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2 September 2021

Clare Neuberger  
Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Neuberger

**Special measures monitoring inspection of Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls' School**

Following my visit with Lucy Bruce and Nasim Butt, Her Majesty's Inspectors, to your school on 22 and 23 June 2021, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2018. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. I discussed the impact of the pandemic with you and have taken that into account in my evaluation.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

**Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.**

**The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.**

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hackney. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Oppenheim  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 June 2021**

### **Context**

Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls' School is a smaller-than-average 11 to 16 orthodox Jewish maintained voluntary-aided girls' secondary school. The school's intake is exclusively from the Charedi community in Stamford Hill, Hackney.

There have been no changes to staff since the last monitoring inspection in April 2021.

In this monitoring inspection, we looked more deeply at English, mathematics, science, art and design, and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.

### **The progress made towards the removal of special measures**

The school has raised its game considerably since the last full inspection in March 2018. Leaders continue to improve the school's curriculum. Subject plans have been consolidated and developed further. Leaders have made strong progress with improving the planning and teaching of the curriculum. However, there is more to be done to ensure that the curriculum is giving pupils a thoroughly broad experience. In addition, leaders and governors have not yet ensured that all the protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, are covered fully in the curriculum.

Subject leaders have continued to develop the programmes for biology, careers and PSHE to ensure that the curriculum is both broad and ambitious. Schemes of work in all subjects are well structured to help pupils remember what they have learned and apply their knowledge to more advanced work. In mathematics, for example, the programme is structured to ensure that pupils know the fundamental concepts before tackling more difficult areas such as quadratic equations. Teachers have adjusted the order in which topics are taught so that pupils can take logical, organised steps through their learning.

The programmes for other subjects, such as English, science and art, are also planned to ensure that pupils progress with their learning. Topics are taught in a coherent sequence and attention is given to ensuring that pupils repeat the essential knowledge so that they recall information quickly. For example, the art curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to practise their drawing skills repeatedly. In English, repetition of key knowledge is used to reinforce reading and writing. This enables pupils to become fluent readers and means they are able to write with greater accuracy and for different audiences.

In science, much has been done to develop the curriculum so that pupils have a broad experience of all the sciences. For example, biology has been introduced in

Year 8 and is to be extended through Years 9, 10 and 11. At present, human reproduction is not included, but leaders intend to introduce this topic to pupils in a way that reflects the values of orthodox Judaism.

Careers education has been greatly improved for all pupils from Year 7 upwards. All pupils in Year 10 receive an individual interview and feedback. In addition, there is a programme of visits to places of work. Although visits have been necessarily curtailed due to the pandemic, pupils have been to a local business as part of an enterprise project. Many are now following this up by running their own small businesses with help from the school.

Subject leaders have done much to provide relevant professional development for their teachers. In mathematics, for example, weekly meetings are used to discuss the next week's programme and how to approach teaching. In addition, subject leaders check teachers' planning of the curriculum regularly to ensure consistency. Across the school, a relatively high number of staff do not have a teaching qualification. However, senior leaders encourage staff to gain Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status through local providers. This is helping to extend teachers' expertise effectively.

Despite advances to the way the curriculum is planned and taught, there remain some sticking points. Pupils choose their GCSE subjects in Year 8. For subjects such as art, history, geography and music this means that the key stage 3 course runs for two and not three years. For the most part, subject leaders make every effort to ensure that pupils cover the full scope of the national curriculum for Years 7 to 9. Nevertheless, the reduced time for key stage 3, and taking some GCSEs early in Year 10, restricts some pupils' opportunities to deepen their learning.

The school's procedures for assessing pupils' learning are now consistent. Pupils understand the feedback they get from teachers. In some subjects, quite complex marking procedures are used to calculate an overall grade. Teachers use this information to identify some gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, the assessments do not check whether pupils are remembering the subject content more broadly. As a result, potential gaps in pupils' learning are not identified routinely and addressed.

Leaders have introduced PSHE since the last full inspection in March 2018. Pupils now learn about different religious beliefs, alongside developing an in-depth knowledge and understanding of Judaism. The course covers British values appropriately and pupils know about the democratic process. However, the PSHE curriculum does not yet include teaching which promotes understanding of all the protected characteristics, as defined by the Equalities Act 2010.

The governing body has improved its work in holding leaders to account and is working to ensure that all legal requirements are met. The principal now reports to the headteacher. Governors are firm in their belief that they have done everything they can to meet the requirements to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. It is

clear that pupils are taught to respect others, regardless of differences. Pupils are well behaved, welcoming to visitors and have positive attitudes to school. However, pupils are not taught about gender identity, or the legal rights given to LGBT people. This means that governors are failing to ensure that the school promotes pupils' awareness and understanding of all the protected characteristics effectively.

During the inspection, inspectors found some library books that were redacted. Leaders and governors explained that there is a process of replacing these books and provided a list of those that had been removed. Leaders also said that the school does not have the resources to replace all of them at the same time. Nevertheless, by the second day of the inspection, the redacted books had been removed from the library.

### **Additional support**

Support from the local authority (LA) is strong. The LA has provided expert help in a number of areas, including improving the design and delivery of the curriculum, developing a coherent PSHE programme and governance. Leaders are especially appreciative of the LA's support and the work of its consultants.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors spoke to the acting headteacher, the principal, senior and middle leaders, pupils, staff and governors to discuss the work of the school. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority. The inspection team visited a sample of lessons and checked documentation. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, or to staff questionnaires.