

Menorah Grammar School

Abbots Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 0QS

Inspection dates

28–30 November 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
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are highly positive. They take learning seriously and enjoy the cut and thrust of debate and discussion. These attitudes enable pupils to deepen their understanding and develop their thinking well.
- Outcomes for all groups of pupils are strong. They achieve high standards in GCSEs and in A-level examinations in the sixth form. Pupils make significant progress from their different starting points.
- Much of the teaching is strong. Teaching is especially successful in encouraging pupils' love of learning. However, a few of the most and least able pupils are not always challenged enough.
- Senior leaders and governors are successful in driving improvements. Over the past 18 months, they have taken the school forward in almost all aspects of its work.
- The quality of care and welfare for pupils is of a high standard. The school has robust procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure their welfare and safety. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and well supported.
- The work of the resource unit provision, known as Darchei Noam Centre (DNC), is especially strong. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported effectively. They make significant gains in their academic and personal achievements.

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 the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that teaching is consistently strong across all subjects and that work is suitably challenging for all pupils, including the most and least able.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The vision and drive of the headteacher and senior leaders have a positive impact on pupils' educational experiences. For example, the introduction of new systems to check pupils' progress and provide targeted support for those falling behind are raising outcomes even further. Similarly, a more consistent approach to managing behaviour, including the application of the uniform code, has improved behaviour considerably.
- Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for the school and are keen to move it to outstanding. They have built on the school's caring values to create a culture where academic and personal achievements are promoted as two sides of the same coin. This ensures that every pupil is supported to achieve his potential.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and based on a range of secure information. Regular assessment of pupils' learning and progress, scrutiny of work in books and classroom observations are all used effectively to provide an in-depth understanding of the school's performance. Where there are weaknesses, leaders take effective but sensitive action to tackle underperformance and improve pupils' outcomes. For example, leaders work closely with teachers to provide support and training. In addition, leaders have introduced a more rigorous teacher appraisal scheme that helps to improve performance. As a result of this approach, teaching is improving and, although leaders recognise that there remain a few inconsistencies, it is typically good.
- A reorganisation of the school's leadership, including introducing heads of faculty and heads of year, has resulted in a system that is more accountable. Middle leaders now have a greater sense of responsibility for the pupils' outcomes in their area and are more closely involved in the school's improvement.
- The new procedures to check pupils' achievements and track their progress are proving successful. Regular assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils who need extra support because they are falling behind. In addition, leaders have introduced a more rigorous system to gain information about pupils' attendance and behaviour. This is partly responsible for the high levels of attendance and almost no incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- The curriculum, split between Kodesh and secular subjects, is not as broad as it could be. However, leaders recognise the need to widen the curriculum to include subjects such as art, and design and technology, and there are well-founded plans to so. This follows a similar development in the sixth form, where a greater range of subjects has been offered, including work-related courses and A levels.
- A particular feature of Menorah Grammar School's curriculum is the way each of the key stages is organised. GCSE examinations are taken at the end of Year 10 and A levels at the end of Year 12. While this provides less time for the curriculum to be taught, it does not adversely affect pupils' achievements. This is because teaching deepens pupils' learning successfully, by getting them to think creatively. This is particularly so in the Kodesh curriculum, where pupils are taught to think about, and question, ethical and religious issues.

- The curriculum is extended well by after-school clubs and activities. Many of these follow on from classroom activities, but others provide opportunities to develop new skills, for example in astronomy. The school also organises a number of trips each year, as well as enabling pupils to follow the Duke of Edinburgh programme. These opportunities contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's 'student leadership' programme and personal, social and health education (PSHE) also contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values. The school gives particular emphasis to promoting mutual respect and tolerance for those who are different from them. As a result, pupils show great respect towards others, regardless of faith, life style or sexual orientation. However, pupils' understanding of religious traditions other than Judaism is sketchy. Careers education ensures that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- The leadership of the DNC, which caters for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is especially effective. Careful assessment of pupils' capabilities enables staff to provide well-directed support that is tailored specifically to their needs. This targeted support has a significant impact and pupils make strong progress during their time at the school. The work of the unit is also helping to improve the way teachers cater for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and have joined lessons in the main school. For example, teachers have detailed information about the needs of pupils and use this to plan their lessons. As a result, the impact of the unit is felt more widely across the school than previously.
- Senior leaders and governors have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

Governance

- Improvements to the way the governing body is organised has had a positive impact on the quality of leadership. Governors challenge and support leaders in equal measure and a range of information about the school's performance is readily accessible. They make regular visits to the school to see its work at first hand. As a result, governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses. This enables governors to work closely with leaders to make improvements. For example, the accommodation is currently being refurbished and there is an ongoing plan to ensure that this cycle remains on track.
- Procedures for recruiting and vetting new staff are secure. Governors have ensured that all the necessary checks are carried out in line with their legal responsibilities. In addition, a number of governors, and leaders, have received training in safer recruitment.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding procedures were judged to be inadequate in the previous inspection and leaders have taken decisive action to improve both systems and practice. For example, there are clear procedures to identify those pupils experiencing difficulties. Leaders at all levels, including the school's therapists, ensure that vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and supported. Good use is made of outside agencies. As a result, all pupils, including the most vulnerable, are cared for successfully.
- Staff have a secure understanding of child protection and receive training regularly. They

have a thorough knowledge of issues such as radicalisation and extremism. Staff understand the procedures for referring pupils about whom they have a concern. There are relevant and up-to-date policies that provide helpful guidance for staff. This ensures that there is a culture of safeguarding across the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is effective because it encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their work. Pupils' demeanour and ability to focus on learning are first-rate. They are highly motivated and keen to do well. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to questions from their teachers and are inquisitive to know more. As a result, most pupils make strong progress and deepen their knowledge and understanding successfully.
- The great majority of teaching is planned to ensure that time is used efficiently to maximise learning and take advantage of pupils' attitudes. For example, in geography, activities stretched pupils' thinking most effectively and pupils were challenged to go further with their thinking. However, occasionally, teaching does not provide enough challenge to all pupils because it is pitched to the middle. As a result, the most and least able pupils do not always achieve quite as well as they should.
- Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and are often experts in their field. This includes subjects in both the secular and Kodesh curriculums. Many teachers use their knowledge well to develop effective teaching methods to ensure that pupils develop their understanding and make significant progress with their learning. However, there are some inconsistencies in teaching quality. A small minority of teaching relies too heavily on pupils' self-assured attitudes and does not move learning forward quickly enough.
- Teachers develop productive relationships with their classes. Pupils show great respect to their teachers and have confidence in their ability to help them succeed. This enables the great majority of pupils to make the most of their teachers' expertise and extend their learning well.
- All staff, including teachers and learning assistants, care greatly for their pupils' outcomes. They have high expectations and want pupils to do well. As a result, staff are keen to improve their practice.
- Pupils who attend the Darchei Noam Centre, and who have SEN and/or disabilities, are taught effectively. Pupils are given individual programmes and support based on their needs and previous learning. This ensures that these pupils make remarkable progress and are prepared effectively for life after school.
- Literacy is promoted well across many subjects, including English, geography, history, PSHE and Kodesh. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and to think more deeply to develop their understanding. Leaders' focus on literacy and reading has successfully encouraged pupils to read widely and for pleasure.
- Numeracy is developed effectively in a number of subjects. For example, pupils use calculations confidently to develop their understanding of electricity in science or of financial systems in PSHE.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their learning. Their willingness to listen to others, and use information to pose more questions and think creatively, is strong. Pupils are highly motivated to succeed and aspirational in their outlook. Relationships are constructive between pupils and teachers, ensuring that there is a strong learning climate in classrooms.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported most effectively. Staff in the DNC go the extra mile to help pupils overcome barriers to learning and make strong progress. Alternative provision is used wisely to provide pupils with access to vocational and practical courses. A member of staff goes with pupils to the alternative provision, ensuring that those pupils who attend are well supported and remain safe. As a result, the personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils who attend alternative provision are strong.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online safety and all forms of bullying. The PSHE programme and assemblies cover topics such as anti-bullying, racism, and radicalisation and extremism. These ensure that pupils are increasingly able to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility around the school. The school's 'student leadership' programme and the head boy system involve pupils in the work of the school, including contributing to the school's improvement. For example, pupils are included in the interview process for new teachers. The programme also reinforces the work of older pupils in acting as 'buddies' for younger boys.
- Parents are exceedingly positive about the quality of care and welfare the school provides for their children. They described the provision in glowing terms and feel that there is a good balance between the personal and academic programmes promoted by the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All staff apply the school's behaviour policy effectively, ensuring that expectations are consistent across the school. Leaders have established new routines and procedures that reinforce good behaviour effectively. For example, applying the uniform policy consistently, checking lateness to lessons and using the 'positive' and 'negative' system all contribute successfully to pupils' good behaviour.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, welcoming to visitors and always ready to offer an opinion or engage in discussion. Pupils confirm that behaviour has improved considerably over the past few years and this is supported by the school's records.
- Pupils are clear that bullying rarely, if ever, occurs. If it were to happen, they are confident that it would be dealt with effectively by staff, including non-teaching and support staff. Pupils know who to turn to if they have a problem. They value those staff who provide emotional and welfare support and feel that they are looked after well.
- Procedures to check pupils' attendance and reduce absence are highly effective. This has resulted in attendance that has improved significantly over the past two years. It is now considerably higher than the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils across the school achieve standards that are much higher than the national figures. Most start school at levels that are at least average and often above those of other pupils nationally. Pupils continue to achieve high standards across all their subjects, including in Kodesh. However, there are occasions when a few pupils do not make the excellent progress of which they are capable. This is because teaching does not stretch and challenge all pupils effectively enough.
- Achievement at GCSE is rising year on year and results are now well above national figures. Pupils do well in all their subjects, including English, mathematics, science, Modern Hebrew and statistics. For example, in 2017, a third of pupils gained six or more GCSEs at the highest grades. The school's assessment information about current pupils shows that these high standards are being maintained and that progress remains strong across all subjects.
- The great majority of pupils, including the most and least able, make good progress from their different starting points. This is because leaders have worked successfully to improve teaching and introduce new procedures to help them identify those who are not doing as well as they should. Leaders recognise that there are still a few pupils of the most and least able who are not being challenged as much as they could be.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and those that attend alternative provision, achieve well. This is because staff in the DNC support pupils effectively and seek to ensure that their needs are met. For example, pupils on the catering course are highly motivated and achieve well.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Pupils start their sixth-form studies in Year 11. This is to enable them to gain A levels at the end on Year 12 and move on to Yeshivas. The small sixth form is led and managed effectively. In practice, leadership of the sixth form is combined with that of the main school. As a result, the characteristics of leadership and management in the main school also apply to the sixth form.
- Leaders have a clear vision and are aspirational for their pupils and students. They are knowledgeable about the overall quality of teaching and tackle underperformance rigorously but sensitively. As a result, teaching mostly has a positive impact on students' learning.
- Students make strong progress and achieve high standards in their A-level examinations. For example, in 2017, 14% of students achieved the highest grade and there was a 92% pass rate overall. Standards were especially high in physics, further mathematics and economics.
- Students' positive attitudes to school and their work continue into the sixth form. They are highly motivated and confident. Students have a strong desire to do well and they take their learning seriously. They conduct themselves well around the school and in lessons.
- Sixth-form students are encouraged successfully to develop their social and personal skills. They are involved in the student leadership programme and in the school's ongoing

work to raise money for charities. Sixth-form students also work with younger boys and act as 'mentors' to help them with their work. As a result, students are successfully involved in the life of the school.

- Last year, all Year 12 students moved to yeshivas. Many go on to university but the school does not routinely collect this information. Leaders recognise that this would support further their evaluation of the school's performance.
- Careers advice and guidance are effective. Students have a range of opportunities to explore their options when they leave school or move to the yeshivas. This includes work experience provided by parents and visits by local people to talk about their job or profession. Students are prepared appropriately for the next stage of their education.

School details

Unique reference number	101387
DfE registration number	302/6089
Inspection number	10035782

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 faith school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	67
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	RABG Memorial Ltd
Chair	Allan Becker
Headteacher	Neil Moir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,600
Telephone number	020 8906 9756
Website	www.menorahgrammar.barnet.sch.uk
Email address	office@menorahgrammar.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 February 2016

Information about this school

- Menorah Grammar School is a secondary school for orthodox Jewish boys. The school includes sixth-form provision.
- The school is registered for up to 251 pupils; there are currently 258 on roll, 67 of whom are in the sixth form.
- The school has a specialist unit catering for the needs of 35 pupils with either a statement

of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. This unit is known as the Darchei Noam Centre. Pupils placed in the unit are funded by their local authority.

- There are two distinct strands to the curriculum: Kodesh (Jewish studies) and Chol (secular studies).
- The school was last inspected in June 2015 when it was judged to be inadequate overall. The quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils were judged to be good. A monitoring inspection in February 2016 judged that the school met the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements.
- The school uses Southgate and Barnet general further education colleges to provide alternative provision for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in classes across all year groups and subjects, including in the sixth form. Nearly all of these were jointly observed with school leaders.
- Inspectors looked at arrangements at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to some Year 7 pupils read.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, new staff and pupils.
- A range of documentation and policies was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and school newsletters.
- Inspectors scrutinised records relating to the quality of teaching, and the school's website, including information about extra-curricular activities, trips and visits.
- Inspectors reviewed records, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 89 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the responses of 24 members of staff to a questionnaire about their views of the school.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Roberts

Ofsted Inspector

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