

Mechinoh School

13 Upper Park Road, Salford, Lancashire M7 4HY

Inspection dates

8–10 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the school does not meet the independent school standards that relate to all the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- The range of information and experiences about possible future education and careers that leaders provide for pupils is limited.
- Pupils' experiences of the wide range of cultures found in global society are limited.
- Inspectors were only able to speak to a limited number of pupils, as some parents and carers had withdrawn their consent. Inspectors were only able to ask pupils questions about some of the protected characteristics. This inhibited inspectors' ability to triangulate evidence and reach judgements in relation to compliance with several of the independent school standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have high aspirations. Their considerably improved use of assessment information allows them to identify gaps and trends in pupils' learning in most subjects. In a small number of subjects, other than in Kodesh studies, English, mathematics and science, this is at an early stage of development.
- Pupils' behaviour is commendable. They are polite, courteous and demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, visitors and staff.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend well. They attend in line with the national average. Persistent absence is extremely low.
- Effective teaching motivates pupils to make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers typically have high expectations and secure subject knowledge. They use their knowledge well to design interesting and engaging learning activities.
- Pupils are protected and well supported by vigilant and caring staff who have pupils' interests at heart.
- Pupils' personal development is well supported through a wide range of opportunities in school and the local community.

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?

- The school must meet the independent school standards, as set out in the annex of this report.
- Ensure that pupils are supported to develop an awareness of, and respect for, the full range of people who make up modern British society, including those of all sexual orientation and gender identities, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that leaders build upon their effective actions and refine further their use of assessment information in Chol subjects other than English, mathematics and science
 - developing the provision of information, advice and guidance that pupils receive about careers and possible future educational pathways
 - enhancing the opportunities for pupils, particularly those who are most-able, to successfully access national accredited qualifications
 - ensuring that leaders develop the curriculum to provide greater opportunities for pupils to experience and learn about a wider range of global cultures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there are unmet independent school standards. The unmet standards are specifically those about encouraging respect for other people, paying particular regard to all the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. The school's curriculum does not enable pupils to be aware of, and respect, people of different sexual orientations or those who have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment. School leaders state that parents do not feel such topics are suitable for discussion with their children in school.
- Other aspects of the curriculum meet the requirements of the standards. These allow pupils to develop their linguistic, mathematical, technological, aesthetic and scientific skills and understanding well.
- Leaders have taken effective actions to improve the use of assessment information in school. Pupils' attainment and progress is carefully monitored in a wide range of subjects. These include Kodesh and many Chol curriculum subjects. Leaders' analysis allows them to identify any gaps in pupils' understanding and also any trends in the progress that pupils make. Leaders use this analysis to hold teachers to account for the impact of their actions on pupils' learning. Leaders take appropriate actions to ensure that the design of the school's curriculum meets the needs of pupils. For example, the careful analysis of entry attainment information confirmed that pupils did not have sufficiently strong scientific knowledge and understanding. As a result, leaders have amended their key stage 3 curriculum to close the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in this subject. However, the depth of monitoring and analysis of assessment information in Chol subjects other than English, mathematics and science is more limited. This is in its early stages of development.
- Information, advice and guidance relating to careers education meets the minimum standard required by the independent school standards. Pupils receive regular information about possible future careers and education opportunities. This is delivered in an impartial manner. Pupils benefit from visits from members of the community who share information about their careers, the qualifications they studied and pathways that they followed to achieve them. However, the range of opportunities for pupils to explore possible future employment and education beyond their community is more limited.
- Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that the school now keeps admissions and attendance registers carefully and in line with current national guidance.
- The leadership of the school has been considerably strengthened since the last inspection through the appointment of a new headteacher. He has the skills and drive required to promote the continuous improvement of the school. Proprietors and leaders share an aspirational vision for the school. They use their monitoring to identify appropriate priorities for development. These include building upon their effective actions to broaden the range of Chol subjects, through the introduction of history and economics. Additionally, proprietors and leaders have started to provide more opportunities for older pupils to work towards national accreditations, such as IGCSE and functional skills qualifications.
- The proprietors and leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well because of improved monitoring. Leaders frequently scrutinise teachers' planning. They visit lessons and look at pupils' books to check the impact of teaching.

- Leaders ensure that they meet the requirement to provide information for parents and others who may be interested in the school. The school does not have a website. However, all information required by the standards is published and freely available on request from the school office. Leaders keep parents well informed about pupils' academic and emotional progress through frequent contact with home and detailed end-of-year reports.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. However, inspectors did receive 50 written responses to the school's own questionnaire that contained the same questions as Parent View. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. This is exemplified in comments such as: 'My children are flourishing in this school' and 'I never knew what a difference a school can make to a child. Mechinoh has been a life changer in a most positive way!'
- This is a caring school that promotes British values effectively, save that they do not adequately promote respect for people with all the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Leaders develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well through a range of activities. These include carefully considered educational outings, such as trips overnight to Wales, the Lake District and museum visits. Pupils participate in a range of different community events, including working closely with a local special school. Here they visit and work alongside its pupils. This helps the pupils in both schools to develop their social skills and achieve success in learning activities. Pupils explore some theoretical differences between cultures as part of their geographical and Kodesh studies. However, they have limited experiences to learn more deeply about the different cultures within global society.
- Teachers' continuing professional development is effective and valued by staff. Training is closely linked to the priorities for the school. For example, leaders develop teachers' skills in the effective use of assessment information. They promote high-quality teaching of the new science curriculum in the classes equivalent to key stage 3. Training ensures that teachers and tutors are knowledgeable about their subjects and the schemes of work that they currently teach. Training for new members of staff is well considered to ensure that they have a secure understanding of the school's procedures and policies, including those relating to pupils' welfare and safety.
- Pupils participate in a range of on-site and off-site physical education activities. This includes opportunities to undertake adventurous activities in the outdoors, such as climbing, trampolining, table tennis and football. These activities develop pupils' social skills, while also promoting their physical development. Leaders have ensured that pupils have access to basic changing and showering facilities on the school site.
- Leaders keep up-to-date records and logs of events in the school, including those that record serious incidents relating to pupils' behaviour. These logs record incidents and their outcomes in detail. Senior leaders and the proprietors effectively monitor and evaluate this information to identify any emerging trends or reasons for their occurrence.

Governance

- The governance of the school is undertaken by the trustees and chair of the proprietary organisation and requires improvement to ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Trustees of the proprietary organisation include members of the school's senior leadership

team. They demonstrate the skills and knowledge to undertake their roles effectively. However, they have followed the requests of parents and their own beliefs regarding promoting respect for those with specific protected characteristics relating to sexuality and gender identity. As a result, the proprietors have not ensured that the school's curriculum promotes respect for those with all the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act. Consequently, the school does not meet some of the independent school standards.

- Trustees have a secure understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of the information that they receive. They communicate frequently with leaders and teachers. They ensure that all leaders are held to account for the impact of their work.
- The school does not currently have a governing body.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and the proprietary organisation have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are of a high quality. These are fit for purpose and are followed meticulously. Leaders ensure that the statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils are completed.
- Leaders' actions ensure that the school is a safe environment in which pupils can learn. Carefully controlled site access ensures that pupils remain safe during their time in school.
- Staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding procedures because of the frequent training that they receive. They are highly vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face, including extremist viewpoints. Staff share any concerns appropriately. Leaders share information with parents and appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety.
- The proprietors have ensured that the school's safeguarding policy pays due regard to the most up-to-date guidance from the Secretary of State. The school does not have a website. However, the policy is published and available from the school office on request. Appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's office internet connection. Pupils do not have access to the internet in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in Kodesh subjects, English and history. As a result, teachers demonstrate confidence when answering difficult and challenging questions that are on occasions raised by pupils. For example, in a Kodesh Talmudic study session, older pupils respectfully challenged the teacher's interpretation of the text. The teacher was able to draw upon his excellent wider understanding of the subject, relating to the transference of debt, to illustrate and clearly explain why he was correct.
- Teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of subjects to provide interesting activities to stimulate pupils' learning and promote good progress. For example, in a science lesson on food chains, the teacher carefully promoted the good use of appropriate

biological terminology through a fun but challenging crossword exercise.

- Teachers typically have high expectations of their pupils and use questioning and debate-focused activities well to check pupils' understanding. Teachers' expectations of behaviour and conduct are also high. They model appropriate conduct and attitudes to learning consistently across the school. Consequently, pupils develop strong positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate much respect for their teachers and for each other.
- Teachers use their assessments of pupils' knowledge well to plan sequences of learning that systematically build upon prior learning to consolidate knowledge and understanding. However, on some occasions, particularly in Chol subjects other than English, history and science, teachers do not ensure that activities are suitably challenging for the most able pupils. This sometimes limits the development of their knowledge and understanding at greater depth.
- Teachers promote tolerance of others strongly through the school's personal social, health and economic curriculum. This is woven carefully into other subjects of the curriculum, particularly the Kodesh subjects and history and English. For example, pupils learn about racism and inequality through a study of American history and slavery. In English, pupils' studies of the book 'Animal Farm' highlight injustice and inequality. Currently, pupils are learning about the development of female suffrage and the important role that women played in industry in the First World War. Across the school, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of respect and tolerance.
- Teachers make effective use of up-to-date resources to inform their planning and support their teaching. Pupils have access to new GCSE textbooks and, where appropriate, new key stage 2 textbooks in Chol subjects, to ensure that they receive appropriate information. Teachers make good use of technology, such as projectors, to share information effectively.
- Teaching sessions have been shortened to accommodate additional lessons in a wider range of subjects. Pupils do not miss out on their education because the school day is considerably longer than that typically seen in other secondary schools. This longer day means that teachers do not regularly set homework. However, when necessary, leaders work closely with pupils' parents to ensure that pupils receive appropriate guidance regarding additional studies.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning to become confident learners because of the high-quality support and guidance that they receive during their time in school. As a result, they are well prepared for their next stages of education. Typically, nearly all pupils leave to join a yeshiva to continue their Talmudic and Rabbinical studies before choosing their career pathways in society. Leaders support pupils in their choice through the appropriate facilitation of visits to different yeshivas.
- Pupils develop their leadership and social skills well through the many opportunities that the school provides for them to take responsibility. These posts include roles as school

monitors, leadership activities to help keep the grounds tidy and the organisation of school celebrations and community events such as musical and theatrical performances. Additionally, some older pupils act as school librarians. The role of the librarian is an important one in the school. This is because school librarians are responsible for overseeing the effective running of the new school library. The growing library catalogue provides pupils with good opportunities to develop their reading proficiency, knowledge and understanding.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle because of the teaching that they receive. The promotion of life skills as part of the school curriculum equips pupils well for future life. Pupils learn how to look after themselves while on residential visits. They learn to cook and how to keep safe in the community. Specific teaching about financial management, delivered in conjunction with visits from local banking staff, ensures that pupils have a good understanding of personal finance.
- Pupils value their education and their positive relationships with teachers and staff. Those that spoke with the inspectors said that teachers help them to improve their work and to get better in their learning.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils said that teachers and leaders are approachable and listen and act to alleviate any concerns that they might have. In lessons, pupils are confident to raise questions respectfully about anything that they do not understand or do not agree with. Inspectors only spoke to a limited number of pupils as some parents had withdrawn their consent.
- Pupils are aware that bullying can take many forms, including that related to technology. Those pupils who spoke with inspectors found it difficult to recollect any incidents of bullying in the school. They were confident that if it did happen, leaders and teachers would act swiftly and effectively to stop any reoccurrence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good
- Pupils' conduct around the school is noteworthy. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff and to each other. They take time to greet and welcome visitors to the school; they show great respect by standing when adults enter the room. No examples of inappropriate language or behaviour were observed during the inspection. However, on a very small number of occasions, pupils' overexuberance to engage in learning did lead to them calling out in lessons.
- Pupils play harmoniously together at breaktimes. They organise themselves well into teams, so as not to exclude anyone when playing football, table tennis and chess. Pupils show great care and respect for each other, reflecting the calm and caring ethos and culture of the school. For example, during a game of football, one player fell to the ground as result of a robust tackle. His opponent stopped to make sure that he was not injured and carefully helped him to his feet before returning to the fray of the game.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are routinely punctual. Their attendance is in line with the national average for secondary schools. Persistent absence is extremely rare. When it does occur, it is typically for acceptable reasons such as medical emergencies and

treatment.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The information about pupils' final outcomes is limited because pupils currently do not take external accredited qualifications. However, pupils' work in their books and the school's own assessment information shows that they make good progress from their starting points in all the subjects that they study. This is particularly the case in Kodesh studies, English and mathematics.
- Leaders' detailed analysis of pupils' attainment on entry shows that pupils begin the school with levels of attainment in the Chol subjects that are typically below that which is expected for their age, particularly in science and English. Typically, pupils' proficiency in spelling, punctuation and grammar when they start the school is lower than that expected for their age. Pupils have higher prior attainment in Kodesh subjects.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they make good progress in developing their English skills because of the good-quality teaching that they receive. As a result, pupils develop a wide vocabulary that they put to good use in their writing to produce detailed descriptions of setting and characters. Additionally, pupils develop their confidence and accuracy in their use of appropriate spelling and more complex punctuation.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they study increasingly more complex and difficult topics as they progress through the school. This culminates in pupils following schemes of work aligned closely to that expected in IGCSE qualifications. In science, amendments to the curriculum and good-quality teaching ensure that pupils entering the school quickly close the gaps in their knowledge. For example, they are confident in their studies of the periodic table in chemistry. They use appropriate scientific terms to describe the relationships between the different organisms found in food chains.
- Pupils develop their proficiency in reading well, and particularly strongly in Hebrew. This is because of their detailed study of religious texts written in Hebrew during Kodesh studies. Pupils' confidence and attainment in reading in English has been enhanced through their access to the new school library. Pupils borrow up to two books at a time from the library's growing catalogue of carefully chosen and appropriate books. As a result, pupils can develop a breadth of experience of fictional and non-fiction writing without undermining the school's faith-based ethos.
- The school is successful in ensuring that pupils are well prepared for their next stages of education. This is typically spent studying at a yeshiva before pupils make their choice of additional education or training to enter employment.

School details

Unique reference number	105999
DfE registration number	355/6020
Inspection number	10067879

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 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mechinoh School
Chair	M Kupetz
Headteacher	N Baddiel
Annual fees (day pupils)	None
Telephone number	0161 795 9275
Website	none
Email address	mechinoh@gmail.com
Date of previous inspection	28–30 March 2017

Information about this school

- Mechinoh School opened in 1982 and is situated in Salford, north Manchester. It offers secondary education for up to 73 Orthodox Jewish boys, aged between 11 and 16 years, with provision for both Kodesh (religious) and Chol (secular) studies.
- There are currently 72 pupils on roll. There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school aims 'to provide a comprehensive religious education for its pupils and to prepare them for entry into yeshivas (Talmudic Colleges) to further their religious education'. In addition, it aims 'to equip pupils with the basic skills required for adult life,

such as literacy, numeracy and general knowledge, while placing great emphasis on developing a high standard of ethical behaviour’.

- No pupils attend any alternative, off-site educational provision.
- The school received its previous standard inspection in March 2017. A progress monitoring inspection followed in November 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice to the school.
- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school, checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards and looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and school life.
- Inspectors held meetings with leaders, trustees of the proprietary organisation and teachers.
- Inspectors scrutinised an extensive range of school documentation, including: policies, planning, documentation relating to the leadership and management of the school, and information about the progress, behaviour and attendance of pupils in the school. Inspectors scrutinised the school's records and systems to check the suitability of adults to work in the school.
- There were no responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. The lead inspector considered the high number of parental responses to a paper copy of the Parent View questionnaire sent out by school leaders.
- There were no responses to the online staff and pupil questionnaires.
- The inspectors made a thorough tour of the school.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mark Quinn

Her Majesty's 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 sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively.
- 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.

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 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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