

Beis Yaakov Girls School

Avigdor Mews, 65–67 Lordship Road, London N16 0QJ

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

- The school's leaders have maintained the good standard of education achieved at the time of the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching over time is good because teachers typically have strong subject knowledge, know their pupils well and plan their lessons to take account of pupils' needs.
- Pupils make good progress over time from their different starting points. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Most-able pupils achieve well, but their performance is not yet consistently strong because some teaching lacks a sufficient degree of stretch and challenge.
- Systems to assess pupils' progress have been introduced and provide leaders with ample information to accurately evaluate pupils' outcomes.
- Sometimes quiet or shy pupils are not fully involved when teachers ask questions to test understanding.
- Pupils are kept safe in the school. They are happy and have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Pupils' attendance is not yet at the national average.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and ensures that pupils cover religious aspects as well as a wide range of other subjects.
- The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and fundamental British values is strong.
- Partnership work between this school and other schools is an area for further development.
- Leaders and governors evaluate the school's effectiveness and plan for improvement, but systems are not yet robust enough. Governors' meetings do not present sufficient challenge.
- The early years provision is effective and very well led. Children are happy and make good progress. The outdoor space is not well equipped.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and governance by:
 - linking the school improvement plan more closely to the findings from self-evaluation processes
 - ensuring that members of the governing body provide a greater amount of challenge to strengthen accountability
 - working more closely with other schools to explore effective practice.
- Improve teaching and pupils' outcomes by:
 - making sure that the most able pupils are consistently stretched and challenged so that their achievement is outstanding
 - ensuring that pupils who are reluctant to respond to teachers' questions are provided with more opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it reaches at least the national average.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor space in the early years provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is shared by parents, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. She is committed to providing a high quality of education for the pupils in the school, and has ensured compliance with all of the independent school standards.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. All those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, commented positively about the quality of the provision. One parent wrote, 'Beis Yaakov meets all my expectations and more. I never knew that a school could put so much love, care and attention into each individual child. My daughter looks forward to seeing her caring teachers who provide such a calm yet exciting environment.'
- The small size of the school and the commitment of the staff ensure that pupils are given a lot of attention and are known as individuals.
- The management of teaching is effective and it secures good outcomes for the pupils. Senior staff who observe teachers, both formally and informally, have a detailed understanding of effective practice. They are able to discuss features of effective teaching, whatever style teachers choose to adopt, and how these help pupils to make good progress.
- The curriculum is well considered and its effectiveness is reviewed regularly. The school's leaders have ensured a balanced approach towards delivering the Kodesh curriculum and the Chol. Leaders have carefully reviewed the subjects on offer to ensure that the afternoon sessions provide full compliance with the independent school standards. This has also been facilitated by extending the school day.
- A key strength of the school is the way in which it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as actively promoting fundamental British values. The values discussed in the morning Kodesh lessons are taught and discussed routinely, and pupils strive to model these values whenever possible. This means that they are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's classrooms and corridors are adorned with colourful displays of pupils' work, and their achievements are celebrated whenever possible. Displays include 'Around the world', 'Remembrance', Chinese New Year, 'Government and politics' and 'Yes we can', which recognises the achievements of individual pupils who have overcome personal barriers or difficulties.
- Systems for managing teachers' performance were not robust in the past. The new headteacher has presented her proposals to staff, which are more rigorous and now link teachers' performance to more bespoke training.
- Pupils say that they would like more clubs after school and during the lunch hour. This is also acknowledged by the school's senior leaders as an area for future development.

- The school improvement planning processes are not sufficiently sharp. Although a school improvement plan exists and a self-evaluation summary is in place, these two documents are not linked closely enough. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is over-generous in parts and does not recognise some shortcomings. This is why leadership is not yet outstanding.
- The school's leaders have not sought to work routinely in partnership with other schools. This means that they often work in isolation and are unable to discuss key issues or have their assessments validated by external bodies.
- There has been a change in the proprietor and it appears that the Department for Education (DfE) has not been notified.

Governance

- Governors are committed to making the school as effective as possible and clearly want the pupils to succeed.
- They meet regularly to discuss the school's progress and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths.
- Governors responded quickly to the findings of the emergency inspection which took place in February 2016. They amended the home-school agreement to ensure that the school promoted the fundamental British value of individual liberty effectively.
- Governors acknowledge that they have the potential to play a greater role in monitoring the work of the school's senior leaders than is currently the case. Minutes of their meetings do not show the amount of challenge necessary to hold the school's leaders fully to account.
- The governors have ensured that the school has published a suitable safeguarding policy on its website.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is committed to keeping pupils safe. All staff have received up-to-date training in safeguarding children. Leaders have ensured that all staff have received and read the latest guidance on safeguarding, 'Keeping children safe in education' (September 2016).
- Staff have also been provided with up-to-date training on the 'Prevent' duty, which aims to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorist activity or becoming the victims of radicalisation.
- The designated safeguarding leads are also up to date with their training.
- Records relating to vulnerable pupils are well maintained, and record all actions taken with details of the resolution.
- The school operates within a culture of vigilance. In their discussions with inspectors, it was clear that staff are suitably trained to recognise the signs of abuse and neglect. Staff build up positive relationships with parents and guardians to promote pupils' well-being.

Some minor administrative errors were found in the recording of necessary employment checks on the single central register of the vetting of staff. These were rectified while the inspector was on site.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and convey enthusiasm for the subjects they teach. Pupils speak positively about the relationships between them and their teachers. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils are able to achieve and they typically plan lessons that motivate and enthuse pupils.
- The Kodesh (religious) aspect of the curriculum is taught particularly well. This often involves pupils in reciting from the Bible and translating from Hebrew. This aspect of teaching is also effective in developing key literacy skills, as well as promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers understand the needs of the pupils they teach. Hence, they plan lessons that meet their needs well. This includes providing suitable tasks for pupils who need to catch up, as well as supplementary work which usually ensures that the most able pupils make good progress.
- Good use is made of additional adults in the classroom, such as learning support assistants. These members of staff liaise in advance with the teacher about what is to be taught, so that they arrive at the lesson ready to work effectively with pupils who require additional support.
- The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' books shows that teachers adhere well to the school policy when marking pupils' work. Teachers' marking recognises and acknowledges pupils' achievements and effort, while at the same time telling them how they can improve the quality of their work.
- Reading, writing and communication skills are taught well. Teachers provided pupils with ample opportunities to read aloud in lessons, both in Hebrew and in English. A new spelling rule is taught at the start of each week. Homework during the week includes spelling revision, and a weekly spelling test takes place on Thursdays.
- Systems to measure pupils' progress have been introduced in line with raised national expectations. These systems are known and understood by teachers, parents and pupils. Teachers use their assessment of pupils' progress to inform their planning and also to report regularly to parents about pupils' levels of progress. They implement the school's marking policy well.
- Although teaching ensures that the most able pupils usually make good progress, sometimes these pupils could be stretched and challenged even more, so that their progress is more rapid than at present. Sometimes the most able pupils attempt tasks that are too easy, rather than start a task at a level that is more challenging than those set for the whole class.
- Although teachers are skilled at asking pupils questions that test their knowledge and deepen their understanding, sometimes pupils who are quieter than others are left out because the more confident pupils are allowed to answer much more frequently than their more hesitant classmates.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe when in the school and that the school teaches them how to keep themselves safe. The provision of a security guard during the school day ensures that no unauthorised persons can access the school site.
- The small size of the school means that the teacher–pupil ratio is small. Consequently, teachers know their pupils well as individuals. This was clear when the inspector toured the school with the headteacher, who knew the names of individual pupils encountered, and could provide detailed information on their specific needs.
- The school has appropriate risk assessments in place to keep pupils safe both when in school and when participating in excursions. The inspector's scrutiny of risk assessments shows that these are detailed in nature and identified all potential situations that might place pupils at risk.
- More vulnerable pupils are well cared for through the services of a counsellor who offers one-to-one sessions to build up pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- The school council is at a very early stage of development, having met only a few times. This means that the vehicle for pupils to be able to express their opinions and views on the school is limited at this stage.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, wear their uniform smartly and typically show respect towards their teachers and one another when in lessons. Work in books is presented neatly.
- Bullying is an extremely rare occurrence. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. They are confident that should any bullying occur, it would be dealt with quickly when reported to an adult in the school.
- In her drive to establish high standards of behaviour outside lessons, the headteacher insists that all incidents of unacceptable behaviour are reported and logged. These logs indicate that the majority of incidents recorded are at a low level, including petty squabbles or pupils falling out with one another. There have been two fixed-term exclusions this academic year.
- Pupils' attendance is below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress over time from their different starting points. This is because the teaching they experience is effective and lessons are tailored to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.

- This effective progress goes beyond English and mathematics. The inspector's scrutiny of pupils' work, observations of their learning and progress and analysis of achievement information validate the school's belief that progress is good both in the Kodesh studies as well as across the secular subjects taught in the afternoon sessions. The scrutiny of pupils' current work indicates that this good progress is set to continue.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, make good progress compared with that of pupils who have similar starting points nationally. This is due to the effective support and intervention they receive and the careful tracking of their progress. The specialist funding allocated to pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is used to good effect.
- Pupils enjoy reading. The inspector listened to pupils of different abilities read from a book of their choice. They read fluently and with expression and are able to link their reading activities to the broadening of their vocabulary and the use of different styles of writing.
- The most able pupils make good progress because teachers use the information gained from regular assessments to set high targets and plan well for their needs. Occasionally, these high expectations are not consistently maintained. When this occurs, work set for this group of pupils fails to provide a level of stretch and challenge that is consistently high and demanding.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is good overall and there is clear evidence that it is in a strong position to continue to improve. This is due to the strong leadership and effective teaching, which are having a direct impact on children's positive outcomes.
- Children generally enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress during their time in the early years, and the proportion who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is above average. This stage of their education places them in a good position when they enter Year 1.
- Teaching in the early years is effective and this is closely linked to accurate use of assessment, to which all staff contribute. The school's approach to assessment is developing well and staff routinely use their observations to inform their planning. Children's learning journals provide an attractive record of their progress, and there is clear evidence of the involvement of parents in their children's learning.
- The teaching of phonics is a priority. Phonics is taught well to enable children to make progress at an appropriate level. Monitoring of progress in phonics is regular and robust.
- The early years self-evaluation document is suitably analytical. It is clear that the early years staff are committed to forming good working relationships with parents.
- Children behave well and listen to adults' instructions. They work well with each other as well as independently, and enjoy their learning.

- Children are kept safe in the early years provision. The area is secure. Risk assessments are detailed, and children are taught at an early age to manage risk. For example, they are taught to use tools effectively. They use scissors and the climbing frame sensibly. They are taught about hygiene at an early age, and are expected to wash their hands after using the toilet facilities.
- The early years internal teaching spaces provide a bright and attractive environment for children. There is a good range of equipment available, which is clearly labelled. The outdoor space is somewhat 'tired' and appears to be less well resourced. Plans are in place to develop the outdoor space this academic year.

School details

Unique reference number	136817
DfE registration number	204/6000
Inspection number	10012790

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
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 8
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr J Leitner
Chair	Shia Chaim Grussgott
Headteacher	Natalie Barwin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,622 to £6,460
Telephone number	0207 5022840
Website	www.bygschool.org.uk
Email address	office@bygs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 May 2012

Information about this school

- Beis Yaakov Girls School opened in January 2011. The school is situated in Hackney, north London, and serves the local Jewish Orthodox community of Stamford Hill. The new headteacher took up her post in September 2016. The school was last inspected in May 2012.

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It currently admits children into the early years and pupils up to Year 5. Lessons are conducted in English and pupils have a basic understanding of the Yiddish language. The school, in adherence to its religious ethos, aims to follow the educational traditions and regulations of Orthodox Judaism, as well as the requirements of the early years foundation stage curriculum. Morning sessions follow the Kodesh (religious) curriculum and afternoon sessions cover the Chol (secular) aspects.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below average. A below-average proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is half the national average.
- The school has no disadvantaged pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has not received approval from the DfE about a change in proprietor.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed learning in all year groups and across a range of subjects. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with the school's senior leaders. The inspector also looked at a range of pupils' folders and books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the leader of early years, the chair and two other members of the governing body, a group of parents and two groups of pupils.
- The inspector scrutinised: school improvement documents; policies; information on progress; records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and information on pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector considered 16 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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