

Beis Malka Girls' School

93 Alkham Road, London N16 6XD

Inspection dates

25–27 April 2017

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders make sure that all the independent school standards are met and that the school provides a good education.
- Leaders strive to ensure that girls leave the school well prepared for life in their Orthodox Jewish community, as well as for life as responsible and active citizens in modern Britain.
- Leaders have taken decisive action since the last monitoring inspection to ensure that pupils gain a much broader understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures found in modern Britain. Underpinned by their religious ethos and belief that all people are created in a godly image, leaders actively encourage pupils to respect everyone without exception.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the school and increasingly to the wider community.
- Pupils are extremely well mannered and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards learning. They have a thirst for new knowledge and understanding.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. This is because leaders provide teachers with ongoing training and support to enhance their practice.
- From their starting points, pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in a range of subjects.
- Children make a flying start in the early years. This is because members of staff provide stimulating activities that effectively help children to learn and socialise.
- Occasionally, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the most able, are not high enough. This limits their progress.
- Leaders have introduced new systems to measure pupils' progress. They are not analysing and acting on the information with sufficient rigour to ensure that enough pupils attain high standards.
- Absence, although reducing slightly, is above the national average.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - teachers challenging pupils, especially the most able, with more difficult work and deeper questions
 - leaders analysing more closely pupils' progress data so that they can quickly act on any identified underperformance
 - working with parents to increase pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence
 - building on the recent improvements in promoting pupils' personal development in understanding the diversity of faith, communities and lifestyles in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, all other leaders and governors are passionate in their desire to create a highly conducive environment in which pupils and members of staff alike can thrive. All share the aspiration to inspire the pupils to excel in their understanding and adherence to the values and customs of their tradition of Orthodox Judaism. Equally, they want pupils to actively take part in and positively contribute to life in modern Britain. As a result, leaders make sure that teaching and outcomes are good and improving in both kodesh (Jewish) and national curriculum subjects. They place much emphasis in enhancing pupils' personal development and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Staff morale is high and there is a culture of welcoming feedback for improvement. Equally, parents are overwhelming positive and supportive about all aspects of the school's work.
- Governors and leaders took decisive action to address the unmet standards identified at the last monitoring inspection. This has resulted in a large cultural shift, acknowledged and welcomed by pupils and members of staff. Leaders introduced a weekly programme of study in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Work included whole-school projects, such as 'all due respect' where pupils learned about different faiths, cultures and lifestyles in modern Britain. Visitors from other faiths and cultures visit the school and through educational visits and working with other pupils at external events, pupils are meeting a range of different people. Pupils particularly highlighted the insights they gained from the visit of a person who has physical disabilities. They appreciate now the richness of diversity and have learned the need to respect each person for their intrinsic value. Leaders say that this is still a work in progress. They have made a very good start.
- The curriculum offer covers a good range of subjects, including at GCSE. Leaders, in their bid to raise standards in English, have introduced GCSE English literature for the current Year 10 and 11 pupils. Pupils excitedly told inspectors how much they are enjoying learning Shakespeare and the anthology of poetry. Further, as leaders want to better prepare pupils for post-16 education, they have introduced the science trilogy GCSE which will be examined in 2018. Leaders enhance the formal curriculum by visits to museums, art galleries and the like. Pupils gain a good understanding of British institutions by visiting the Houses of Parliament and observing court cases.
- Senior and subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility. They act responsively and in a timely fashion to address any shortcomings that they identify. They seek external guidance and use consultants to help them improve. For instance, leaders in the primary phase identified that pupils, most of whom speak English as an additional language, have difficulty in comprehension. They therefore organised training, which has improved teachers' skills and raised standards in reading comprehension.

- Leaders at all levels check teachers' planning, regularly observe lessons and scrutinise

pupils' books. Leaders give developmental feedback to their colleagues, which is well received and acted upon. In addition, since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced appraisal to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. Because of these activities, the quality of teaching is good and improving.

- Leaders now use an electronic system to record pupils' progress. They have a secure general overview of pupils' performance. They do not, however, analyse the information strongly enough to check the progress of groups of pupils so that they can support them in making rapid progress.

Governance

- The proprietor, governors and school leaders have ensured that the school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Governors use a consultant to help them improve their effectiveness. They regularly check the work of the school, including through short visits to lessons and looking at pupils' books.
- Governors hold a range of leaders to account by inviting them to report to the board. Governors therefore know about the quality of teaching in the school and pupils' progress.
- Governors are very supportive of school leaders and are especially concerned that teachers enhance their pedagogical skills. Through their initiative, a group of unqualified teachers are now undertaking training towards a qualified teacher learning and skills (QTLS) professional accreditation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Given the vulnerability to attack of Jewish schools and institutions internationally, governors make site security a high priority. There are full-time security guards deployed on both sites.
- There are three designated and trained safeguarding leaders and a number of deputies. Leaders deliver refresher training to all members of staff at least once a term. All members of the governing body are safeguarding trained. This means that all are fully aware of the latest guidance and procedures and know how to identify concerns and what actions to take.
- Governors and members of staff are vigilant. They know what the most common safeguarding issues are for their community. Equally, they are fully aware that anything is possible and that they need to be alert to any signs that might suggest a pupil is vulnerable to a safeguarding concern.
- Leaders work closely with agencies when concerns arise. Workshops for parents cover issues such as e-safety. Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- The school does not have a website. Printed copies of its safeguarding policy are available at the school office. The policy has full regard to the government's current requirements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Across the phases, therefore, pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- There is a very strong rapport between teachers and pupils. Consequently, pupils are very eager to please and work diligently. This creates a harmonious learning environment.
- Teachers plan their lessons well. They have good subject knowledge and model enthusiasm for learning. Pupils respond in kind and develop a thirst for learning. They follow their teachers' instructions and get on with their work without wasting any time.
- In most cases, teachers give useful feedback to pupils on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Pupils readily take the advice on board, learn from their mistakes and improve their work.
- The special needs leader and teachers have a clear understanding and expertise in identifying the learning needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils benefit from well-tailored support. This ensures that these pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers readily give up time at breaktimes or after school to help pupils who fall behind and need to catch up.
- Since the previous inspection, teachers are making better use of assessment information in planning lessons and for the long- and medium term. There are some instances, however, where teachers plan activities that are not challenging enough, especially for the most able. Occasionally, teachers ask pupils simple closed questions and this limits the opportunities for pupils to think deeply.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils grow in self-confidence as they progress through the school. Older pupils told inspectors how much they appreciate the changes to the curriculum and opportunities that they now have to learn about diversity. Their enhanced understanding and respect for others have also heightened their own self-awareness and raised aspirations for their future careers.
- External experts have worked with all classes on personal safety and understanding, such as how to recognise the signs of grooming and what to do in such circumstances.
- Pupils understand the various types of bullying but report that it hardly ever occurs at the school. Leaders are proactive in helping pupils who may be facing any difficulties, physical, mental or emotional. They encourage pupils to communicate concerns via the 'worry box' and display the telephone number of a counsellor whom pupils can call at any time. Pupils confirmed that they are confident to communicate their concerns and know that adults in the school will take them seriously. Pupils thus feel very safe and secure.
- Pupils make a strong contribution to the school and wider community. In each phase, older pupils look after younger ones as 'big sisters'. Many pupils volunteer in the local

community. Secondary pupils are now encouraged to research national and international charitable organisations. They take responsibility for presenting their findings to the school community, for inviting guest speakers from the charities and for arranging fund-raising activities. Charities that have benefited from these activities include Great Ormond Street Hospital, Action Aid and Handicap International. These activities give pupils a broad understanding and empathy for people and their daily struggles in this country and across the world.

- Pupils enjoy organising and arranging all aspects of an annual theatre production, the latest being 'Titanic'. This gives pupils opportunities for developing leadership skills, expressing their artistic and musical creativity and for collaboration with their peers.
- Pupils benefit from good careers guidance. Year 6 pupils visit a centre designed for pupils to explore real-life activities and test their skills in a variety of professions. Older pupils attend a taster day at Hackney College. Visitors to the school talk about their careers such as in nursing, teaching and accountancy. When they leave the school, pupils are well set to prepare for their careers while still pursuing enhanced studies of Jewish law and tradition.
- Leaders have plans to cultivate further pupils' understanding of different communities and lifestyles beyond their own immediate experience. These plans will make an even stronger contribution to pupils' personal development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. They wear their uniform with pride and have impeccably good manners.
- Pupils treat their teachers and visitors with the utmost respect. Pupils waste no time in lessons. They work very well by themselves, in pairs and in groups. They present their work beautifully. An inspector observed a situation in which a teacher had to leave the classroom immediately the bell rang at the start of break. Without fuss, the pupils on their own initiative cleaned the whiteboard, packed away their books and got out their books for the next lesson before going out for break. These very positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their successful learning.
- Leaders are at the early stages of working to improve rates of attendance and reduce persistent absence. Although there has been a slight improvement this year, attendance rates remain below average and persistent absence rates above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress in their subjects and across year groups.
- Teachers are skilled in the teaching of phonics. As a result, a higher proportion of Year 1 pupils than found nationally met the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2016.
- In the 2016 tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined was above average.

- In 2016, GCSE results in English were below the national average. In mathematics, single science, history and geography, however, they were well above average. Leaders have made it a priority this year to improve outcomes in English across the year groups. Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that current pupils are making good progress overall and that Year 11 pupils are on track for improved GCSE results in English.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because they receive well-targeted support.
- School leaders make some specific arrangements for the most able pupils in the primary phase. Leaders enter the most able mathematicians in Years 5 and 6 for the national mathematics challenge competition. A number of pupils have had their writing published in young writers' competitions. In one competition, judges declared one of the school's pupils as the overall winner. Typically, in daily learning, however, teachers do not challenge the most able pupils well enough to reach the high standards of which they are capable.

Early years provision

Good

- The provision for two-year-old children is good. Members of staff have a sound understanding of how young children learn. They prepare a good range of activities in all areas of learning and make sure that they meet each child's needs well. As a result, children learn a range of social skills and gain new knowledge, understanding and skills at a sound rate. The restricted outdoor area, however, hampers learning and development.
- Children enter Nursery and Reception with skills that are typical for their age in almost all areas of learning. High proportions, however, speak English as an additional language and as a result, their English literacy skills are below those expected for their age. Children make good progress because of the good-quality teaching and care that they receive. An above-average proportion of children who left Reception in 2016 entered Year 1 with a good level of development. They are thus well prepared for primary school.
- Leadership in early years is good. Leaders make sure that planning takes account of all areas of learning. They also incorporate all areas of learning when planning the kodesh curriculum. There are good systems in place to check each child's progress. Leaders and teachers use the information to prepare activities to meet the needs of the children. Leaders are aware that they need to analyse the information with greater rigour to help identify how groups of children can make rapid progress.
- Teaching is good. There is a good balance between child-initiated activities and teacher-led learning. A strong emphasis on developing children's English language skills effectively helps children to become bilingual. Teachers organise a range of activities and use a variety of resources that keep children happily engaged and learning. Children enjoy cutting out pictures, decorating biscuits, kneading and modelling clay and singing songs, for instance. Children behave well and happily share apparatus and learn to socialise.
- Teachers make certain that children feel safe and secure. They have devised an effective system that encourages children to show their feelings through pictures and drawings. The information that teachers glean from these activities helps them to identify and

support any child who may be sad or worried. Teachers identify early on any child that might have a special educational need and/or disability. They work closely with external agencies and parents to meet effectively the child's needs.

- Leaders inform parents about the children's activities via detailed weekly news-sheets. Leaders have identified the need to encourage parents more to support their children's learning and development at home and to share the information with the early years members of staff.

School details

Unique reference number	100295
DfE registration number	204/6337
Inspection number	10020732

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	Jewish Orthodox Girls' School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	492
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Aaron Grossman
Chair	Aaron Grossman
Headteacher	Gita Wind
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,080
Telephone number	0208 8062070
Website	No website
Email address	mail@beismalka.com
Date of previous inspection	15 October 2013

Information about this school

- Beis Malka Girls' School is an independent Orthodox Jewish day school for girls. It serves the Belz Chassidic community. It is situated in Stoke Newington in the London Borough of Hackney. It has 492 pupils aged from two to 16 years. Boys attend the provision for two-year-olds.
- The school has separate secondary and primary provision as well as provision for children aged two to three on one site. Early years provision for children aged three to five is located in a different building a short drive away.
- The primary and secondary schools and the early years provision work independently with

their own senior leadership teams, but the secondary headteacher oversees the entire school.

- The school opened in 1980 and was inspected by Ofsted in October 2013, when the overall effectiveness was judged to be good. However, an emergency inspection on 15 July 2015 identified some unmet independent school standards. A further emergency inspection on 14 April 2016 identified a few remaining unmet standards.
- The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language as they speak either Yiddish or Hebrew at home. Kodesh (Jewish studies) is taught in Yiddish.
- There are 44 pupils on the special educational needs and disability register with eight pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school does not have a website.
- Policies are available to parents in the school.
- The school's aim is, 'We take pride in doing EXTRA – Excellence, Tradition, Respect and Ambition.'

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed learning in 38 parts of lessons; some of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. The school's information about pupils' progress was also checked.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, other leaders and teachers. A meeting was held with three governors. The proprietor was not available during the inspection. There was also a formal discussion with four groups of pupils and various informal discussions with pupils during breaktimes and during lessons.
- Inspectors took account of the 119 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, and the 40 responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors checked documentation, policies and all aspects of the school's work for compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Rick Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	Her Majesty's Inspector

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