

Ateres Girls High School

Willow Grove, Felling, Gateshead NE10 9PQ

Inspection dates

15–17 May 2018

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The effectiveness of teaching is too variable to promote pupils' consistently good progress. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Neither is assessment information used consistently to meet the needs of pupils effectively.
- Teachers in subjects beyond English do not demand that pupils produce written work that is of the highest standards. This limits pupils' opportunities to consolidate their writing skills.
- Although leaders have ensured that schemes of work are in place, in some subjects there is insufficient emphasis upon developing pupils' subject-specific skills.
- Leaders have ensured that procedures for managing pupils' behaviour and dealing with parental complaints are established. However, records of leaders' actions are not detailed.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and have secure subject knowledge. However, they are not yet fully effective in their roles.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that the school's assessment systems extend to all subjects. This makes it difficult for leaders to measure pupils' progress in all subjects with the same degree of accuracy.
- Leaders recognise that limited time spent studying some subjects makes it difficult for pupils to complete the content for their examinations. Leaders have planned timetabling changes for the next school year.
- Leaders recognise the need to work more closely with their feeder primary school, to improve transition arrangements between key stages 2 and 3. Leaders are keen to align assessment procedures.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have implemented many changes since the last inspection which are leading to improvements.
- Pupils, parents and carers are highly positive about the school's work. All pupils move on to further education by the end of key stage 4.
- The proprietor has ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- The proprietor and leaders are highly ambitious to do the very best for their pupils. They are keen to seek advice from successful practitioners for support to improve their work.
- Trusting and respectful relationships lie at the heart of the school's work. As a result, pupils who spoke to inspectors say that they feel well supported and safe. They say that they are happy in school and that pupils behave well.

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 leadership and management further by ensuring that:
 - detailed assessment systems are extended to all subjects, providing more accurate information about all groups of pupils, to enable greater accuracy in measuring pupils' progress
 - subject leaders receive further support and training to develop and extend their skills and responsibilities, so they play a full role in the school's improvement
 - adjustments to the school's timetable are realised, so that pupils are able to deepen and consolidate their knowledge in a range of subjects and fulfil certain course requirements more easily than is currently the case
 - plans to develop pupils' transition arrangements between key stage 2 and key stage 3 are realised
 - leaders' actions are recorded with greater precision and detail, particularly with regard to the management of behavioural incidents and parental complaints.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by ensuring that:
 - all teachers set the same high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve, so that pupils produce work of the highest standard in a range of subjects
 - teachers in all departments place the highest priority on consolidating pupils' writing skills
 - pupils are provided with increasing opportunities to develop their subject-specific skills
 - teachers make improved use of assessment information to plan work that better meets the needs of pupils of differing abilities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders, including governors, have worked exceptionally hard to ensure compliance with the independent school standards, which are now met.
- Since the last full inspection, leaders have established a new tier of leadership, by appointing middle leaders who have strong subject knowledge and who are keen to take on more responsibilities. However, these middle leaders are at the very earliest stages of their development and have not brought about the improvement to the quality of teaching and learning as quickly as senior leaders would wish.
- The school's new behaviour system has led to considerable improvement in pupils' behaviour. Pupils' movement around the school and attitudes to learning are positive. While this is heartening, leaders are unable to evaluate accurately the effectiveness of their new systems, because their records lack the detail needed to evaluate these improvements accurately.
- The leadership of teaching and assessment is developing effectively. Leaders visit lessons regularly to review teaching and learning and the quality of work in pupils' books. They provide feedback to staff on the strengths and weaknesses of their practice. Leaders have also introduced detailed assessment systems for English and mathematics, which enables leaders to identify those pupils falling behind in their learning. However, leaders recognise there is still more to do. They know that areas for improvement in the quality of teaching need to be followed up in a timely manner and that assessment for all subjects needs to replicate the same level of detail as that used for English and mathematics.
- Leaders establish an attainment on entry measure for each pupil. While this provides a starting point against which to measure each pupil's progress, leaders acknowledge that improved transition arrangements between key stages 2 and 3 would help further.
- Leaders have worked hard to improve the school's curriculum to ensure that it is compliant with independent school standards. They have accessed support and advice from a range of other providers to help them develop their schemes of work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there is still more to do to ensure that pupils receive the opportunities they need to develop both their subject-specific knowledge and skills consistently.
- The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is extremely knowledgeable about the individual pupils in her charge. She knows their academic and pastoral needs in great detail. She checks carefully the progress individual pupils make, but does not yet analyse or evaluate strategically, the effect of the range of interventions put in place to support this pupil group as a whole.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils receive a good range of independent careers advice. An independent careers adviser visits the school regularly to meet with pupils and to provide advice about a range of career options. A range of visiting professionals supplement the school's work and this information broadens pupils' awareness of the very many career choices available to them.
- Leaders positively foster British values. Aspects of democracy, the rule of law, protected characteristics and rights of the individual are woven through the taught curriculum,

helping to promote pupils' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

- The headteacher is working proactively with other local school leaders to ensure that expert guidance is used to secure rapid improvements. A detailed review of each subject department has been commissioned, but it is too early to evaluate the effect of this work on improving teaching and learning.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher share the same determination to achieve academic excellence. The improvements they have secured since the last inspection mean the school is well placed for further improvement.

Governance

- The proprietor is very involved in the school and has ensured that governors share his high aspirations for the school's future success. Collectively, they are highly skilled professionals who use their skills effectively to challenge and support school leaders.
- Regular visits to the school and frequent communication ensure that governors are fully informed about all aspects of school life. A review of their formal and informal communication shows clearly the level of challenge provided for pupils' achievement. Governors rightly concentrate upon those pupils whose progress is declining. However, there is a need to review strategically the progress of other groups of pupils with the same degree of rigour.
- A designated safeguarding governor scrutinises the school's policies and procedures to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- Governors ensure that additional funding received for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used effectively to meet their needs.

The school's application to make a material change to its registration

- The proprietor has ensured that the spacious premises are maintained well. He ensures that all the relevant independent school standards are currently met. They are likely to continue to be met if the Department for Education (DfE) approves the modified material change application. The business manager and caretaker work proficiently together making regular checks, for example daily risk assessments, to ensure that the building remains safe and secure.
- The proprietor is aware that the school currently exceeds their current registration requirements regarding capacity.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff have had appropriate training and guidance, to ensure that they are fully aware of the role they play in keeping pupils safe in school.
- Leaders have ensured that all relevant checks are made on staff and volunteers who work at or visit the school and that the safeguarding policy takes into account current government requirements. The dedicated safeguarding governor monitors these records regularly.

- The school does not have a website where parents can access school policies. However, the school's prospectus lists a number of policies, including the safeguarding policy, which is available to parents on request.
- The school occupies a large site and security is high priority. It is monitored throughout the school day by designated security teams. All visitors to the school are escorted to the main entrance as part of the security process.
- Staff know how to report any concerns they have about pupils and are confident they will be taken seriously. Where there has been a requirement for leaders to act on concerns about individual pupils, this has been swift and involved the relevant agencies and parents to make sure pupils are supported and safe.
- Pupils know how to use the internet safely and what to do if someone hurts them or is unkind. Pupils' care and well-being are a high priority for school leaders.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Not all teachers use assessment information to plan effectively for pupils' abilities, particularly for those pupils of lower ability. This means all pupils receive the same level of work and have varying degrees of success.
- While some teachers insist on pupils producing work that is of the highest standards, this is not consistent in all year groups and across all subjects. Teachers do not routinely place the highest priority on consolidating pupils' writing skills. This is particularly evident when reviewing work in books and includes work seen in Kodesh.
- Teachers' questioning is generally effective. However, some teachers are not sufficiently probing in their questioning and settle for short answers. This prevents pupils from deepening their knowledge and from their thinking being fully extended.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced a new feedback policy for teachers and pupils. In some year groups and subjects, pupils improve their work in response to teachers' comments. However, the effect of this has been limited, because only some teachers use this as effectively as leaders want.
- Teachers follow schemes of work which provide a structure for their teaching. However, there is too little emphasis upon developing pupils' subject-specific skills, particularly for the younger pupils. For example, in geography, pupils acquire knowledge of physical and regional geography, but there is very little evidence of pupils acquiring strong fieldwork skills. Likewise in science, limitations in laboratory facilities mean that pupils' practical skills are underdeveloped.
- Strong relationships provide pupils with a safe and nurturing environment in which to grow in confidence and develop resilience to learn from mistakes.
- Teachers try to find interesting ways to make their lessons engaging and active and to harness pupils' thirst for learning. This leads to lively and purposeful debate and discussion.
- Homework in most subjects is set in line with the school's policy and complements the work completed in lessons.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured because of the encouragement they receive. They have a thirst for learning and are inquisitive to find out more and to ask questions.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there are no unsafe places. The vast majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire say their child feels safe and is happy in school.
- There are no reported incidents of bullying at the school and exclusions are rare. When incidents do occur leaders take appropriate actions. However, leaders' records are not reflective of the degree and timeliness of their actions.
- Pupils have aspirational ideas of future career choices. Visiting speakers also reinforce important messages about personal safety and well-being. For example, a doctor not only discussed training and qualifications, but also talked about safety in the workplace and the importance of personal hygiene and the spread of infection and disease.
- Pupils' good personal development is further developed as a result of visits to Parliament and opportunities to debate and discuss issues. Consequently, pupils are respectful and demonstrate a growing understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Leaders are developing links with the local community effectively. This is ensuring that pupils are becoming increasingly involved with local issues and with the wider community. For example, pupils are involved in a campaign to improve the local park for residents. Leaders actively seek ways in which to become further involved and have made arrangements to visit the neighbouring old people's home.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is taught for the most part through the Kodesh curriculum. Pupils learn about other religions and beliefs and are taught to be tolerant and respectful to others. Leaders are working to ensure that aspects of pupils' cultural development, particularly that of the younger pupils, are embedded further.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils receive high levels of autonomy and it is expected that they will behave appropriately. This is most obvious during unstructured parts of the day, where pupils are trusted to make their own choices of where to spend their breaktime. Pupils do not exploit these freedoms.
- Pupils conduct themselves appropriately. They are polite and well-mannered and are welcoming to visitors. Throughout the inspection, pupils demonstrated good manners and were keen to say 'good morning', 'enjoy your day' and to hold doors open for adults and each other.
- Attendance is above the national average for maintained secondary schools and has improved upon the rate found at the same time last year. Absence procedures are

securely in place and all pupils not at school are quickly accounted for.

- During lessons, pupils are keen to contribute and eagerly ask questions. For the most part they talk eagerly about their learning and enjoy the opportunities they receive to work collaboratively. Occasionally, some pupils get overenthusiastic, and talk over one another, but staff manage this well.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes in 2017 dipped when using the national Attainment 8 measures. Pupils who took their GCSE examination in Year 10 skewed this measure, as their subsequent AS-level results, taken in Year 11, were not as strong and superseded the results of previously taken examinations.
- Generally, pupils leave Year 11 having achieved nine GCSE qualifications at grade 4 or above. Pupils' outcomes in English language, literature and mathematics are above the national average, with most pupils gaining at least a grade 5 or above. This ensures that pupils have secure basic qualifications for entry onto most advanced level courses.
- The progress made by pupils currently in the school is variable, because the quality of teaching is too variable. Pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 make stronger progress than those pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- In key stage 4, progress is strongest in English and in art. This is because assessment systems are stronger and teaching is organised more effectively to meet pupils' needs and abilities.
- In 2017, pupils' outcomes in business studies and information technology were disappointing. Time constraints limited the opportunity for those pupils of lower and middle ability to study in sufficient depth to meet the course requirements and achieve as highly as they might. Pupils' unfamiliarity with and understanding of some subject-specific vocabulary were also contributing factors. Leaders have sought advice from neighbouring school leaders to improve this aspect of provision. Timetable adjustment and additional training are planned for the summer term in readiness for the new school year.
- Pupils' outcomes in science are variable. Limited practical science experiences hamper pupils' overall achievement. Older pupils access the science facilities of a neighbouring college to complete controlled assessments in a laboratory. Leaders acknowledge that a lack of appropriate facilities impedes pupils' progress in this subject. The planned new school extension is intended to include laboratory facilities.
- Pupils who have an education, health and care plan for their special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress against their specific targets. This is because they receive bespoke support and work is set at an appropriate level for their needs.

School details

Unique reference number	138118
DfE registration number	390/6000
Inspection number	10046954

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	Independent Jewish Secondary School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Mr David Schleider
Chair	Mr David Schleider
Headteacher	Rabbi Y Katz
Annual fees (day pupils)	Voluntary contributions
Telephone number	0191 4692 969
Website	None
Email address	info@ateres.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 to 9 June 2016

Information about this school

- Ateres Girls High School, situated in the Felling area of Gateshead, provides independent secondary education for orthodox Jewish girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years.
- Almost all girls enter the school from a local independent orthodox Jewish primary school.
- Pupils at the school are able to follow Kodesh curriculum, alongside studying for nationally accredited GCSE examinations.
- A small proportion of pupils at the school have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school uses no alternative providers.

- Since the last inspection, there has been a change in proprietorship of the school. The DfE were notified of this change. The proprietor is also the chair of the governing body.
- The proprietor was made aware that they are currently exceeding their registration requirements regarding capacity.
- The proprietor has submitted planning permission to the local authority for additional premises to be built in the extensive grounds. The proprietor noted his intention to apply for another material change to the school's registration when this building work is complete.
- The school received a progress monitoring visit in March 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited teaching sessions across a range of subjects and in all year groups. The vast majority of these visits were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and middle leaders. A further meeting was held with the proprietor and one other governor. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and spoke to them formally and informally about their learning.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including pupils' assessment information, leaders' self-evaluation report and development plans. The school's records relating to safeguarding and child protection were also checked.
- There were 12 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including free-text commentaries as well as 54 paper copy parental questionnaires. The inspector took account of these as well as 29 staff surveys.
- The DfE, as part of this inspection, commissioned Ofsted to consider the school's application to make a material change to its registration. The application requests an increase to the current capacity of the school from 200 to 300 pupils. During the inspection, the proprietor agreed to modify this application from 300 to 250.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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