

# Beth Jacob Grammar School for Girls

Stratford Road, Hendon, London NW4 2AT

## Inspection dates

9–11 October 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders, including the proprietor, have worked effectively to make sure that this is now a good school. Standards at the end of Year 11 have risen remarkably over the last three years.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteachers for secular and religious studies. Together, they have raised everyone's aspirations for pupils' achievement.
- New senior and middle leaders have bolstered the school's capacity to secure further improvements in the quality of the curriculum, and teaching, learning and assessment.
- The leadership of some other subjects is not as strong as in the core subjects. Pupils' progress is inconsistent in these subjects.
- Pupils' well-being and their mental and physical health are the cornerstone of the school's work. Pupils are nurtured and exceptionally well cared for. Pupils are protected and kept safe.
- Teaching is good and results in effective learning, including in English, mathematics and science. However, the most able pupils do not always achieve their full potential. Work does not always stretch them fully in their thinking.
- Pupils flourish and grow into confident and responsible individuals. Their behaviour is good.
- When given the opportunity, pupils work on their own, solving problems effectively. Pupils know what skills they need to use to be successful. However, these features are not typical in some lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils have great respect and tolerance for all differences.
- However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to interact with people who are not from a Jewish background. This prevents pupils from being fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

### 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?

- Ensure that teaching secures strong and sustained progress in all subjects by:
  - making sure that those pupils who find learning easy are given work that deepens their understanding
  - providing pupils with clear steps in their learning, so that progress can be assessed more accurately
  - giving pupils further opportunities to solve problems for themselves.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - other subjects are as well led and managed as the core subjects to secure consistently good or better teaching
  - pupils have first-hand experiences to interact with people from a range of backgrounds, including those from different cultures and religions.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Senior leaders and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They have successfully improved the overall effectiveness of the school to secure good-quality teaching, within an ethos of excellent care and guidance.
- Staff are equally committed to making sure that every pupil achieves their full potential, both academically and personally. Senior and middle leaders are well focused on raising the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers benefit from a range of supportive and individualised development opportunities to enable them to grow professionally. They are held to account for their work through an appraisal cycle. As a result, good teaching secures strong learning.
- The relatively new heads of department for the core subjects are proficient role models for their colleagues. They have good subject knowledge and are effective teachers. Both middle leaders, as well as senior leaders, provide valuable support for newly appointed teachers and those who need additional guidance.
- The recent restructuring of middle leaders has had a sustained impact on raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. However, a lack of strong leadership in some of the non-core subjects leads to some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders use information gleaned from checks on the quality of teaching to identify, prioritise and plan effectively for further improvements. The newly implemented assessment system provides a sharp focus on the progress pupils that make, including the most able pupils.
- Leaders set challenging targets and make sure that each pupil is on track to achieve these targets. Potential underachievement is identified, with additional support put in place if required.
- The design, implementation and impact of the curriculum are reviewed frequently. The range of subjects taught has broadened and is more relevant to the pupils' interests and aspirations. There is a good focus on developing pupils' subject-specific skills and knowledge. Activities are usually well planned to enable pupils to apply these skills to secure good achievement.
- Specialist teachers deliver lessons in physical education (PE), science, music, home economics, textiles, and information technology (IT). Enrichment activities offer good opportunities for pupils to excel and experience success in a range of subjects and topics that interest them and for which they have a talent. Pupils' learning is enhanced through educational visits and residential trips, including to The National Gallery, Tate Britain and further afield to Poland and Prague.
- Leaders ensure that the school is faithful to the school's Orthodox Jewish values and the local community it serves. Mutual respect and tolerance for all people, irrespective of their backgrounds, are tangible features of the school's ethos. These are also a key feature threaded through the wider curriculum, including the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

- Leaders have carefully mapped out activities across the curriculum. This secures good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as British values. Pupils have a keen understanding and appreciation of differences, including for their own and other cultures and religions.
- Nonetheless, pupils have very few opportunities to learn and interact directly with others who are not from a Jewish background. This limits pupils' ability to be prepared fully for life in modern Britain.
- The school works in close partnership with parents and carers. Parents who completed the Ofsted online survey rate the school very highly in all areas, including how well the school protects and safeguards their children.

## **Governance**

- The proprietor, who is also the chair of the governing body, is a dedicated and committed leader. He invests significant funding to enable the school to develop and improve. His charitable and caring philosophy is reflected in his core value of 'you grow by giving'. Together with a small number of governors, their good collaborative working with senior leaders secures effective governance.
- Although small in numbers, governors have a wide range of knowledge and skills, including in education, law and business. This, together with regular meetings to monitor the impact of the school's work, enable governors to provide leaders with the right level of support and challenge.
- Governors make sure that school leaders also have the right skills and support. They have boosted leadership capacity with the appointment of new leaders. External consultants provide further support when required. Governors have made sure that all the independent school standards are met.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school does not have a website, but provides parents with the most up-to-date safeguarding policy on request. The policy uses the latest government requirements as a framework for safeguarding procedures.
- The designated safeguarding lead and deputies ensure that safeguarding procedures are thorough and effective. This includes all the required safer recruitment checks.
- Health and safety checks are rigorous. The school building and outside areas are well maintained. Security guards check the identity of visitors. Pupils learn and socialise together in a safe, spacious and pleasant environment.
- Staff receive regular training in line with the latest guidance from the Department for Education. Staff put in place the correct procedures if any concerns are raised. Regular meetings ensure that staff are mindful of their responsibilities to safeguard pupils.
- Referrals, both internal and external, are prompt and followed up immediately if necessary. The school has forged good links with outside agencies, including the local authority, so that pupils receive the right level of specialist support. Pupils say that they feel very safe and secure in school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this and technical vocabulary to explain clearly to pupils what key concepts they are going to learn about. Pupils quickly get on with their work.
- Activities are usually structured in a clear sequence, so that new learning builds effectively on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers are adept at maximising several skills within a lesson. Pupils' numeracy and oracy are fostered very well, for example in science and textile lessons. Most pupils are highly articulate and confident speakers. They told inspectors how they take great pleasure in communicating to an audience in drama lessons and productions.
- Teachers make learning interesting and relevant. Pupils are highly motivated, focused and keen to achieve their best. They work cooperatively, diligently and with perseverance. This has a good impact on their learning.
- Teachers check on pupils' progress and provide timely support to diminish any gaps in learning through additional sessions before school and at lunchtime.
- Pupils learn very effectively when teachers identify precisely what skills pupils will need to practise to be successful. In these instances, both teachers and pupils know how much progress has been made at the end of a lesson. Pupils are encouraged to find solutions to problems. These successful features of learning are not always evident in some lessons.
- Most-able pupils make less progress when they are given the same work as the rest of the class to complete. They finish work quickly and wait patiently for others to finish. This prevents this group of pupils from making strong progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's nurturing environment promotes pupils' self-confidence, independence and resilience. Specific lessons encourage pupils to develop self-help skills. Pupils recently explored and reflected on their own preferred way of working, thus promoting their self-knowledge and self-esteem.
- The wide range of artistic activities enables pupils to reflect and to grow spiritually. The powerful, harmonious and meditative singing of psalms by the whole school, led by the school choir, is uplifting.
- Pupils flourish and grow into responsible and mature individuals. They form strong and collaborative relationships with their friends and members of staff.
- Pupils trust adults to resolve concerns when these arise, both academically and personally. A range of options is available for pupils to discuss these concerns with adults. Every pupil has a key member of staff whom they can approach. The school council provides a key forum to discuss and resolve issues. Senior leaders make themselves very accessible to pupils. Pupils told inspectors they often 'ring the bell' outside the headteacher's office to discuss their worries individually or in groups.

- Adults keep a close watch on pupils' mental and physical well-being. Members of the pastoral team meet regularly to prioritise and plan individual pastoral support programmes for those pupils who are experiencing difficulties. The school engages effectively with external agencies to secure further support if required.
- Pupils are guided effectively to take the most relevant subjects to help them aspire to, and achieve, their full potential. They receive good careers advice and guidance from teachers and individual speakers. External organisations provide workshops to prepare pupils for future employment opportunities, including tips on writing a curriculum vitae and interview techniques. Pupils are well informed about potential future careers.
- Developing essential life skills is a key aspect of the curriculum. Pupils follow a range of topics, including those relating to their health, well-being and safety. Pupils are aware of ways in which to keep themselves safe and to avoid potential risks.
- Pupils understand all the forms that bullying can take. Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils feel very safe in school.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and work on their own.
- To date, there have been no instances of poor behaviour. As a result, learning proceeds in a calm and purposeful manner.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary. They warmly welcome visitors and are exceptionally polite and respectful.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils clearly enjoy the wide range of educational experiences on offer. They are very proud of their school.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The school's baseline assessments demonstrate that pupils' starting points vary considerably across different subjects. Some pupils have gaps in their learning, for example in science, because they have not been taught the subject prior to attending the school.
- The school is particularly successful in meeting the needs of those pupils who may find learning difficult and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Subject-specialist teachers provide tailored support for these pupils, often on a one-to-one basis. As a result, this group of pupil makes strong and sustained progress.
- Prior to the implementation of a new assessment system, progress information lacked consistency, as heads of departments used different assessments for different subjects. However, this information demonstrates that most pupils made good or better progress.
- Attainment by the end of Year 11 has improved demonstrably over the last three years. In 2018, the proportion of Year 11 pupils who achieved GCSEs in English, mathematics and science was well above the national averages. The proportion of most-able pupils who attained the higher levels was also above age-related expectations in these key

subjects. As this group of pupils started school with below-average attainment, pupils made at least good progress over key stages 3 and 4.

- Inspection observations confirmed that pupils make sustained and strong progress, and attain highly in art, photography and Hebrew.
- Some Year 8 pupils start GCSEs in art and home economics and several Year 11 pupils start AS levels in Hebrew. The small number of Year 12 students in 2018 who took A levels within one year also achieved well in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history and photography.
- The school cultivates a love of reading. Pupils enjoy a wide range of reading materials. They also value how reading is the gateway to accessing their education successfully.
- All pupils go on to seminaries or to higher education colleges.

## School details

Unique reference number	101388
DfE registration number	302/6092
Inspection number	10054284

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	11 to 17
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	282
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Benzion Freshwater
Chair	Benzion Freshwater
Headteacher	Michele Gluck
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,195
Telephone number	020 8203 4322
Website	Not applicable
Email address	<a href="mailto:l.fielding@bjgs.org">l.fielding@bjgs.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	2–4 November 2016

## Information about this school

- The Beth Jacob Grammar School provides education for girls from 11 to 17 years of age. A small number of students remain in the school until the end of Year 12 and complete their A-level courses within one year.
- The school is registered for 300 pupils.
- The school is run as a non-profit organisation. The school opened in 1980 and moved to its current purpose-built site in 1997.



- Around 60% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of secular subjects and around 40% to the faith curriculum. There is an entrance examination. However, the school takes pupils of all academic abilities.
- The school serves a Jewish community in north-west London. It aims to ensure that 'pupils grow into productive and successful adults, developing their academic, spiritual, physical and emotional skills, while remaining true to the teachings of the Torah to become honest and respectful citizens.'
- There were no students aged 17 or above at the time of the inspection.
- The school enters some pupils early for public examinations.
- An average number of pupils have been identified as having SEN and/or disabilities. There are very few pupils who have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use off-site training or other alternative provision.
- The school does not have a website, but all the required policies are available to parents on request from the school office.
- The school's last full standard inspection took place in November 2016, when a number of unmet independent school standards were identified and the school's overall effectiveness was judged inadequate overall.
- The first monitoring inspection in September 2017 found that while most of the requirements for the unmet standards were met, including those relating to safeguarding, a small number remained unmet. The second monitoring inspection in April 2018 confirmed that all the independent school standards were met in full.
- There have been several new appointments at both senior and middle leadership levels since the last inspection. A new deputy headteacher for secular studies, and new heads of department for English and mathematics, were appointed from September 2018.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors, accompanied by senior leaders, undertook joint observations of learning in all year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with senior and middle leaders. Inspectors met a group of pupils who were accompanied by a senior leader.
- Inspectors reviewed the surveys completed for this inspection by 47 members of staff. They considered 48 parental responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspection team evaluated a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, safeguarding documentation (including a range of case studies), the single central record of staff suitability checks, and achievement information.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school.

## Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sean Flood

Ofsted Inspector

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