

# Torah Vodaas

Brent Park Road, London NW9 7AJ

## 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>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors and proprietors, have been committed to improving the school since the previous inspection. The school complies with the independent school standards.
- Leaders carefully manage the religious and secular curriculums. They take pupils' religious and academic success seriously. Pupils' achievement has improved significantly, particularly in their reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed very well. Pupils have a strong sense of morality and benefit from well-planned opportunities to develop their social and cultural experiences.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful of differences and have a strong understanding of British values.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school. Pupils' attendance is high. They are very happy and thoroughly enjoy their time at school.
- Pupils make strong progress in their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to debate, particularly in religious lessons.
- The early years provision is outstanding because of extremely strong leadership and teaching. Children make excellent progress, particularly in their speaking and listening.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to apply their strong arithmetic skills to complex tasks, particularly in key stage 2.
- Teaching is good and pupils benefit from interesting activities to engage them. Pupils develop strong skills in the wider curriculum, particularly in design and technology. However, the quality of phonics teaching is not consistently high.
- Pupils, including the most able pupils, make sustained progress by the time they leave the school. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are inconsistent.
- Safeguarding is effective and pupils are well cared for. Pupils understand the importance of keeping safe online. However, pupils' deeper understanding of the wider aspects of internet use is not as strong as it could be.

### 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?**

- Continue to develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that:
  - weaker teaching, particularly in phonics, is improved
  - expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are high.
- Ensure that pupils' understanding of online safety is strengthened further.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders are committed to improving the school. They have worked effectively to address areas for improvement since the previous inspection. The school complies fully with the independent school standards.
- Leaders balance the school's religious education and secular curriculums well. They ensure that pupils thrive in their understanding of the Jewish faith and life in modern Britain, including about different types of families.
- Leaders have a thorough understanding about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They know the school's priorities well and have worked well to strengthen the leadership team since the previous inspection. Leaders' evaluations are accurate, and they have a clear rationale about how to improve the school further.
- Leaders have embedded strong systems to check pupils' assessment information in the religious and secular curriculums. They monitor pupils' progress regularly and provide targeted support for lower attaining and most-able pupils.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well thought out. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about public institutions. For example, Year 6 pupils visited the Houses of Parliament and met with a range of public servants. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions and benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils discuss moral aspects in depth during their religious lessons.
- Teachers are highly positive about working at Torah Vodaas School. They value the approachable senior leaders and appreciate time given to support their own professional development.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They appreciate the school's strong communication systems and value how happy their children are at the school.
- Middle leaders carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively, particularly in mathematics. However, recent changes to the leadership of phonics have not been managed fully effectively.
- Pupils have restricted access to the internet at home and at school. Leaders ensure that pupils understand the importance of keeping safe online. However, pupils' deeper understanding of wider internet use is not as strong as it could be.

### Governance

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's journey since the previous inspection and the current priorities. They visit the school regularly and work closely with the parents.
- Governors meet with leaders and are committed to improving the school further. For example, they worked alongside leaders to ensure a new library could be developed to help raise pupils' literacy skills.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that they keep up to date with changes to safeguarding guidance. They review safeguarding policies well and ensure that these are available for parents in the main office.
- Pre-employment checks are thorough and staff have a good understanding of procedures to follow should they have a concern. Staff are vigilant and take pupils' safety seriously. Regular meetings among leaders help to highlight any potential concerns in a timely manner.
- All pupils spoken to during the inspection told inspectors that they felt safe. Pupils speak confidently about how they can leave messages for leaders and speak with senior staff should they need to. Parents agree that their children are safe and well cared for.
- At the start of the inspection, there were minor administrative errors with the single central record. Leaders rectified these by the end of the inspection.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Consistently strong teaching allows children to make good progress over time.
- Adults and pupils develop strong working relationships underpinned by mutual respect. Teachers, particularly in religious lessons, encourage pupils to deepen their learning. As a result, pupils are articulate with a strong grasp of more complex vocabulary.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength. Pupils develop strong arithmetic skills. In key stage 2, teachers encourage pupils to apply their calculation skills to complex problems. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils were challenged to solve real-life problems using fractions.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, particularly when teachers' good questioning encourages pupils to discuss scenarios. For example, in a Year 6 religious lesson, pupils pondered over the exceptions to a rule when returning a damaged item to an individual.
- Teachers use a variety of resources to engage pupils in their learning, particularly in design and technology lessons. Pupils learn to make mats using palm leaves and demonstrate a love for creativity.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very well developed. They benefit from many opportunities to learn technical terms in religious lessons and apply these to their learning in secular lessons.
- The small number of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are supported well. In religious lessons, they receive targeted one-to-one support that supports their learning in a sequenced manner. Pupils receive effective support in the 'rainbow room', where adults provide focused sessions, including in sensory provision.
- In English, pupils develop strong literacy skills and enjoy reading a variety of books. However, the teaching of phonics and reading in key stage 1 is not as strong as it could be. This is because some adults do not have the skills to build on pupils' prior learning.

- Pupils write across a range of topics, including newspaper reports and letters. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation are not consistently high.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils learn a strong sense of morality. They speak articulately about the importance of 'good deeds' by helping others.
- Pupils are polite and extremely welcoming. They are confident in their own Jewish faith and respectful of differences in modern Britain. They are very aware of contemporary issues and discuss these with maturity. For example, pupils shared a variety of views about whether Britain should remain in the European Union.
- Pupils develop a strong sense of safety through using a variety of public transport in London. They enjoy many opportunities to develop their confidence while camping and on residential trips. Pupils know the importance of keeping safe online, but their understanding of wider internet use is not as strong as it could be.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are resilient and typically focus with concentration in lessons. They collaborate well in lessons and pupils told inspectors that bullying at the school was rare.
- The new behaviour system is very popular. Pupils take pride in receiving vouchers for good behaviour and interact enthusiastically with staff while receiving these.
- Pupils play sensibly at playtimes and interact positively with adults. They move around the school in an orderly manner. However, at times, transitions between the classrooms are not managed as well as they could be.
- Attendance and punctuality remains high. Pupils arrive at school on time and ready for their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Outcomes have improved, particularly in reading and mathematics since the previous inspection. Pupils leave Year 6 well prepared for secondary school.
- In 2018, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining at least in line with the national averages in reading and mathematics was high.
- Pupils develop strong speaking and listening skills. They use high-level vocabulary in English with a good understanding of technical terms. By the end of Year 6, pupils make sustained progress in their Hebrew comprehension. Pupils transfer between English and Hebrew with ease.
- Pupils' abilities in mathematics are typically above age-related expectations, particularly in key stage 2. They develop well-embedded calculation strategies and knowledge of

number bonds in key stage 1. In key stage 2, pupils solve complex problems using fractions and decimals. The most able pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, are challenged with multi-step tasks that require a high level of proficiency in mathematics.

- Pupils make good progress across the curriculum. They develop well in their science and history understanding. In design and technology, key stage 2 pupils have skills above those expected of their age. Pupils become proficient at making moving components, joining wooden parts and working with a wide range of materials.
- Pupils who have SEN are well supported, particularly in their religious lessons. These pupils benefit from well-structured support and make good progress.
- Pupils develop well in their writing. They write with increased accuracy as they move up the school. Pupils have a strong grasp of grammar, which is strengthened by a systematic focus on grammar in religious lessons. In some classes, pupils' progress in writing is not as good as it could be because teachers do not set high expectations of pupils' handwriting or use of correct punctuation.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average. This was due to weaker phonics teaching. Pupils in key stage 2 develop fluency in their reading and strong comprehension skills.

### Early years provision

### Outstanding

- The early years is outstanding because of excellent leadership and very strong teaching. Children's achievement is extremely strong. They are very well prepared for Year 1 when they leave Reception.
- Leaders have an in-depth understanding of individual children's progress and development. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are rigorous. All the independent school standards are met.
- Adults develop excellent relationships with children. Children are enthused in their learning and listen attentively. They behave exceptionally well and follow well-set routines. The learning environment captivates children's learning, and themed topics such as 'Noah's Ark' in Reception are used seamlessly in religious and secular lessons.
- Children's speaking and listening skills are highly developed because of adults' probing questioning. Adults interact with children in a positive manner and encourage dialogue. Children are articulate and curious and adults encourage children to make choices in their learning.
- Provision for children's creative development is very strong. Children learn to use a wide range of resources independently. For example, children in the Nursery made presents for their mothers using egg cartons while being extremely well supported by adults.
- Children learn to develop their early English and Hebrew reading exceptionally well. They learn initial sounds in both languages and have opportunities to draw and write these. Adults pay careful attention to children's pencil grip, which helps them to progress very well in their writing.
- Children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop physically. They have fun

as they balance on beams and jump through tyres with constant adult encouragement.

- The outdoor area is used very well to promote learning. For example, Reception children collected leaves, acorns and chestnuts and used these to develop their mathematical skills, such as by ordering and grouping.
- Adults promote a strong sense of moral purpose in children's learning. For example, children are encouraged to collect money for charity. Children learn to appreciate the diversity in modern Britain, including different cultures and respect for blind people.
- Leaders make excellent use of external agencies to provide additional support for children when appropriate. Parents value highly the support that their children receive and they communicate regularly with staff using 'link books'.

## School details

Unique reference number	133553
DfE registration number	302/6115
Inspection number	10054291

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 11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	335
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Torah Vodaas Limited
Chair	Mr Arie Leib Levison
Principal	Rabbi Y Feldman
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,500
Telephone number	020 3670 4670
Website	Not applicable
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@torahvodaas.org">office@torahvodaas.org</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–3 November 2016

## Information about this school

- Torah Vodaas is an Orthodox Jewish primary school for boys. It opened in September 2001 and provides Jewish studies and secular education.
- Pupils learn Kodesh (religious education) during the morning and Chol (secular studies) in the afternoons. The secular curriculum is broadly based on the national curriculum.
- A pre-school early years centre is located on the same site and is inspected separately.
- The school has no website and policies are made available to parents on request.
- The last standard inspection took place in November 2016, when the school was judged



as requiring improvement. In May 2017, the school received a progress monitoring inspection to check the unmet independent school standards. At that time, the school met all the independent school standards that were checked.

- No pupils attend any off-site provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Meetings were held with the proprietor body, the principal, the governing body, senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors observed learning in all year groups in both religious and secular lessons. Most lesson observations were undertaken jointly with senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and through a formal scrutiny of books presented to inspectors from the previous year.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and during a formal meeting to discuss their learning and views about the school.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including leaders' records of monitoring, behaviour records and documents related to safeguarding. Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards, including risk assessments, policies and health and safety audits.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's online surveys, including 131 responses from parents and 25 from staff. Inspectors also took into account the views of parents at the end of the school day.

## Inspection team

Noeman Anwar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rosemarie McCarthy

Ofsted Inspector

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