

# Talmud Torah Yetev Lev

393–395 Bury New Road, Salford, Lancashire M7 2BT

## Inspection dates

9–11 May 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not had high enough expectations of the chol curriculum (secular studies), particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers do not offer pupils sufficient chances to write for different purposes and at length, nor do they build pupils' reading capability quickly enough.
- At times, pupils are not extended to think more deeply about their learning, learn from their mistakes and, in mathematics, solve challenging problems.
- There are insufficient resources to promote reading in English. Books are not always appropriate.
- Children in early years do not hear and learn spoken English regularly. They have limited opportunities to obtain phonics knowledge.
- Early years assessments are not always rigorously recorded.
- There are insufficient indoor resources to encourage children to practise what they have learned, on their own or with their peers.

### The school has the following strengths

- The inspiring headteacher has the respect and admiration of the whole school community.
- Leaders and governors responded quickly to the need to improve the chol curriculum and have already paved the way for its implementation.
- Pupils feel safe and are extremely proud of their school. Mutual respect is strong. Pupils say their teachers 'speak from the heart'.
- The teaching of the kodesh curriculum (religious studies) is of a high standard.
- In early years, the new outdoor provision provides children with good opportunities to learn and practise their skills.
- Leaders have ensured that the school meets the independent school standards.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, in order to raise the achievement of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that teachers:
  - provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in writing and regularly attempt longer pieces of work
  - ensure that pupils are provided with the skills and knowledge required to be confident and competent readers
  - ask questions that encourage pupils to think more deeply about what they are learning
  - use the mistakes that pupils make as opportunities for further learning
  - provide opportunities to extend and challenge pupils to reason and think more deeply about what they are learning, particularly in applying their mathematical skills to problem-solving.
- Improve the progress of children in the early years by:
  - increasing the opportunities for children to hear and learn spoken English
  - increasing the opportunities for children to acquire phonics knowledge and apply these skills to reading and writing in English
  - ensuring that assessments are rigorously recorded so that it is clear where children are in their learning and their next steps
  - further increasing the range of indoor resources available to children so that they can develop skills such as perseverance and independence, and develop an understanding and love of reading.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - implementing a revised chol curriculum, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, that more closely matches the standards of work typical of other schools
  - increasing reading resources across the school so that pupils' learning is developed more effectively, for example through the opportunity to read a range of interesting, enjoyable and age-appropriate books.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Talmud Torah Yetev Lev requires improvement because the chol curriculum and in particular the English and mathematics offered to the boys does not have high enough expectations of their learning. Consequently, it does not equip them as well as it could do for the next steps in their education.
- The headteacher is well aware of the need to urgently improve the English and mathematics, along with reviewing and revising their chol curriculum. To this end, he has already gained the required approval from governors and the local rabbinical committee. A local leader in education, with an expertise in working in Jewish schools, has been employed to support them in implementing a new curriculum and developing the associated teaching and learning skills to deliver it effectively.
- The headteacher is an inspiring figure who is rightly held in high esteem by staff, pupils and parents. His dedication and that of other senior leaders and staff to provide a good-quality kodesh curriculum and to ensure the welfare and nurturing of pupils is of a high standard. However, because secular studies are not as strong as religious studies, pupils are not achieving as well as they could.
- The school's curriculum is divided between the kodesh and chol subjects. The kodesh curriculum is strong, the chol curriculum less so because it is not sufficiently challenging. However all areas of the chol curriculum are covered, some discretely, such as English, mathematics, science and physical education. Other subjects are taught across the curriculum. Pupils particularly like geography and history and say how they enjoy learning in these subjects. The revised secular curriculum will incorporate a wider range of topics covered within subjects and also increase the demand and rigour of learning offered to pupils.
- The curriculum is enriched by additional opportunities for pupils to visit places such as museums and parks, and further afield to places such as the Lake District. Pupils' understanding of the wider world is also enhanced by visitors to school. For example, as part of the careers guidance offered to older pupils, they have had visits from an author, a doctor, a plumber and other local businesses.
- Senior leaders and governors of the school have been diligent in ensuring that all the independent school standards are met and are up to date. This has been achieved through regular checks. Policies mirror closely the day-to-day working and ethos of the school. The premises of the school are tidy, clean and well organised. However, some areas of the school are 'tired' and resources for pupils, although available, are limited in secular subjects. For example, there are not enough interesting, age-appropriate reading books and resources to support learning in mathematics are sparse.
- The outdoor space in which pupils play and take part in physical education is of an appropriate standard. School leaders have invested in a range of external sports provision to support this aspect of pupils' development. For example, all pupils learn to swim. Pupils of all ages recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a very positive aspect of school life. The school weaves the values of tolerance and mutual respect through every aspect

of kodesh and chol teaching. Opportunities to talk about democracy, liberty and the rule of law are discussed regularly. For example, pupils took part in a school vote about whether to leave the European Union and older pupils are eager to talk about world politics and related issues. Pupils also enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being school monitors. They also contribute to charities, such as the local hospital. This has resulted in pupils who are thoughtful, compassionate and respectful of each other and the wider community.

- Senior leaders know their school well. The strengths of the school and areas for improvement are clearly identified in their self-evaluation and action plans, which are accurate and honest. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are carried out frequently.
- Senior leaders have worked successfully to improve how pupils are assessed and their progress is tracked. This information is scrutinised meticulously on a weekly basis for religious studies and monthly for English and mathematics. In these latter subjects pupils achieve well against the curriculum they are offered. However, this curriculum is not sufficiently challenging. Assessment information is used regularly by senior leaders to talk with teachers about pupils' learning and to plan opportunities to help pupils catch up if needed.
- There are a small number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities and the provision for these pupils is effective. Identification of need is appropriate and resources are adequate, ensuring that these pupils are supported to succeed in their learning and their personal and social development. There are no pupils who receive pupil premium funding.
- The opportunities to involve parents in the school and in their children's learning are highly valued by school leaders. Parents who spoke to the inspector felt very positive about the school in every aspect. There was a great deal of praise for the hard work and dedication of staff and how they are approachable and care deeply about their sons. A few parents remarked about how the headteacher was 'always at the front door in the morning to greet each child personally by name'. Parents particularly value the newsletter that they receive, which informs them what their son has been learning each week.

## **Governance**

- Governors are committed to the school's success and improving outcomes for pupils. They responded quickly to the headteacher's request to improve the chol curriculum, and in particular the way English and mathematics is taught in the school. They understand that they need to be more effective to ensure that all pupils achieve well in these subjects, comparing more closely to national standards. In doing this they are aware that they will equip pupils more successfully to become citizens in modern Britain.
- The governors know the school well and ensure that the school keeps compliant with all independent school standard regulations.
- The governors have a good understanding of performance management procedures and support the headteacher in holding staff to account.
- Governors have a reasonable understanding of the progress that pupils make.
- Governors are diligent in their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Robust systems are in place, which are understood by all staff. Up-to-date and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and is regularly revisited. As a result, staff are clear about procedures and confident to act upon concerns if required.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in school, particularly the care and welfare of vulnerable pupils. Aspects such as radicalisation and extremism are taken very seriously and school leaders have taken effective action by making sure that staff are well trained and vigilant regarding these issues. The school's safeguarding policy is made available to parents on request.
- Leaders are persistent in cases where they are concerned for a pupil's welfare. Effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- In English and mathematics the quality of teaching and learning is not consistently good across all year groups. As a result, pupils are not making the progress that they should.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to practise their writing skills, particularly the younger pupils in school. Pupils have little opportunity to write in a variety of styles, such as creatively, letter writing, reports or on longer pieces of work.
- In some cases, teachers lack confidence in what they are teaching. This was particularly evident in English, where they tended to be quick to answer the questions for the pupil or write out the sentence for them. As a result, pupils were not getting the opportunity to try out their skills or think for themselves. Similarly a few teachers missed valuable learning opportunities to pick up on pupils' mistakes or misunderstandings.
- Pupils learn basic grammar, punctuation and spelling but this work is not then built upon to allow pupils to utilise this learning to write and try out these skills. As a result, pupils often lack confidence to write anything more than one-word answers or short 'clipped' responses to comprehension questions.
- Pupils, particularly the older ones, say that they enjoy reading, and would like to read more. However, phonics teaching starts quite late in their school career and opportunities to read are not consistent. This is further hampered by a limited number and range of books for the boys to systematically practise and develop their reading skills. As a result, particularly in lower school, boys are hesitant and self-conscious readers.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is good. However, in some lessons, teachers do not ask the right questions to aid pupils' thinking, draw out learning and help them move on. At times, the activities that are provided are not sufficiently demanding. As a result, pupils are not stretched and challenged enough in their learning. In particular, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply these skills in problem-solving activities to enable them think more deeply about their learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in religious studies is strong. Kodesh subjects are taught with assurance and enthusiasm. A striking feature is the confidence with which pupils are encouraged to discuss and debate. This skill is valued highly in school. Cross-curricular

opportunities are regularly taken up through kodesh subjects, particularly in mathematics, geography and history.

- Teachers know pupils very well and have strong, nurturing relationships. They keep a close check on pupils' kodesh and chol learning through weekly assessments and endeavour to meet the varying needs of pupils within the class and build this into their planning. They also seek to make lessons as interesting as possible, often reminding pupils of prior learning and giving personal examples and encouraging them to think of examples from their own experience. As a result, pupils' attitude to learning is good, as is the mutual respect between adults and pupils, and with each other.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The importance placed on pupils' personal development and welfare is unmistakable in school. Staff and governors are conscientious in their responsibility to ensure that the school provides a safe and nurturing environment. Parents talked to the inspector about how teachers are 'amazing' in their care for their children and how they often go 'above and beyond' to support a pupil. As a result, pupils grow confidently in their learning.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. They do this by modelling a strong moral code of respect, tolerance and thoughtfulness to others, to which pupils respond well. As a result, pupils are considerate and compassionate citizens. As one pupil said: 'We welcome people, and if a boy is new to our school, we take care of them and show them what to do.'
- Leaders are mindful that to meet orthodox Jewish principles, the boys' education is sheltered to some extent. However, where possible, pupils, particularly the older ones, do have opportunities to reflect on and discuss the broad range of people and experiences within modern British society.
- Older pupils are confident learners and, although sometimes shy, are happy to talk about their learning. Younger ones are less so; this is because many have a more limited vocabulary and understanding of spoken English, and as a result are less confident to speak. However, all pupils were able to tell inspectors how proud they were of their school and how they felt well looked after by adults.
- Pupils talked with pride about the responsibilities and obligations they have to speak and sing publicly in religious events, for example a Chumash party, which is a celebration that pupils prepare for around the time they are five years old and signifies them being ready to read the Bible, and also bar mitzvah, a special coming of age celebration for 13-year-olds.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors were clear about what bullying was and said that incidents were unheard of. They were confident that teachers dealt with any unkind or negative language towards pupils quickly but said this behaviour was rare. Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school and gave examples of how to keep themselves safe. All parents spoken to felt confident that the school would deal appropriately with bullying, should it occur. However, the overwhelming majority were not aware of any

bullying towards their child.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well around school. They are polite and well mannered, but equally have a keen sense of fun and exuberance at the appropriate time. Consequently, school is an orderly and purposeful place to learn, but also has energy and spirit.
- Teachers place importance on offering pupils a range of experiences, celebrating aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and work related to developing British values. They build these into the curriculum through their religious studies and their personal, social and emotional development. For example, tolerance and respect is regularly discussed and valued highly.
- There is a productive atmosphere in the classrooms. Pupils are attentive and eager to participate in lessons. They see learning as being very important to them and have a good attitude towards it. This is typified by pupils' eagerness to ask questions to clarify what they are learning or, in older classes, enthusiasm to discuss and debate a point.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to behave and of the consequences of poor behaviour. However, incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare, dealt with quickly by teachers, and responded to by pupils appropriately. Adults and pupils know each other very well and relationships are strong. Pupils are responsive and highly respectful towards adults and each other.
- The importance that parents place on education and pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their good level of attendance, currently running at just above that of other pupils nationally. The systems for monitoring absence are effective. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. There are no pupils who are persistently absent and absence during term time does occur, but is minimal.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- The information about pupils' outcomes is limited because the school does not participate in national tests and therefore it is harder for teachers to match the standards that pupils achieve to those of other schools.
- Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' progress requires improvement. This is because in writing pupils do not make sufficient progress to equip them for the next stage in their education. Although a number of pupils have caught up in their mathematical learning and reading by the time they leave at the end of Year 8, progress in these subjects is not consistent across the school. This is particularly evident in lower school.
- Pupils enter the lower school with skills typical or just below for their age, although inspection evidence indicates that pupils' skills in English are behind other aspects of learning.
- Evidence in pupils' English books indicates that progress in writing is limited. Activities are mainly based around basic grammar, punctuation, spelling and comprehension passages, which pupils are often heavily supported in completing. Pupils have very few opportunities for writing independently or in different styles, including creative or longer pieces or work.

As a result, pupils are not confident in their writing skills and are at a disadvantage when they move to the next stages of their learning.

- The school's own assessment information indicates that pupils make progress in mathematics according to their own curriculum. However pupils' books indicate that progress is slow because the curriculum is narrow and repetitive. This improves in the older years and by Years 7 and 8 clear progress can be seen, for example as more difficult topics are studied to challenge pupils and encourage them to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills.
- Pupils develop strong reading skills in Hebrew and Yiddish through their detailed study of religious texts. However, pupils do not start learning phonics or reading English books until they are six years old and their progress in reading is slow until they reach the older year groups. Leaders' plans to increase the number of appropriate English books available to all pupils will support further development of their reading in English.
- The most and least able pupils are well supported in their religious studies but, along with other pupils, not as well challenged in chol subjects. Within their kodesh studies they are identified through regular assessment and promptly offered intervention opportunities to support them to achieve their best.
- Pupils make good progress in their religious studies. Rebbees (male kodesh teachers) equip the boys with high-quality skills and knowledge across the whole kodesh curriculum. As a result, pupils are very confident in this area of learning, approaching it with both gravity and enthusiasm. The school is successful in giving the boys a secure foundation for their further kodesh study. This includes providing them with information about a range of future careers.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Children start early years as they become three years old. Most start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age or just below. All children speak English as an additional language.
- The school assesses and plans for children's learning against the national early learning goals. The school's assessments, which are moderated by the local authority, indicate that by the time children are five years old the majority of children are meeting the expected standard in most areas of learning, including mathematical, physical and personal, social and emotional development. However, children underperform in communication, language and literacy.
- Teachers support children's first language development to a high standard. However because teachers predominantly speak Yiddish to children they are not offered sufficient opportunities to hear and learn spoken English.
- Similarly, teachers teach children to read Hebrew and Yiddish with expertise and a nurturing regard, but children are not offered enough chances to acquire simple phonics knowledge to support them to learn to read and write in English. Although all classrooms have reading corners, the books available to children are limited and often not age- or ability-appropriate.
- Teachers contribute effectively to the assessment of children's learning, as do parents. This information is then recorded within an individual learning profile by the two early



years leaders. In the majority of cases the profile is detailed and demonstrates that adults know as much as possible about the progress of children. The information is then used to support the planning of the next steps in a child's learning. However, in some instances, records for children are not up to date and as a result are not being used as effectively as they could be.

- Indoor provision is adequate but is predominantly resourced and set out for religious studies. Some equipment is 'tired' and does not provide children with interesting opportunities to develop their learning further, including skills of independence and perseverance. However, children are encouraged by adults to participate in the activities provided and they visibly enjoy their learning. For example, children were having fun junk-modelling and painting caves in preparation for a Jewish celebration at the weekend.
- Early years leaders have worked hard to improve learning, particularly in supporting teachers' understanding of early years requirements and in improving outdoor provision. The latter has been particularly successful. Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They recognise that more improvement is needed, and are eager to continue to develop.
- Early years effectively meets the independent school standards, safeguarding is effective and welfare requirements compliant. Risk assessments are thorough and the classrooms are a safe environment for children. Children's behaviour is good and adults are quick to provide support to children to help them understand the importance of being polite and treating one another with respect. This is often done through linking kodesh teachings to the good conduct and behaviour expected.
- Outdoor provision is very well organised to create a stimulating learning environment for all children. Enjoyable activities capture the children's imagination and allow them to practise their skills. Children have plenty of opportunity to explore with a range of equipment that encourages them to build, create and try out their ideas. As a result, children are motivated to learn and play together well.
- The teaching of kodesh is particularly strong and teachers work hard to link this teaching to the chol curriculum. As a result, children are offered many opportunities to learn through their play and be creative. Routines are well established. The gentle manner and sensitive approach of adults is conducive to helping children settle and thrive in their learning.
- The strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the positive relationships adults have with children, and children have with each other. Staff have strong relationships with parents. Parents describe the early years as 'welcoming' and 'approachable'. They are full of praise for how well their children have settled into school and the progress that they have made.

## School details

Unique reference number	131435
DfE registration number	355/6035
Inspection number	10012865

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Talmud Torah Yetev Lev Ltd
Chair	Mr Simon Gluck
Headteacher	Rabbi Zev Poznanski
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,600
Telephone number	0161 792 9922
Website	None
Email address	<a href="mailto:ttlysatmar@gmail.com">ttlysatmar@gmail.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	3–5 July 2013

## Information about this school

- Talmud Torah Yetev Lev is a school for orthodox Jewish Chassidic boys, aged from three to 13 years, in the Broughton Park area of Salford, Manchester.
- The school was formed in 1997 and is owned and maintained by Satmar Chassidic community.
- The aim of the school is 'to provide a sound Jewish education that reflects the Satmar traditions and moral values'.
- The school is registered for up to 301 pupils. Currently, there are 382 pupils on roll.

Eighty-five of these children attend the school's early years provision.

- There are a small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school does not receive additional government funding to support disadvantaged children.
- The school does not have a website; however, it meets requirements on the publication of specified information by making documentation readily available to parents upon request.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning in a range of classes. They also observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and in the learning profiles of children in the early years. An inspector also listened to a number of pupils read.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, leaders of the lower and upper schools, the special educational needs coordinator and early years leaders.
- The inspector met with two governors, including the chair, and met with an external consultant.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils around school.
- The lead inspector took account of 21 responses to a questionnaire by staff.
- The lead inspector met with a group of six parents.
- School policies and other documents were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards, and to provide other inspection evidence, including minutes from meetings; information on pupils' attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance; and its development plans. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Cathy Parkinson

Ofsted Inspector

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