

Beis Aharon School

83–95 Bethune Road, London N16 5ED

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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because there is more to be done to improve the quality of education and pupils' understanding of modern Britain.
- Pupils' starting points in English language are low. The new programme for teaching English is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' language learning. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to improve the quality and range of their writing in English and other subjects.
- There are inconsistencies in teaching which hinder pupils' learning. Teachers' levels of skill vary. For example, they do not always pitch work at the right level, particularly for lower-attaining pupils.
- Assessment in the early years lacks precision. However, leaders have ensured that all the statutory requirements of the early years are met and children are starting to make more rapid progress in literacy.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher evaluates areas of strength and weakness accurately and is beginning to transform the school.
- Governors are a committed and knowledgeable team who have a clear vision and determination to improve the school.
- There are good relationships between pupils and teachers, creating a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are attentive in class and conduct themselves well around the school.
- Pupils make consistent progress in mathematics across all year groups. They enjoy the activities and the range of mathematical topics.
- The early years provision is well resourced. Adults interact well with children and help them to make the most of activities.

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 to ensure that:
 - inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are eradicated by further professional development, monitoring and performance management for teaching staff.
- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - pitch work at the right level to challenge and engage all pupils
 - address any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' understanding.
- Improve pupils' personal development by ensuring that:
 - pupils know about and appreciate the values, traditions and lives of people from cultures other than their own
 - further work is done to raise pupils' awareness of the different relationships and groups protected by the Equalities Act 2010.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information about pupils' starting points and progress to plan work that better meets the needs of lower-attaining pupils
 - pupils have more opportunities to write their own creative pieces in different genres in English, science and in other subjects
 - pupils practise their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills in the English language
 - pupils have further opportunities to experience creative subjects.
- Improve the early years provision by ensuring that:
 - assessment of children's progress and attainment is precise, and focused on the criteria being evaluated
 - the evidence in children's profiles fully supports the evaluation being made.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because pupils are not prepared for life in modern Britain as well as they could be. Pupils' English language skills are improving slowly, but still hinder their learning, particularly in older year groups.
- The new headteacher, who has been in post since September 2017, has knowledge, drive and determination. He is beginning to improve the quality of education and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders are at the early stages of developing pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own. The range of visiting speakers has improved and a few now come from outside the pupils' own community. However, visits out of school are very limited, and pupils have comparatively little experience of the capital city in which they live.
- The headteacher has introduced more opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken English skills and their reading, and this is having a positive impact, particularly in the early years provision and in key stage 1. However, these changes are in the early stages of development and so pupils' limited skills in English remain a barrier to their learning and progress in secular subjects.
- The curriculum includes all the required areas of learning. Schemes of work are in place and teachers follow them. The headteacher is clear that some aspects, such as creative subjects, need further improvement to ensure that pupils make more progress.
- The headteacher is working with governors to develop pupils' understanding of respect and tolerance for groups of people with the full range of protected characteristics. Opportunities to do this are planned for and actively promoted. These relate to equality and diversity, which are protected by law. For example, an assembly led by a Holocaust survivor explained about all the other groups of people with protected characteristics who were persecuted by the Nazis.
- The headteacher's system for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and performance management, based on the teachers' standards, is beginning to have a positive impact. However, more work needs to be done because there are too many inconsistencies in teaching.
- Leaders communicate effectively with parents and carers. Parents are supportive of the school and the changes being made.

Governance

- Governors are a united and highly committed team who play an important and very visible role in the life of the school. Governors have a strong vision for the school's future and are determined that it will provide an education for pupils which enables them to thrive and become active and responsible British citizens. Governors have taken an important decision towards meeting this vision by appointing a headteacher to make the necessary changes to improve the school.
- Governors have been fully involved in the development of the curriculum and the focus on developing English language teaching. The chair of governors meets regularly with the

headteacher. Governors are fully supportive of the active promotion of respect for those with the full range of protected characteristics. This support includes the invitation to the interfaith group, including Muslim speakers, to talk to pupils at an assembly. These changes have been challenging for some parents, and governors have worked skilfully to communicate effectively with parents to allay their concerns and ensure their support.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff are trained appropriately, understand their responsibilities and can apply their safeguarding training in practice. They know what to do if they have concerns. The designated safeguarding lead and the deputies, including the headteacher, have a pupil-centred approach to their work. They meet regularly and reflect on how best to ensure that pupils are safe. Leaders develop pupils' understanding of safeguarding issues in whole-school assemblies or working with smaller groups. Leaders recognise that their record-keeping is not as well organised as it could be. Records are sometimes kept in different places, which makes it more difficult for them to monitor and improve the safeguarding arrangements.
- All the required recruitment checks on the suitability of staff and leaders to work with children are recorded on the single central register. The school has a safeguarding policy that meets requirements and is available to parents on request.
- Governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding and understand that it is the responsibility of all to keep children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement because there are inconsistencies across classes and subjects. Where teaching is effective, pupils make strong progress, and activities are well planned and meet the needs of pupils with different starting points. Pupils are involved in their learning, show motivation and behave well. Teaching is particularly strong in the early years and key stage 1. However, where there is variation in teaching, pupils do not make as much progress as they should, particularly in key stage 2. In addition, pupils' English language skills are stronger in lower year groups.
- There are variations in teachers' subject knowledge and teaching skills. Where teaching is strong, teachers' exposition captures pupils' interest and imagination, they use specialist vocabulary well, and pupils make strong progress. Where teaching is weaker, pupils sometimes lose interest because activities are not pitched at the right level. This is particularly true for lower-attaining pupils. Weaker teaching lacks precision in applying subject knowledge. Teachers sometimes do not pick up mistakes in pupils' work and so errors are repeated.
- Teachers have regular classroom routines and set common expectations for pupils' behaviour and concentration in classes. Teachers follow the schemes of work and plan activities to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points. The changes are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, some teachers are less successful in designing activities to meet pupils' needs because of weaknesses in their

subject knowledge and teaching skills.

- There are good relationships between pupils and teachers, which contribute to a positive learning environment in classes. Teachers set consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour and concentration in class. They give individual support to pupils when required, and check that pupils are on task and focused. Pupils understand the classroom routines.
- Leaders have planned learning effectively. Schemes of work are in place and teachers follow them. Teachers usually plan activities to engage and interest pupils, using a range of helpful resources effectively so that pupils make progress. For example, in a Year 5 geography class, the teacher used a range of images to illustrate different types of volcanic cones and lava flows. Pupils' understanding of eruptions was further developed using a bottle of fizzy drink.
- The headteacher has prioritised developing teaching to meet the needs of pupils with different starting points. This approach is in the early stages of its development but is having a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly for higher- and middle-attaining pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. This is because pupils' knowledge and appreciation of other cultures in London and beyond are limited. Leaders have started to develop this. For example, pupils participated in a parkland walk to Finsbury Park and have eaten food from different cultures. However, pupils' experience is still developing, especially in the younger year groups.
- Leaders have put appropriate plans in place to develop pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. These plans were seen in both the religious and secular aspects of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils' awareness of the different groups protected by law is slowly developing.
- The school's pupil survey suggests that pupils feel safe and trust adults to help them if they have concerns. Records of incidents indicate that that action is taken to support the victim and change the behaviour of the perpetrator. If appropriate, issues are followed up across the wider school community through assemblies. Leaders' work is carefully planned and thoughtful. Pupils said they felt safe and were confident that the school would deal with bullying effectively.
- The school's new rewards system for behaviour, attitudes to learning and contribution to school life is clearly having an impact. Pupils often have their behaviour tokens out on desks and there are high levels of anticipation and excitement at spending them at 'the tuck shop', which is a whole-playground event. Year 7 pupils respond confidently to the leadership opportunities the event offers. They run the stalls and manage the token bank.
- Leaders increasingly take pupils' views into account. Pupils elect the school council members. There are regular question-and-answer sessions in assemblies, which feed into further assemblies as follow-up for pupils. Pupils' views, gathered through the whole-school survey and those who spoke to an inspector, are overwhelmingly positive about

their school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in classes and are attentive. Leaders have ensured that teachers set common expectations of how pupils should behave. Teachers communicate these expectations clearly to pupils. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and this ensures that learning is enjoyable and uninterrupted. Only occasionally do some pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. On the playground, pupils are very self-aware and so are able to play a range of games by making use of the space available but without endangering others.
- Pupils' attendance is good. The school has a positive, caring ethos with a focus on learning, and so pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Observation of pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school, feedback from parents and the school's behaviour records indicate that pupils behave well over time. Pupils' views, expressed in the survey and by those who spoke to an inspector, were very positive about how behaviour in the school is managed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because pupils' weak English language skills in speaking, reading and writing are holding them back, particularly in key stage 2. Consequently, pupils are not fully prepared for the next stage in their education. The new headteacher has increased the focus on using English around the school, for example in displays and notices. Also, adults are now speaking more English to pupils. However, this is in the early stages of development. In key stage 1, pupils' language skills are better developed, and they make more progress.
- Lower-ability pupils make less progress than middle- and higher-ability pupils do. This is because teachers lack the skills to design activities which enable pupils to make accelerated progress and overcome misconceptions. Teachers do not consistently point out to them where pupils have made mistakes.
- Leaders have introduced a commercial phonics programme. This is having a positive impact in the early years provision and is used more extensively in Year 1. Pupils' phonics knowledge is broadly in line with age-related expectations in Year 1. A new reading programme has been introduced, but this is in the very early stages of development and so its impact on pupils' reading skills and comprehension is inconsistent.
- Pupils' writing is inconsistent across year groups. Pupils have few opportunities to produce their own creative writing. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 have some opportunities to write creatively, and work in pupils' books includes stories, poems and letters. However, there are fewer opportunities to do this in lower year groups because teachers do not have consistent skills to teach creative writing. Pupils' spelling and knowledge of grammar is stronger, but they lack the opportunities to apply these to consolidate their understanding.
- Pupils make consistent progress in mathematics because it is developed effectively across

year groups. Schemes of work are appropriately challenging, and teachers follow them. Coverage of topics is well planned; pupils study shape and space, such as the properties of polygons and angles, in Year 4. In Year 5, pupils learn about different types of graphs and charts. They plot line graphs and can interpret information. Pupils greatly enjoy mathematics and take pride in their work.

- Pupils make progress in learning science. Pupils' work indicates that pupils' conceptual knowledge and coverage is in line with age-related expectations. Pupils study a wide range of topics, such as electricity, forces, plants and animals, and properties of materials. However, pupils' written work includes very little of pupils' own writing or reporting of experiments and practical demonstrations.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The school's provision for the early years requires improvement. All the requirements of the early years statutory framework are met. However, leaders' systems for providing evidence to support their assessment of pupils' progress are not yet secure. Also, the English language provision is in the early stages of development.
- In 2017, no children attained a good level of development because of the lack of effective English language teaching in the provision. This year, there has been a significant improvement, which is evident in children's work and through observation. The school judges that nearly two thirds of children are on track for at least expected progress in literacy. However, these judgements are not moderated, and the evidence available does not support the standards assessed. This is because assessment is too broad and lacks precision in recording evidence to support fully the levels being stated as met.
- Leaders' planning has ensured that all the areas of learning are covered and that adults are trained and prepared well. The provision is well resourced.
- Children are happy and engaged in their learning. Adults interact very effectively with children. Most of the time, adults speak Yiddish to the children. However, some morning sessions have an English language focus. Adults show them how to use resources, talk to them, ask questions and pose challenges. Adults ensure that there is a very positive environment for the children's learning.
- Leaders work effectively with the local authority to improve the provision. They have taken on board advice about developing cross-cultural activities and developing children's language skills. Children's personal and social education is a strength.
- The outdoor area is small but well planned and resourced. Children behave well. They interact and play well together, and adults encourage them to explore and challenge themselves.
- Safeguarding is effective. Children are well looked after.

School details

Unique reference number	131170
DfE registration number	204/6398
Inspection number	10038160

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 13
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	279
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Joseph Lipschitz
Chair	Aaron Hoffman
Headteacher	Menashe Moishe Gotlieb
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,860
Telephone number	020 8809 9444
Website	The school does not have a website
Email address	fgotlieb@hotmail.com
Date of previous inspection	18 November 2014

Information about this school

- Beis Aharon School is an independent Orthodox Jewish day school for boys in the London Borough of Hackney.
- The new headteacher took up his post in autumn 2017.
- The school occupies a purpose-built building in Bethune Road, Hackney.
- The school is registered for pupils between the ages of three and 13. All pupils speak Yiddish as a first language and Hebrew as a second language. Pupils speak English as an additional language.

- The school's previous standard inspection took place in November 2014 when the school was judged to be inadequate.
- At present, there are 279 pupils on roll. This is above the school's capacity of 243. The school was issued with an order under section 116(1)(a) of the 2008 Act on 24 September 2015, which prevents the school from admitting any new pupils from 26 April 2016. School leaders have complied with this notice.
- The school does not use any off-site educational provision for pupils.
- The school has a small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils with an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils study Jewish religious studies in the morning. This is taught in Yiddish. Pupils also learn Hebrew. The secular curriculum is taught in English in the afternoon.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors visited classes in all year groups, including the early years provision. Most of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books.
- The lead inspector undertook a tour of the premises.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the compliance manager, the SENCo, the curriculum leader and the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the impact of their work. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the school's external consultant, who is undertaking work with the school.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair of governors, representing the proprietor.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the designated officer for safeguarding for Hackney local authority.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, including the 44 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), and talked informally with parents at the start of the day.
- Inspectors considered the 12 responses to the Ofsted staff survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils in classes and around the school, considered the results of the school's own pupil survey and spoke formally with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including records of attendance, safeguarding, the curriculum and teaching, the maintenance of the premises, and pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nick Flesher

Ofsted Inspector

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