the study of different faiths and religions part of the planned curriculum, and collate and record current practice and teaching so that it could link to the Kodesh (Jewish studies) lessons and Jewish festivals. Since that time, schemes of work have been effectively revised for all the required areas of the curriculum. The requirements for this paragraph are now met.
- On entry to the school, parents complete a questionnaire on their child's development to date. Teachers use this information together with a range of their own checks, to establish children's starting points across a range of subjects. This information is now used effectively alongside the revised schemes of work to ensure that teachers plan interesting activities that are set at the right level for pupils to succeed. The requirements of this paragraph are now met.
- The previous inspection also identified that the study of different faiths was not part of the planned curriculum. The action plan stated that the schemes of work for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development would be revised to incorporate this aspect. Since that time, the PSHE and SMSC schemes of work have been revised, and staff were able to demonstrate that pupils in all year groups study and learn about the six major world religions to enable them to understand how people from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds contribute to life in modern Britain. The requirements for this paragraph are now met.

Paragraph 2(2)(a) and 2(2)(d)(ii)

- The second progress monitoring inspection in May 2016 identified that the PSHE education curriculum did not pay sufficient regard to those who may have protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 Equality Act. In the school's action plan, it stated

that following discussion with government officials, leaders agreed to link with and learn from other orthodox Jewish schools judged by Ofsted to be meeting all the independent school standards. The plan also stated that the schemes of work for PSHE and SMSC, together with the anti-bullying policy, would be revised. Since that time, the anti-bullying policy has been revised to ensure that there is zero tolerance of all forms of bullying. The school has also produced a leaflet entitled 'Anti-bullying advice for students', which gives advice and tips on what to do if pupils are bullied or if they see someone else being bullied. One of the proprietors has made effective links with six successful orthodox Jewish schools to find possible ways forward to address the issues surrounding the teaching of the protected characteristics.

- Recently, the school has appointed an independent counsellor, who is also a Rabbi. His specific responsibility is for supporting pupils and staff about the different forms of bullying and the issues surrounding the protected characteristics. It is intended that he will lead assemblies for both staff and pupils on these issues and arrange specific training for staff so that they feel confident in teaching these aspects. However, as he only took up his duties last week it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this initiative. The requirements for this paragraph are not met.
- Not all the requirements for this part are met.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(v), 5(b)(vi)

- The second progress monitoring inspection in May 2016 found that the study of different faiths and religions was not part of the planned curriculum. It also found that pupils were not being taught explicitly about the full range of protected characteristics, particularly about gender and sexuality. The action plan states that the schemes of work for pupils' SMSC development and PSHE education would be updated. The plan also states that the school intends to have an increased focus on encouraging pupils to respect people in relation to their protected characteristics, though these were not specified. Since that time, several strategies have been put in place, as stated above in part 1.
- The school's ethos is based on its founding principle of 'unconditional adherence to the Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish law)'. This means that pupils are shielded from learning about particular differences, such as sexual orientation. The school's culture is clearly focused on teaching pupils to respect everybody, regardless of difference. Leaders and proprietors recognise the requirement to consider the protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010, and are engaged in ongoing dialogue with government officials regarding this and other issues. However, they acknowledge that as they do not teach pupils explicitly about all the protected characteristics, particularly those relating to gender reassignment and sexual orientation, the related standards continue to be unmet.
- Not all the requirements for this part are met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1) and 32(1)(c)

- The school's comprehensive and effective safeguarding policy reflects the Secretary of State's latest guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016), and

'Working together to safeguard children' (March 2015). As the school does not have a website, this policy and all others are available upon request from the school's office.

- The requirements for this part continue to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)

- The proprietors and senior leaders have made progress towards meeting the unmet independent school standards.
- Leaders, including the proprietors, have successfully addressed a number of aspects relating to the quality of education provided and pupils' SMSC development.
- Staff have the skills and knowledge and an increasingly good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in addressing the remaining unmet parts of the standards that were highlighted at the last inspection in May 2016. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done to ensure that all the requirements of the independent school standards are met consistently to promote pupils' well-being. The requirements of this paragraph remain unmet.
- The school does not meet the requirements for this part.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

- Ensure that personal, social, health and economic education encourages respect for other people, paying regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Equality Act (paragraph 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(ii)).
- Ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils encourages them to respect other people, paying regard to those who may have protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 Equality Act (paragraph 5, 5(b)(vi)).
- Ensure that the persons with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge relevant to their roles, and fulfil these responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and they actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

The school now meets 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; and that the written policy, plans and schemes of work take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan (paragraphs 2(1), 2(1)(a) and 2(1)(b)(i)).
- Ensure that the written policy on the curriculum, 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 there are detailed plans focused on practical skills and appropriate resources to ensure that pupils experience linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education elements of the curriculum (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996) (paragraph 2(2)(a)).
- Ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at 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 (paragraphs 5 and 5(a)).
- Ensure further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures (paragraphs 5(b) and 5(b)(v)).

School details

Unique reference number	100294
DfE registration number	204/6331
Inspection number	10030634

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.

Type of school	Orthodox Jewish
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	564
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Moreshet Hatorah Ltd
Chair	Rabbi J Baumgarten Rabbi A Klein
Headteacher	Rabbi C Silbiger
Telephone number	020 8800 6599
Website	None
Email address	mrb@swartons.co.uk / klein@belzlondon.com
Date of previous standard inspection	4–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School is an independent Charedi (strictly orthodox) Jewish boys' school, founded in 1973 and situated in the Jewish community in Hackney, North London.
- All pupils come from a Jewish background. Most boys belong to the Belz Chassidic community and the majority speak Yiddish as their first language. Kodesh (Jewish studies) is taught in Yiddish. Chol (secular studies) is taught in Yiddish but supported by English. In the early years, boys are taught through a combination of English and Yiddish.
- The school is open six days a week, from Sunday to Friday, with the majority of time being devoted to the teaching of Kodesh studies. These lessons provide cross-curricular input, to which elements of the Chol curriculum are linked.

- The school is guided by the principles of Torah (Jewish law) and the ethos of Torah values. The school's ethos has an unconditional adherence to the Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish law) and has an emphasis on respect and tolerance.
- There are 564 pupils on roll. There are 12 pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan. There are 85 children in the early years.
- The school does not use off-site training for pupils.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View).
- The school does not have a website but all the required policies are available from the school office upon request.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- This is the third progress monitoring inspection since the full standard inspection in November 2014 to judge whether the school has met all the independent school standards.
- The Department for Education wrote to the school on 3 January 2017 to confirm that the action plan submitted on 30 September 2016 had not been approved.
- The inspection focused on the school's progress in those parts of the action plan relating to Parts 1, 2 and 8 of the independent school standards.
- The inspector held discussions with a senior leader and the personal assistant to the proprietor. On the day of the inspection, the two proprietors and headteacher were absent from the school. However, the inspector was able to have several long-distance telephone discussions with one of the proprietors. He scrutinised a wide range of documentation related to the independent school standards including teaching plans and schemes of work. The inspector also reviewed key documents and policies, including those related to safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

David Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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