

Inspection of Keser Girls' School

Ely Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 1NR

Inspection dates: 10–12 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Girls told us that coming to school 'is the best' because 'we enjoy learning and meeting up with our friends'. This was reflected in their good behaviour in lessons. The school is the hub of the local community. Parents and their children believe that the school gives the girls a good start to their education.

The headteacher is determined that each girl should make as much progress as possible. Teachers agree with this vision and work very hard to make sure that every moment in the classroom matters.

Girls also told us that they feel safe in school. The school provides classes which identify how to keep safe from both strangers and people they know. These help girls to learn how to stay safe outside school.

School teaches girls to understand the difference between bullying and falling out. Girls are taught how to recognise most forms of bullying. Leaders are unwilling to teach girls about homophobic bullying. This reduces their understanding of some types of bullying behaviour. Girls report that very little bullying behaviour occurs in school. School records confirm this view.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's curriculum is ambitious and carefully sculpted. The curriculum in each year ensures that pupils learn and remember key information. From this, teachers develop the following years curriculum. For example, in physical education (PE) younger pupils first learn how to catch and throw different size balls. Next, they move to practising turning and shooting towards a goal. Then, they develop the other skills of playing netball as a team.

The school curriculum has two distinct areas. All girls study the Kodesh curriculum from a young age. This includes learning Hebrew and studying sacred texts. Most girls learn this in the morning. The afternoon is dedicated to the secular curriculum. Pupils learn literacy, numeracy, PE, art, humanities, music, science and some information technology (IT).

This combination of subjects enables the school to deliver a broad and rich curriculum which enables the girls to learn and achieve well. For example, in literacy, school leaders recognise that girls often have less phonics knowledge than might be expected. This is often because the girls are learning a second language in the early years. In response to this, leaders focus the Year 1 curriculum on developing early reading and writing skills. Work in pupils' books shows that this approach pays off and pupils catch up quickly to become competent and fluent readers.

Staff carry out regular checks on how well pupils achieve. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) makes regular checks on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). She also supports staff and teaches pupils, making

sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive an engaging and suitable curriculum.

Most elements of the curriculum are planned and taught well. Yet, although provision for information technology meets the independent schools' standards, it is less well planned in key stage 2 than in key stage 1.

Pupils behave well. Girls are keen to learn and listen attentively and show a boldness and enthusiasm to try new things. Girls spoken to told us: 'It is all right even if something you try goes wrong as long you try hard.' This positive attitude and clear enjoyment of school are reflected in the girls' high levels of attendance.

The headteacher is passionate about developing girls' self-esteem and self-worth. Initiatives such as fortnightly friendship circle lessons teach pupils in Year 1 to Year 4 to think about moral and life values. In another example, pupils learn how to recognise passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour using the animal characters of a mouse, an owl and a shark. This helps pupils to think about their own behaviour and values.

The school's proprietors have not ensured that the independent school standards are met. Discussions held with representatives of the proprietorial body, during the inspection, confirmed that the school would not be teaching pupils respect for those who are protected by the Equalities Act 2010 because of gender reassignment or sexual orientation. The impact of this action is that pupils will not be taught about gay, lesbian, or transgender people during their time in school. This means that pupils cannot show respect for those groups of which they are unaware.

Because it has failed to ensure that all the independent school standards have been met, the school's leadership requires improvement.

The proprietors visit school regularly and have an understanding of the day-to-day routines. They receive information on the curriculum through discussions with and reports from the headteacher. A formal performance management structure is not yet in place to monitor the headteacher's performance or that of the staff. The headteacher's performance is currently monitored informally.

The headteacher and leadership team have a clear vision for the future of the school. Teachers and other staff share this vision and are keen to move the school forward to be 'even better than it is now'.

Staff spoken to believe their workload is manageable. They also said how much they appreciate the care, help and support they receive from leaders and colleagues.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff spoken to were clear about the challenges to pupils in the area around the

school. Leaders ensure that safeguarding updates are passed on to staff regularly. Risk assessments identify hazards well and give staff clear guidance on how to reduce and manage risk by their actions. Staff are clear about what action to take if a pupil comes to them with a concern. Safeguarding records are stored appropriately and shared only with those concerned.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- The headteacher has ensured that the curriculum intent is in place. Staff and curriculum leaders also ensure that the implementation of the work is planned effectively for pupils. This could clearly be seen in pupils' work in PE, mathematics, reading and science. It could also be seen in the learning observed by the inspection team. However, written plans do not reflect the high quality of learning which is planned by staff. Leaders need to ensure that this discrepancy is rectified.
- The proprietors visit school regularly in their different roles. In discussion with inspectors, they described how they monitored the response to complaints made by parents. While the proprietors regard this as a form of informal monitoring there is no sustained system for managing staff and leader's performance in school. This needs to be addressed by the proprietors in order to move the school forward.
- The independent school standards which refer to the protected characteristics as defined within the Equalities Act 2010 are unmet. Action needs to be taken by the proprietors to include all groups identified as protected by The Equality Act 2010 within the curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

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School details

Unique reference number	146525
DfE registration number	390/6010
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10123294
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	345
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Gateshead Jewish Primary school
Chair	Mr David Silkin
Headteacher	Mrs R Springer
Annual fees (day pupils)	Contributions from families
Telephone number	0191 478 5841
Website	None
Email address	info@kesergirls.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school was registered by the DfE on the 28 June 2019. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school caters for up to 421 girls and is located close to the centre of Gateshead.
- The school has a Jewish ethos and teaches the Kodesh, as well as a secular, curriculum.
- The school does not have nursery classes.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors met with the proprietors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teachers and pupils.
- We carried out four deep dives into the four subject areas: mathematics, reading, science and PE. As part of our deep dives we met with leaders, teachers and pupils. We also scrutinised pupils' work and checked the curriculum plans for each of these areas, as well as observing learning in classrooms within the school.
- The team looked closely at documents relating to safeguarding presented by the school. We also looked closely at the record keeping provided by the school and spoke to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and recent training. We spoke to pupils about how safe they felt in school.
- We carried out conversations with a number of pupils.

Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gordon Watts

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 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)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act; and

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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