

Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School

1 Belz Terrace, Clapton Common, London E5 9SN

Inspection dates

6–8 February 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Teachers' use of assessment to plan classroom activities and to check pupils' progress is poor in most subjects.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils in the secular curriculum are too low.
- The secular curriculum does not allow pupils to develop skills and acquire knowledge in sufficient depth. Therefore, it does not prepare them adequately for their future lives.
- Standards in English and mathematics are low and show insufficient signs of improvement.
- Leaders do not pay particular regard to all the protected characteristics, as defined in the 2010 Equality Act.
- Pupils' personal development is restricted due to weaknesses in the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not adequately prepared for all of the possible opportunities and responsibilities of their future lives.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are taught well about their own religion and how to read Hebrew.
- School leaders ensure that there is a caring culture and pupils feel safe in discussing concerns.
- Pupils behave and attend well.
- Children make better progress in the early years than in the rest of the school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen pupils' personal, social, health and economic education so that pupils are provided with effective opportunities to learn about and understand all of the protected characteristics that are defined in the 2010 Equality Act.
- Improve the implementation of the curriculum so that pupils have a range of opportunities to learn and make good or better progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Strengthen the quality of teaching across all subjects by ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan effective classroom activities.
- Urgently improve the progress of pupils in English and mathematics so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Ensure that leaders and managers hold teachers to account for promoting high expectations of pupils and check that teachers set a good example for pupils' presentation of work.
- Improve the work of governors in ensuring that leaders' plans for improvement are implemented effectively so that all of the independent school standards are met.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders and governors have not ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders continue to follow a policy of not explicitly encouraging respect for all of the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. Standards which were unmet at the previous progress monitoring inspection remain unmet. Pupils are not prepared well enough for their future lives as a result of these gaps in the curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education.
- Leaders have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers do not use curriculum plans to ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged. Leaders' recent attempts to improve assessment and the way pupils' progress is monitored have not had an impact as they have been restricted to one part of the school. Leaders' expectations for the pace and extent of improvement in the quality of teaching are too low.
- The curriculum does not adequately prepare pupils for their future lives in modern Britain. Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge across a wide range of subjects. For example, pupils learn little about computing and their physical education is inconsistently taught. Pupils' work shows that the implementation of the curriculum for English and mathematics results in typically low standards. This significantly disadvantages pupils in pursuing the next stage of their education. Leaders continue to operate a policy of offering English as an optional subject beyond key stage 3, available at the request of parents. Leaders told inspectors that no parents were making this request at the time of the inspection.
- Leaders have made some improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education since the last progress monitoring inspection. Pupils who spoke to inspectors had a secure knowledge of the main features of religions other than their own. Pupils demonstrate respect for others and an ability to discuss moral issues. Leaders have also broadened the range of careers guidance on offer to older pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the progress of pupils in their Jewish religious studies is rigorously monitored and regularly reported to parents. As a result, pupils are well prepared for each subsequent stage in their learning in the school's Kodesh curriculum.
- Leaders have been broadly effective in maintaining and developing the premises, following a serious fire in 2017. Procedures for maintaining the premises, assessing risks and checking equipment are conducted effectively with the welfare of pupils central to the work of leaders. However, they have not made provision for hot water in the newer part of the premises, which contravenes one of the independent school standards.
- The additional provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well led. Teaching staff offering individual or small group support make a positive impact on the progress of these pupils as a result.
- Parents and pupils are supportive of the work of leaders in ensuring policies adhere to the stated aims and ethos of the school.

Governance

- Governance is ineffective.
- Governors have not taken decisive or robust action to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met. In particular, they do not challenge leaders effectively to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum in order to ensure pupils' good or better progress.
- Governors know some aspects of the school well and are vigilant in ensuring that the school's stated values are upheld by leaders. They place a strong emphasis on challenging leaders to promote a strong culture of safeguarding and care for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain safe, secure premises and conduct rigorous checks on the suitability of staff. They respond promptly and appropriately to concerns.
- Leaders check how well staff understand the most recent statutory safeguarding guidance. The safeguarding policy is kept under regular review to ensure it reflects statutory requirements.
- Leaders and governors maintain their own enhanced safeguarding training well. For example, the chair of the governing body has recently completed safer recruitment training.
- Pupils and parents express confidence in leaders' work to ensure that safeguarding is effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not plan classroom activities effectively to ensure that pupils make good or better progress in English and mathematics. The impact of teachers' work to promote pupils' progress in the wider curriculum is inconsistent. Teachers typically lack the skills and information to use assessment information to help pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' work typically demonstrates teachers' low expectations of pupils' learning capabilities. Teachers' written comments in pupils' books do not demonstrate high standards of presentation and handwriting. This offers a very poor role model to pupils who struggle to achieve consistently neat and accurate handwriting.
- Teachers provide limited opportunities for pupils to write across a wide range of genres. They usually assess pupils' progress in understanding English spelling and grammar by examining their accuracy when completing exercises or tests. As a result, they do not know how well pupils can apply these skills when writing independently and at length.
- The teaching, learning and assessment of reading in English are poor. Leaders acknowledge this and have provided effective training for teachers of younger pupils to help them teach phonics more skilfully. They have also introduced new resources and assessment procedures for reading in two key stage 2 year groups. Nevertheless, there are too few books in English on display around the school, apart from in the early years.

- In mathematics, teachers typically set work which does not pay sufficient regard to the range of abilities of pupils. Pupils' work shows that the range of mathematical topics covered is too narrow and there is little opportunity for pupils to use and apply skills. There is little evidence of how teachers know who the most able pupils are in mathematics.
- Leaders are inaccurate in their view that teachers provide effective opportunities for pupils to progress in the wider curriculum through their religious studies. These activities take up the vast majority of the school day. There are some examples of effective teaching, but this is too variable. In some subjects, such as physical education, art and computing, teachers do not ensure that pupils have a broad enough range of opportunities to sustain progress. As a result, pupils' achievement in these areas is poor.
- Teachers demonstrate effective use of subject knowledge to ensure pupils' progress in their Jewish religious studies and in learning to read religious texts in Hebrew.
- Additional adults support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities well. They provide skilful support to help pupils overcome specific barriers to learning, such as their spatial awareness. However, the work of teachers in mainstream classes to reinforce learning for these pupils is not as effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Pupils do not learn enough about the characteristics that are protected in law to prepare them adequately for their future lives. Leaders say they are acting on the wishes of parents in omitting to teach pupils how to use computers. However, this puts pupils at a disadvantage in preparation for the next steps in their education, training or employment.
- Leaders have been effective in improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of British institutions. For example, pupils knew that the Queen is the head of the Church of England. They could name the current Mayor of London and describe some of the recent initiatives he has led. Pupils can also apply their understanding of democracy. Inspectors saw evidence of how the school had held mock votes and election campaigns.
- Pupils learn to respect one another's views and make a positive contribution to wider society. For example, they sponsor the welfare of a young person in Afghanistan. They visit the local park to plant spring bulbs and help with litter picking.
- Pupils have a reasonable range of opportunities to learn about different careers. Leaders believe that the recent survey shows that pupils unanimously wish to continue their religious studies in Israel when they leave the school.
- The school provides some guidance on using the internet safely, though opportunities to apply this learning practically in school are not possible due to the absence of computers or access to the internet.
- Pupils' attendance is high, with records demonstrating that lessons are rarely missed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils concentrate well in class. Younger pupils are capable of sustaining concentration for extended periods of time. However, it takes little to provide distraction for a few pupils. Teachers in some classes occasionally need to remind pupils of expectations for their behaviour.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour policy and enjoy the rewards leaders offer them for behaving well. Leaders keep detailed records of poor behaviour and can show how these have helped them prevent it from reoccurring.
- Pupils say that bullying and other discriminatory behaviour is rare. Leaders have placed a priority on improving the school's anti-bullying strategy.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils make weak progress over time in English and mathematics after getting off to a better start in the early years. As a result, the standards at which pupils in other key stages are working are typically much lower than those expected for their age. They are poorly prepared for the next stage of their education or for progressing eventually into employment.
- There was little evidence of pupils' skills in reading English available to see on inspection. Leaders have recently introduced curriculum plans for the teaching of reading in Years 3 and 4. The outcomes of the first assessment completed show that most pupils found it very difficult to answer the reading comprehension questions asked of them.
- Inspectors saw independent writing from pupils in Years 7 and 8 which demonstrated very limited skills. Short, simple sentences and basic vocabulary were typical of the content seen. Pupils make poor progress in developing sophisticated writing skills in English.
- Leaders told inspectors that they believe that the school is exempt from offering English lessons to pupils after Year 9. Consequently, pupils in key stage 4 do not routinely learn this subject further. Pupils in key stage 4 are able to speak and listen in English with skills more typical for their age.
- Leaders are beginning to track the progress made by pupils in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics. They have yet to analyse the first assessments emerging from this work. Leaders told inspectors that they believed pupils' progress in mathematics was better than in English. However, they struggled to provide any convincing evidence to support this claim. Pupils' work demonstrates that they are provided with activities that fail to challenge them or offer the most able pupils opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills. On occasion, in some mathematical aspects of the Kodesh curriculum, pupils are challenged more effectively.
- In a wide range of subjects, school leaders could provide little evidence of pupils' sustained, systematic progress in acquiring subject-specific skills. Inspectors were shown photographic examples of pupils' art work or participation in science investigations. However, there was little convincing evidence available to demonstrate how pupils build up skills over time. The entire absence of opportunities to learn about computing means the school does very little to contribute to pupils' progress in this subject.

- The school does not enter pupils for any key stage 2 national tests, GCSE or other external examinations or qualifications. Therefore, it is not possible to report on how pupils' outcomes in these compare to any national averages.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress in achieving personal targets in learning when they receive additional support.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to read Hebrew and understanding the Jewish religion.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The teaching of English, mathematics and technology in the early years requires improvement. Leaders correctly evaluate that the support for children in learning basic skills in these areas requires improvement. Children currently make steady progress from their starting points, which are lower than those typically seen.
- Leaders are making the most of the temporary premises, currently in use until the programme of building is complete at the school. Leaders and teachers ensure that children learn outdoors in all areas of learning, despite the complexities of the current premise arrangements.
- Teachers' use of assessment to plan and adapt classroom activities is more effective in the early years than it is in the main school. For example, teachers know they need to provide a wide range of opportunities for children to recognise written English. They help children to write independently and to learn from their mistakes.
- Leaders are ensuring that the welfare requirements of the early years are met and that safeguarding is effective. For example, hot water is available for children to wash while it is not in the rest of the premises at Belz Terrace.
- Children get on well with one another. Teachers work well as a team to share information and ensure that expectations for children's behaviour and personal development are high. Risk assessments and premises checks are carried out effectively and supervision arrangements are suitable.

School details

Unique reference number	100294
DfE registration number	204/6331
Inspection number	10038149

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	3 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	649
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Moreshet Hatorah Ltd
Chair	Rabbi Baumgarten and Rabbi Klein
Headteacher	Rabbi Abeless
Annual fees (day pupils)	Not applicable
Telephone number	020 8800 6599
Email address	compliance@belzlondon.com
Date of previous inspection	4–6 November 2014

Information about this school

- Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School is an independent Charedi (strictly orthodox) Jewish boys' school, founded in 1973 and situated in Hackney, North London.
- All pupils come from a Jewish background. The majority speak Yiddish as their first language. Kodesh (Jewish studies) is taught in Yiddish. Chol (secular studies) is taught in Yiddish and English. In the early years, boys are taught through a combination of English and Yiddish.
- The school is open six days a week. Most of the school day is devoted to Kodesh studies. These lessons include links to the areas of the wider curriculum identified in the independent school standards.
- All pupils attend full time. Key stage 4 pupils attend separate premises at 87 Lampard

Grove in Stoke Newington, about half a mile from the main school site.

- There are very few pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- The school does not have a website but all the required policies are available to parents on request.
- The school was judged to be good at its previous full inspection in November 2014. Subsequently, the school has undergone an emergency inspection and two progress monitoring inspections, most recently in February 2017. Some of the independent school standards were judged to be unmet at each of these additional inspections.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection incorporated a progress monitoring inspection to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards that were not met at the previous inspection.
- The inspection was carried out without notice.
- Inspectors visited classrooms across the school, including the Lampard Grove site. They conducted some of their observations alongside school leaders.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' written work and looked at a range of recorded evidence provided by leaders to show the work pupils carry out in the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors held discussions with leaders responsible for different aspects of the school's work and with two governors.
- Inspectors met informally with a small number of parents and with groups of pupils. They observed pupils at play outside.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress, admissions, attendance, school improvement planning and premises maintenance. They conducted tours of both premises.
- There was one written response to the online Parent View survey. Inspectors were not given any responses to the staff survey.
- At the end of the inspection, leaders and governors declined the opportunity to receive feedback about the inspection judgements and refused to engage further with inspectors.

Inspection team

Andrew Wright, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jo Jones

Ofsted Inspector

Gerard Strong

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school must meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act[9];
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which-
 - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 28(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 28(1)(b) toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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