

# Beis Ruchel Girls School

1–7 Seymour Road, Manchester, Lancashire M8 5BQ

## Inspection dates

21–23 March 2017

| Overall effectiveness                        | Inadequate           |
|--|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Inadequate           |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good                 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | Good                 |
| Early years provision                        | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good                 |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- The school does not meet all the independent school standards. The unmet standards include those about equalities.
- The development of children’s English skills in the early years is limited. This means that they are not as well prepared for Year 1 as possible.
- While pupils develop a good ability to work out what English words say as they read them, their understanding of what some words mean is limited.
- The codes used to record pupils’ absence do not match those in the latest national guidance.
- Maintenance of the premises is not good enough. Necessary repairs and redecoration identified at the previous inspection have not been completed. The playground is uneven.
- Not all documents precisely relate to practice in the school. Some documents and records were updated during the inspection to ensure their suitability.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and the proprietor have a clear vision for the school and high expectations of staff and pupils. The school is well organised and many aspects are improving.
- Pupils are happy and they enjoy school. They relate very well to each other and their teachers. Pupils’ behaviour is exemplary. They are extremely polite to visitors. They are proud to belong to their school.
- Staff are valued and their morale is very high.
- Teaching is effective. This helps pupils to learn well and make good progress in religious (kodesh) and secular (chol) studies. Pupils’ English skills are much closer to those seen elsewhere by the time pupils leave Year 6. Pupils are well prepared for senior school.
- The school’s provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very effective.
- Parents are highly satisfied with the school.

### 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?

- Ensure that leadership and management have the impact required by:
  - the proprietor ensuring that the school pays particular regard to people with the full range of protected characteristics as set out in the national equality legislation
  - senior leaders undertaking regular review of policies and other documents so that these remain up to date and relevant
  - leaders and teachers sharpening the systems for recording attendance so that absence and the reasons for it can be most easily checked
  - the proprietor, governors and leaders arranging for a suitably high standard of maintenance and decoration so that the premises add to, rather than detract from, pupils' learning.
- Ensure that leaders build on recent developments in the early years so that children's English skills, and the systems for tracking and recording how well children learn, improve.

### The school must meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that the curriculum policy, plans and schemes of work provide for and effectively implement personal, social, health and economic education which encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and which provides for effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(i))
- The proprietor must ensure that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils 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 and ensure that principles are actively promoted which encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. (paragraph 5, 5(a), 5(b), 5(b)(vi))
- The proprietor must ensure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. (paragraph 15)
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (paragraph 25)
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable physical education to be provided to pupils in accordance with the school curriculum and for pupils to play outside. (paragraph 29(1), 29(1)(a), 29(1)(b))
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and actively

promote the well-being of pupils. (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c))

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The proprietor and senior leaders ensure that the school meets most of the independent school standards. However, the school does not meet those standards which require it to pay particular regard to the protected characteristics identified in the national laws about equality. Leaders explained to inspectors that aspects of these standards are inconsistent with Orthodox Jewish belief. Similarly, while many aspects of the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are strong, pupils have limited opportunities to develop understanding of the full range of people who make up modern British society.
- At the start of this inspection, some of the policies required by the independent school standards were not fully up to date or reflected practice in other schools. These policies were amended during the inspection.
- The headteacher and head of department (chol) work closely together to provide clear and consistent leadership. They set high expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders ensure that all aspect of the school's work match the Jewish faith principles, which firmly underpin its work. The strength of the partnership between the most senior leaders is recognised by staff and parents, and contributes to high morale and strong commitment to the school.
- The school has a strong feeling of being like a family. Staff care about pupils deeply and pupils respect and look after each other. Pupils are proud of the school and their success. Characteristics like these contribute to the effective learning which takes place and to pupils' very good behaviour.
- The school is well organised so that time is not wasted. Leaders look for ways to improve the school. For example, staggered breaktimes have recently been introduced so that the best use is made of the available outdoor space.
- Senior leaders understand the school and its strengths and weaknesses well. The headteacher and head of department (chol) meet each day as they hand over responsibility for the school between the morning and afternoons sessions. This allows them to build their awareness of all aspects of its work. There are regular staff team meetings and other meetings with the proprietor and governors to ensure that information is shared further and that plans come to fruition. The school's self-evaluation document is generally accurate and links to the school's improvement plan, which identifies sensible priorities for the school.
- Senior leaders are willing to seek and listen to advice from suitably experienced partners from outside the school. Such advice has recently led to the appointment of a new leader for the Reception class, so freeing up the headteacher's time for her wider leadership responsibilities.
- Leaders ensure that teachers' performance is closely monitored through formal lesson observations and other scrutiny of their work. These are in addition to regular informal visits to class and conversations during normal school days. Where teachers are judged to be performing very effectively over time, systems are in place to increase their pay.
- The curriculum is split between Jewish studies, which are taught each morning, and secular work, which is taught in the afternoons. The morning lessons are taught in

Yiddish, with English being used in the afternoons. The secular curriculum includes English, mathematics, science, geography and physical education and broadly matches the national curriculum in these subjects. The topics covered link, where appropriate, to other subjects, for example by using historical topics, such as the Vikings, as themes in English. In addition, opportunities are taken to use kodesh learning to extend pupils' secular knowledge and skills. For example, this inspection took place while pupils were completing craft and art work as part of their preparation for the Pesach (Passover) festival. Personal, social and health education is taught as part of kodesh learning.

- Parents are very positive about the school. The letters received were unanimous in their support for the school. Typical comments were: 'I am proud to belong to this school', 'Any problems that have ever arisen have been dealt with in a kind, caring and professional manner' and 'Every girl is brought out to her maximum potential in a relaxed atmosphere.'
- The school has roughly 30 more pupils on roll than the number specified at registration. This change happened after the school provided additional accommodation for children in the early years.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor works closely with senior leaders to shape the development of the school. He is supported by a governing body that is made up of members of the local Jewish community.
- Governors have not ensured that the current buildings are suitably maintained and decorated. There has been little improvement in this aspect since the previous inspection, although plans have been made to resurface the school playground and for some redecoration.
- The governing body meets regularly and considers an appropriate range of items relevant to the school. These include the performance of, and pay for, teachers, changes to staffing and longer-term plans for the school to move to a new site.
- The regular contact between the headteacher and the governing body means that governors are well informed about the school's work and are able to hold leaders and other staff to account.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and teachers are closely aware of the needs of pupils and any vulnerabilities they may have. Staff receive regular training so that they know what to look out for should a child be at risk.
- The headteacher and head of department (chol) have received up-to-date training on safeguarding, including on how to ensure that only people suitable to work with children are appointed to posts in the school. The school's record of pre-employment checks is complete. However, a small number of members of staff working in the early years had not completed additional declarations about their suitability before the start of the inspection.

- The school does not have a website on which to publish the school's safeguarding and child protection policy. However, details of how parents can obtain a hard copy of the policy are clearly displayed on the parents' noticeboard in the school entrance. This policy provides sufficient detail. In addition, the school provides parents with information and opportunities to attend meetings to discuss safeguarding.

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

**Good**

- Teaching of both kodesh and chol studies is effective. Teachers plan activities which interest pupils and which they enjoy. The learning relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive. These features encourage pupils to try hard and help them to do well.
- Teachers' expectations of learning and behaviour are high. Pupils know that they should work collaboratively and are given frequent opportunities to do this as part of class discussion and in work in groups or pairs.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Teachers skilfully use questions to build up individual pupils' and class understanding. Tasks are usually very well focused on learning.
- Leaders and teachers have continued to develop the assessment systems since the previous inspection. Staff are increasingly matching their assessments to national curriculum standards. They have introduced a computer-based system to track learning in writing, as well as reading and mathematics. Formal assessment is not in place for other secular subjects.
- If teachers identify that any pupils are at risk of falling behind in their learning, additional support is given. A small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive continuing extra support. This is very effective and has led, for example, to marked progress in these pupils' writing. However, teachers' routine planning to target work at different groups within classes, including the most able, is less well developed.
- The school is systematic in providing pupils with opportunities for them to develop their reading in English. Leaders judge this to be particularly important as many pupils do not have easy access to reading in English at home. Pupils' reading is supported through group and pair work, and by regular sessions for pupils to work one to one with an adult.
- Teachers have recently had a particular focus on helping pupils to increase their vocabulary. Classrooms have helpful displays of words and spelling lists. Pupils have ready access to textbooks, for example in mathematics, and opportunities to undertake practical work in science.
- The quality of teaching is consistently high in kodesh studies. Where new teachers are developing their skills, leaders provide careful supervision and opportunities for training. Leaders provide training for all teachers on important topics and teachers are encouraged to seek out and attend specific training relevant to their needs and interests. Some staff are currently working on externally accredited teaching and leadership qualifications.
- Teachers set homework regularly. Pupils told inspectors that they felt this helped them.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- In accordance with the orthodox Jewish principles, which run through the school and its work, pupils have limited opportunity to learn about the full range of people and experiences which contribute to modern Britain. For example, visits to Christian churches or other places of worship are never included in the curriculum.
- In other respects, the school's culture is highly nurturing and helps pupils to develop positive attributes, such as general respect for other people, politeness, confidence and self-awareness. These were amply demonstrated in the thoughtful conversation between pupils and inspectors.
- Attendance registers are kept carefully and accurately, so that pupils are accounted for day by day. However, the registration codes set out in national guidance are not used. In addition, the school's analysis of pupils' attendance over time is sketchy. This makes it harder for leaders to identify if any patterns of less-good attendance are building up.
- Leaders give a high priority to keeping pupils safe. Pupils are very confident that they are well looked after and say that they feel safe. Their parents agree. The school has suitable security measures in place. The playground is currently unsuitable because it is uneven and very large puddles form when it rains. Leaders are already aware of this problem and plans to resurface it have been made but not completed.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is impeccable. They are very considerate of each other and work hard to support each other's learning. Inspectors saw no instances of poor behaviour or disruption to learning.
- School leaders confirmed that any instances of poor behaviour are very rare indeed. For example, there have been no recorded incidents of bullying over the previous year. Staff knowledge of pupils, along with close but friendly supervision, mean that any issues are responded to before they develop. Where teachers and leaders identify that pupils' particular needs mean that they need additional support to help them to learn well, this support is provided.
- Pupils are keen to participate in lessons and respond very well to different tasks and activities. This creates a calm, studious atmosphere in class.
- Pupils are highly motivated to attend school. The headteacher reported that sometimes pupils insist on attending even if they are slightly unwell. Despite this, overall attendance is a little below the national average for primary schools. Leaders have considered the reasons for this and identified that additional, unavoidable absence arises from participation in family celebrations, some of which take place abroad.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in kodesh and chol learning. These starting points tend to be lower in writing and, to some extent, reading than in mathematics. This reflects the later start to learning English than seen in most schools.
- Pupils build on their writing skills as they progress through the school. Standards in writing have become more secure due to the recent emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary. By the time pupils leave the school, their standard of writing is much closer to that seen nationally.
- Pupils rapidly develop technical reading skills; they score very well in the national phonics check in Year 1. Pupils' early work on letters and their sounds in Yiddish supports similar learning in English. However, while pupils can work out what words sound like, some have more difficulty in knowing their meaning. Younger pupils make gains in their reading when using the school's scheme for teaching reading. However, some pupils then have few books in English to read at home. Leaders check reading books carefully to make sure that they do not contain content which is felt unsuitable. They have recently extended the range of books available for older pupils.
- The school has a systematic approach to teaching spelling and handwriting. Pupils' rapid progress in these aspects is clearly seen in their books.
- Mathematics is taught using commercially available textbooks, matched to the national curriculum. This helps teachers to make sure that pupils make progress at least in line with that expected in other schools. Progress is relatively faster for pupils with lower starting points than for the most able. Rates of progress in mathematics have increased as teachers have brought in more direct teaching of mathematical ideas.
- While observation indicates that pupils learn well in other secular subjects, the lack of formal assessment means that teachers do not track pupils' progress in them.
- Pupils' progress in kodesh subjects is carefully monitored by leaders. Revisiting topics in an age-appropriate way builds up strong knowledge and understanding over time. Inspectors saw this in the increasing depth of preparation for Pesach for pupils in the successively older classes in the school. Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils meet the standards required to pass the entrance examination set by the linked senior school.
- Pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities make rapid progress as a result of the support that they receive.

## Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

- Children enter the early years with skills that are broadly typical for their age, except in spoken English. However, leaders and teachers build up a profile of children's skills over time rather than identifying definite starting points as children join the early years. This makes it harder to identify precisely how much progress children have made over their time in the early years.
- The majority of children speak Yiddish as their first language and have limited skills in spoken English. Learning in English is not introduced until their last term in the early years. This means that children's early reading and writing skills in English are less



developed than in many other schools. In 2016, no children reached a good level of development by the end of the early years because their English skills were not good enough. This meant that they were not as well prepared as possible for Year 1.

- Children's experience in aspects of technology is also limited because computers are not used within play or learning.
- Children's learning in other aspects is rapid. They develop writing and phonic skills in Yiddish. They enjoy constructive play, which helps them understand themselves and others, and to develop their physical skills well.
- There are separate leaders for the Nursery and Reception classes. These leaders work well together, for example in ensuring that there is smooth transition between the different classes. Leaders have comprehensive plans which help them to make sure that children learn quickly. The classrooms have recently been reorganised to provide better opportunities for children to focus their learning on different activities. Some of the parents who contacted inspectors commented particularly favourably on the quality of teaching that children experience, for example recently about the five senses.
- The space for outdoor play and learning is limited. Children do not have direct access from their classrooms and, while there are tricycles, scooters and a play house, other equipment has to be taken outside as needed. When children are outside they play creatively, for example by investigating bubbles on water in the area. They also learn to be considerate of each other, for example by being careful when they use the ride-on toys.
- Leaders are extending the range of resources and recording systems, particularly for children in the Reception class. Staff have recently started to record children's learning by using photographs.
- Children's behaviour is very good. The positive relationships between children, which are rapidly established, mean that they learn together well and play safely. In addition, relationships between staff and children are very strong. Staff are vigilant and children are cared for very well and feel safe.
- Communication with parents is effective, with regular telephone contact, weekly newsletters and open days. Leaders encourage parents to ask any questions that they may have.
- Leaders ensure that the independent school standards, as they apply to the early years, are met.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 130286   |
| DfE registration number | 352/6050 |
| Inspection number       | 10026805 |

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                      | Other independent school   |
| School category                     | Independent school   |
| Age range of pupils                 | 3 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Girls  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 277  |
| Number of part-time pupils          | 0  |
| Proprietor                          | Mr B Krausz  |
| Headteacher                         | Mrs E Krausz   |
| Annual fees (day pupils)            | £1,591–3,900   |
| Telephone number                    | 0161 795 1830  |
| Website                             | None   |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:beisruchelmanchester@tiscali.co.uk">beisruchelmanchester@tiscali.co.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 22–24 June 2016  |

## Information about this school

- Beis Ruchel Girls School is an independent school, which opened in November 1995.
- The school is located in the Crumpsall area of Manchester, about four miles north of the city centre.
- The school is a provider of nursery education.
- A below-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school provides education for the children of the religious Orthodox Jewish Chassidic communities in Manchester and Salford. Most pupils are members of the Satmar community, however, some girls from other Jewish backgrounds also attend the school.

- The school offers a religious (kodesh) and a secular (chol) curriculum.
- All pupils are bilingual and speak Yiddish and English. Almost all pupils speak English as a second language.
- The school aims to prepare the girls to become active members of their community, living ethical lives in harmony with others.
- The school does not have a website.
- All pupils are educated on the school site.
- The school is currently registered for up to 250 pupils. More pupils than this attend the school.

## Information about this inspection

- An inspector toured the school site accompanied by the headteacher and the head of department (chol).
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across the school in kodesh and chol learning. Inspectors observed pupils' conduct in lessons, during movement between lessons, at breaks and at lunchtimes. Inspectors made a short visit to the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, the early years leaders and a group of teachers. They met formally with a group of pupils and spoke to others during lessons and at other times during the school day.
- Inspectors met with the proprietor.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books during lessons and in a scrutiny of samples of written work in English.
- Inspectors reviewed documents to confirm compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence. These documents included school policies, safeguarding information, the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness and development planning, minutes of meetings, and the attendance and admissions registers.
- Inspectors considered the suitability of the premises, including whether there is sufficient space to accommodate the number of pupils on roll.
- Too few responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were received for these to be considered. However, 81 letters from parents and three written comments provided through Parent View were reviewed. Inspectors examined 48 responses from members of staff to a questionnaire provided by Ofsted.
- This inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education to take place earlier than would normally be expected.

## Inspection team

David Selby, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Pippa Jackson Maitland

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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