

Vishnitz Girls School

49 Amhurst Park, London N16 5DL

Inspection dates

5–7 February 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and governors have a clear vision for the school. They have sought guidance and support to address many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Consequently, all of the independent school standards are now met.
- Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and have a good understanding of pupils' starting points. Consequently, teaching meets individuals' needs well, and outcomes are strong.
- Teaching is consistently good and most pupils make good progress across the curriculum. In the early years, leaders have ensured that there are many good-quality opportunities for Nursery children in the outdoor area. However, they have not made sure that these opportunities are available to children in the Reception Year.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders have made sure that the accommodation and the systems for ensuring pupils' safety are fit for purpose.
- The school takes its duty to promote respect for all seriously. Leaders have taken bold decisions to ensure that respect is a strong and consistent thread through the effective implementation of a new personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme. This is having a strong impact on pupils' learning and personal development.
- Typically, pupils are polite, courteous and highly respectful of others. Behaviour in lessons and around both sites is good.
- Curriculum advisers and leaders for each phase have ensured that the curriculum for all pupils is carefully planned, including good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are now better prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe, and parents and carers agree that they are kept safe at school. They know that the school cares deeply about pupils' well-being. This is reflected in pupils' enjoyment of learning and the strong relationships between staff, parents and pupils.

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 the provision in the early years by ensuring that leaders more effectively monitor the outdoor provision and learning across Nursery and Reception Years so that any inconsistencies in the provision are addressed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The proprietors and school leaders are ambitious for the school and have addressed the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. With the support from a local leader of education, they have successfully ensured that any areas of non-compliance with the independent school standards have been addressed.
- Proprietors swiftly took the decision to review systems to enable a clearer oversight of compliance. A senior administrator now oversees the school's compliance with the independent school standards, reporting back regularly to proprietors. She works effectively across both sites and demonstrates good understanding of the statutory requirements. Consequently, the school now meets all the required independent school standards.
- The proprietors and school leaders are committed to promoting the school's vision. This is 'to deliver a high-class education that is firmly based on the principles of the Torah and, combined with a strong Chol (secular) curriculum, to enable all pupils to become productive and upstanding citizens'. Since the inspection in November 2017, leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that respect is a strong and consistent thread throughout the school and that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders have researched and implemented a new PSHE education programme. They have carefully considered the ages of pupils, together with the requirements of the independent school standards.
- Curriculum advisers and phase leaders have ensured that the curriculum for all pupils is carefully planned, including good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are now better prepared for life in modern Britain. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven through the curriculum. Aspects are also taught through the school's religious studies and PSHE education programme. Through subjects such as history and geography, for example, pupils' studies enable them to explore people and places beyond their own cultural experiences. However, the PSHE education curriculum is at an early stage of implementation. Leaders know that pupils need to develop a deeper understanding of other faiths and cultures, and the different ways people live within and beyond their immediate locality.
- School leaders frequently check on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. This enables leaders to identify what works well. It also ensures that staff get the right support and professional development to address areas of need in school. For example, recent training in mathematics has ensured the successful implementation of problem-solving activities across the school. This encourages pupils to be more inquisitive and to model how they can apply their mathematical learning in a range of situations.
- The school is in breach of its registration because the number of pupils on roll is 311, which is above the school's capacity of 127. The accommodation and systems for ensuring the health and safety and the management of risk are fit for purpose for the number of pupils on roll.
- On 'Get information about schools', the age range of pupils is three to eight. The age range on the most recent report states that the age range is three to 12. Leaders have confirmed that the current age range across both sites is two to 13. Appropriate provision

and a suitable curriculum are in place for the age range on both sites.

- The school has been in communication with the Department for Education (DfE) regarding changes to the sites, and their intentions for the new site to accommodate 300 pupils, with classes up to Year 8. Correspondence provided from the school shows that the DfE has requested further information. However, it is not clear if the DfE has been informed of the current age range of two to 13.

Governance

- Governors have a clear vision for the school. They visit often and have sought external guidance to check on how the school is progressing. They communicate routinely with staff and oversee the management of the headteacher's performance.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and they recognise the strengths of the school and its areas for development. However, there are no recent formal minutes of meetings. The headteacher's records of meetings with proprietors refer to discussions. There is, however, no evidence of proprietors holding leaders to account for the school's effectiveness. Consequently, some aspects of the school's evaluation are overgenerous.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The recruitment checks on the suitability of staff and leaders to work with children are completed and recorded on the single central record.
- Staff have received appropriate and ongoing training in relation to safeguarding children. As a result, there is a strong culture of monitoring pupils' welfare and providing help and support when they are needed. Staff understand the signs and symptoms of concern to look out for, for example the risks associated with children missing in education or potential radicalisation. They are aware of the importance of passing on information to leaders.
- The school's policies and procedures reflect current guidance. The culture of safeguarding is reinforced through the school's curriculum and the effective implementation of the school's PSHE education programme.
- The school does not have a website but its safeguarding policy is readily available to parents on request.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- In key stages 1 and 2, leaders have sustained the good quality of teaching reported at the last inspection. In key stage 3, leaders have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement. As a result, the school meets all the unmet independent school standards for the quality of education and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- At the time of the last inspection, there were limited opportunities for pupils to practise their investigation skills, particularly in mathematics, and few links were made between subjects. Teachers now plan more opportunities for pupils to practise investigation skills

and to make links across religious and secular studies and subjects. This is captured well in pupils' books, in displays and in class books that celebrate pupils' experiences. For example, links include learning about safety at the local underground station, dressed as evacuees as part of their history topic, or when using mathematical skills in design and technology to design rooms. In conclusion, pupils now have more opportunities to apply and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across different contexts and subjects.

- Detailed curriculum plans support teachers' good subject knowledge. Consequently, teachers and subject specialists plan learning which develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills well. Pupils make good progress because they are taught well.
- Teachers make learning interesting and engaging for pupils and are committed to doing the very best for the pupils they teach. Positive relationships underpin learning in classrooms.
- Teachers are confident and effective in their use of the systems and processes to track pupils' progress. Good use is made of pupil profile sheets and targets. Pupils value the individual support they receive and the opportunities to evaluate how well they are doing. During lessons, teachers regularly check pupils' understanding through effective questioning and monitoring of their work.
- Resources remain basic but adequate. Teachers encourage pupils to read and, although still limited, more books have been purchased to enhance the breadth and number of books available. There is a greater range of fiction and non-fiction books appropriate for the age ranges at the school. Books have been purchased to support the delivery of the curriculum, including bright and visually stimulating non-fiction texts which celebrate the many peoples of the world, their lifestyles and cultures.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Parents, pupils and staff value their school community and respect the rules that are in place to keep everyone safe and happy.
- Leaders have addressed the weaknesses identified at the last inspection around pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world. This includes the potential risks of technology and the provision of careers information and guidance for pupils in key stage 3. Consequently, the school now meets all the unmet independent school standards identified during the last inspection.
- The new PSHE education programme is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe when out on trips and how to cross the road safely. Pupils know how to keep fit and healthy. They have an awareness of the different ways people live within Stamford Hill and beyond, and what constitutes inappropriate behaviour towards others, including some of the different forms of bullying.
- A new careers guidance programme has been implemented. It is based on the government's recommended benchmarks and incorporates study leading towards an

accredited diploma. Pupils receive a range of impartial careers guidance, which is helping them make informed choices about their academic needs and future aspirations. The school has invited speakers from outside the Jewish community. They have taken the opportunity to invite speakers to talk about their own culture and experiences of working in Britain's multicultural and multifaith communities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful. They care for others around them and are kind. They have a good understanding of what acceptable behaviour is and know that you should treat others how you would wish to be treated – with care and respect.
- Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around the school, tucking in their chairs and carefully hanging up their bags and coats. During assemblies, they listen attentively and sing prayers or songs in two-part harmonies with skill and enthusiasm.
- Pupils enjoy school. They arrive to lessons on time and are keen to learn. Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the previous inspection just over a year ago, leaders have ensured that pupils continue to achieve well across the school and in all subjects. Outcomes for pupils remain good. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils in the primary provision make good progress in reading, writing and, particularly, in mathematics. At the end of key stage 2, pupils sit the national curriculum tests in mathematics, in reading and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Most pupils reach age-related expectations. A few pupils exceed national expectations and attain at greater depth. Overall, this represents good progress from pupils' starting points.
- At the time of the last inspection, work set in key stage 3 lessons enabled pupils to make progress according to the limitations of the planning. Inspectors noted that, because planning was only in place for one term, it was not possible for inspectors to see if the school had appropriate expectations of what pupils should learn and achieve across a year and more. Well-considered and appropriate curriculum plans are now in place for all subjects across key stage 3, including art and physical education. These are supporting pupils' good progress over time in the secondary phase.
- Careful tracking and the use of individual pupil mentoring contribute well to pupils' good progress. This and the effective support provided for those few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensure that they too make good progress. The school provides detailed termly reports on the progress of all pupils in all subjects.
- Pupils' work shows that they acquire skills and knowledge in a logical way. Progress is particularly strong in literacy. Pupils speak with confidence to adults in lessons and read with fluency and understanding. However, on occasions, their reading lacks expression and they speak with less self-confidence when articulating their views in more formal settings.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have ensured that arrangements for safeguarding are effective. They have made improvements to the early years provision so that all the requirements of the independent school standards, and the requirements of the statutory framework for the early years, are met. Since the last inspection, key stage 1 classes have been relocated to the early years site. This facilitates better transition from early years into key stage 1.
- Leaders and staff in the early years are committed to ensuring that all children get off to a good start. Leaders provide good opportunities to support staff to undertake regular training and development. This results in accurate observations and records of what children can do. It also addresses the inconsistencies in assessment identified at the last inspection.
- Typically, children join the school as Yiddish speakers, with knowledge, skills and understanding just below those typical for their age. Teaching in the early years is good, and most children make good progress across all areas of learning. The proportion who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is above the national average. They are well prepared for their journey into Year 1.
- Children's learning journals demonstrate the good progress they make as they move through the early years, particularly across the Nursery Year. Accurate records of children's learning help staff plan learning activities that are appropriate to each child's stage of development and interests.
- Children are well cared for, and staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. This results in the calm and purposeful learning environment and good relationships seen. As a result, children quickly feel secure in school, play well together and are keen to learn.
- Partnership working with parents is strong. Parents are positive about the quality of provision in the early years and the good progress their children make. Parents' contributions to their children's learning journals are regular. Good communication is provided through the school's newsletters and parental meetings.
- Classrooms and outdoor spaces are clean, tidy and well organised to ensure that children move between activities safely. The spacious outdoor area is well equipped, with access to large fixed play equipment. This supports children's resilience and physical development.
- However, discrepancies exist between the planned provision and the access for children in Reception Year to high-quality enabling outdoor learning environments and to other children. Leadership has not evaluated this aspect of the setting carefully enough. Consequently, inconsistencies between the outdoor provision for the Nursery and the Reception classes are evident.

School details

Unique reference number	138516
DfE registration number	204/6006
Inspection number	10068030

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	Jewish Orthodox girls school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 13
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Vishnitz Girls School Ltd
Chair	Rabbi Benzion Steiner
Headteacher	Mrs Leah Weiss
Annual fees (day pupils)	Fees are variable, depending on the ability of parents to pay
Telephone number	020 8800 0490
Website	None
Email address	head@vishnitzgirlsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–9 November 2017

Information about this school

- Vishnitz Girls School is an Orthodox Jewish independent day school located on two sites in Stamford Hill, north-east London. It was registered in 2009 as an early years setting and registered as a primary school in 2012.
- The school is registered to take up to 127 girls aged between three and eight years of age. However, there are currently 300 girls on roll, whose ages range from two to 13. This exceeds the school's agreed upper registration age of eight. Leaders have also exceeded the school's registered capacity of 127 pupils.
- Most girls speak Yiddish as their first language but they are also fluent in English. In the

main school, pupils study Jewish religious studies (Kodesh) in the morning. This is taught in Yiddish. The secular curriculum (Chol) is taught in English in the afternoon. In the early years, girls are taught through a combination of English and Yiddish.

- The school has a very small proportion of pupils with SEND.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has moved its key stage 1 provision to join the early years provision at 85 Lordship Road, London N16 0QY. The school now admits 2-year-olds into their early years classes. These are children who will be turning three in their first or second term at the school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to increase the numbers on roll from 261 to 300. Proprietors have also made the decision to continue to expand the age range at key stage 3 to include Year 8 pupils. The key stage 2 and 3 provision is at 49 Amhurst Park, London N16 5DL.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The governing body runs an after-school club for pupils in key stages 2 and 3 on a Wednesday at the Amhurst Park site.
- The school does not have a website but all the required policies are available from the school office upon request.
- School leaders have the support of a local leader of education.
- The last standard inspection took place in November 2017, when it was judged as inadequate overall, with unmet independent school standards.
- However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for pupils were judged as good. Prior to this, the school had a standard inspection in July 2013 and an emergency inspection in February 2016, following safeguarding concerns. Two monitoring inspections have taken place – one in October 2016 and another in May 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors visited classes across the school sites in all year groups, including the early years. Many of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders. Assemblies and breaktimes were also observed.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in books, in learning journals and in class and corridor displays.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders for the early years and key stage 1. Inspectors met with the special educational needs leader, curriculum advisers and the senior administrator who oversees the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the proprietary body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a local leader of education who has provided the school with consultancy support.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in classes and on the playground, and heard pupils reading. They met with two groups of pupils across key stages 2 and 3, and with a mixed group of staff from both sites, to gather their views of the school.
- Inspectors undertook a range of inspection activities to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards. They scrutinised the school's documentation, including leaders' own evaluation of the school's effectiveness and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety, the curriculum, teaching and pupils' attendance and progress.
- The number of responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, was too low to be considered. However, inspectors considered the 122 responses to the school's own questionnaire sent during the inspection in paper format. Inspectors also considered the 73 written comments provided by parents to the inspection team. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for either staff or pupils.

Inspection team

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Rick Barnes

Ofsted Inspector

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