

Inspection of Talmud Torah Yetev Lev

111–115 Cazenove Road, London, N16 6AX

Inspection dates: 31 August to 2 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken steps to secure improvements to the school's quality of education. They have increased the time allocated for secular-subject teaching. They have broadened the range of subjects in the curriculum and introduced schemes of work. Leaders have also recruited more teachers whose first language is English. However, teachers' subject knowledge is often weak beyond their areas of expertise. They do not follow subject plans to teach the curriculum in an ordered way. This has limited the overall impact of leaders' improvements to the curriculum.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding in the majority of secular subjects are poor. They do not achieve sufficiently well. Leaders have credible plans in place to provide training for teachers to improve their subject knowledge and skills. Children in early years achieve better than other year groups. Leaders and staff here have a clearer understanding of how to teach the curriculum.

Pupils' knowledge about faiths and cultures other than their own is very limited. They struggle to communicate with visitors or share their experiences of learning. Pupils are lively in 'kodesh' (religious studies) lessons, and eager to engage in debate and discussion. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are strong in these lessons. Pupils' focus and attention sometimes wane in 'chol' (secular) classes. When adults are not skilled in dealing with low-level disruption, some pupils do not behave well.

Leaders have worked hard to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils. They give due attention to health and safety. Pupils feel safe and bullying is a rare occurrence. Leaders have suitable systems to deal with any bullying if it happens.

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

Leaders have improved the curriculum by increasing the range of subjects covered. Pupils have more time to learn subjects such as humanities and science, including on Sundays. Leaders have introduced subjects such as art and design technology and have put suitable schemes of work in place, for example in science. They have appointed new staff to teach the secular curriculum.

These changes have not secured lasting improvements to the school's quality of education overall. Too many teachers do not have a good knowledge of the secular subjects they teach. They do not present subject matter in a coherent and systematic way so that pupils build up their knowledge and skills over time. For example, in geography, teachers do not break down concepts such as air pollution or map-reading skills into their component parts. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders have not provided staff with the subject-specific training they need to enhance the teaching of the curriculum. This has hindered the school's development.

Teachers have a limited understanding of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They do not adapt their curriculum plans well enough to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils with SEND do not receive the extra support they need to achieve well.

The teaching of reading is not focused on developing a love of reading across the school. In Years 1 to 3, pupils' reading fluency is not supported because they read books that are not carefully matched to the phonics they know. Pupils often have difficulty understanding what they read. Higher up the school, staff do not check what books pupils are reading, how often or how well. Many pupils in each year group lack confidence in speaking or reading English. Children get off to a better start with reading in early years.

In early years, children develop their language and communication skills in Yiddish. Leaders have recently appointed English-speaking staff. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the development of children's English vocabulary. Inspectors saw this in particular through the reading and sharing of stories.

Increased curriculum time for secular subjects helps pupils learn more than in the past. Leaders have given thought to the order in which topics are taught in some subjects. For instance, in mathematics, pupils learn place value and calculations before moving on to fractions and decimals. However, typically, teachers do not have enough mathematical subject-specific knowledge. This limits their ability to teach mathematics as clearly as they might. As a result, misconceptions sometimes take root in pupils' minds and are not identified because teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough.

Staff are skilled at supporting children to manage their feelings and behaviour. They help children to understand the impact of their actions on others. Behaviour is stronger in early years compared with the rest of the school. In other years, where the rules and boundaries are not routinely clear and when low-level disruption is not effectively tackled, the teaching of the curriculum is interrupted.

Leaders have developed a programme for the teaching of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). For example, pupils are taught in practical terms what it means to care for others. They are encouraged to look after their own health and well-being. Pupils' respect for other people is encouraged, paying appropriate regard to the protected characteristics. Pupils are introduced to the central role of democracy in Britain, the place of the monarchy and the rule of law. However, opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of other cultures and religions are limited. Pupils' knowledge in this area is weak, indicating poor social and cultural development. This, coupled with the limited development of English language and literacy skills, means that pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders have established appropriate systems to safeguard pupils' welfare. Health and safety matters with regard to pupils and the school premises are given due attention. Staff know about the processes and procedures in place, for example for risk assessments. This indicates efficient organisation on a day-to-day basis. The proprietor body and governors have been instrumental in providing the resources to teach more secular subjects and recruit new teachers. However, they do not have the skills and knowledge to offer sharp scrutiny. They do not challenge the quality of education that leaders provide.

Leaders and governors have not sustained some of the improvements identified at the progress monitoring inspection. They have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met consistently. For example, they have not made sure that the independent school standards related to teaching are consistently met so that pupils can learn well. Pupils are not prepared well for the next stages of education.

Leaders have ensured that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policy meets requirements and is available to parents and carers on request.

Leaders have prioritised safeguarding as part of their strategy to improve the school. Staff are suitably trained and know what to do if they have any concerns about a child. Leaders make referrals to the relevant outside agencies when any concerns arise.

The school has suitable recruitment systems in place. All the appropriate checks are undertaken with care. Governors understand their responsibilities. An external consultant supports them in reviewing the school's systems. Although leaders are aware of the local risks with regard to child criminal exploitation, these are not part of the school's PSHE programme.

What does the school need to do to improve?

- Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their English reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Many pupils lack confidence in speaking and reading in the English language. Leaders do not promote a love of reading across the school. Leaders should ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to teach the English literacy curriculum effectively across the school, in particular in Years 1 to 6. Books should match pupils' phonics knowledge for pupils at the early stages of reading English, and a culture of reading appropriately challenging books should be actively promoted in key stage 2.

- Teachers have a weak understanding of how to plan lessons well in the secular subjects. They do not consider well enough pupils' prior knowledge and assessment information. This results in a haphazard rather than a systematic approach to learning over time. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are not built sequentially, and hence they do not make the progress they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers of the secular subjects have the training and coaching they need to plan a sequence of learning effectively that builds pupils' knowledge systematically over time.
- Teachers who teach the secular curriculum do not have secure subject knowledge. This prevents them from identifying when pupils have made mistakes and providing appropriate support. Leaders should provide a systematic programme of professional development to ensure that staff are secure in their subject knowledge.
- Although pupils are well acquainted with British values, their knowledge and understanding of the major religions and cultures represented in modern Britain are very limited. Pupils are only knowledgeable about their own community, which means that they are not well prepared for life in British society. Leaders should develop and teach a systematic programme about other faiths and cultures, including the perspective of no religious faith.
- Teachers lack the knowledge and skills to implement the strategies outlined for pupils with SEND. As a result, the needs of these pupils are not met in lessons and they do not make the progress they should through the curriculum. Leaders should provide an effective training programme for teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of SEND. This includes strategies that enable most pupils with SEND to achieve the same curriculum goals as their peers.
- Although governors have provided useful support, they do not have enough knowledge and understanding about the quality of education that the school provides. Therefore, they are not able to hold school leaders to account effectively. Governors need training on how to use self-evaluation to ask relevant questions and offer sharp challenge to school leaders.

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School details

Unique reference number	100289
DfE registration number	204/6233
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10204960
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	985
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Talmud Torah Education
Chair	Shalom Cik
Headteacher	Bernard Margulies
Annual fees (day pupils)	No fees for school-age pupils. £10,000 for early years children
Telephone number	0208 806 3834
Website	None
Email address	mail@satmar.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–24 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Talmud Torah Yetev Lev is an independent day school for the Satmar Orthodox Jewish community. It operates from four premises in the Stamford Hill area of Hackney.
- In addition to the school's main building at 111–115 Cazenove Road, the school uses buildings at 112 and 122 Cazenove Road, and 2–4 and 8 Chardmore Road. All premises are located within a short walking distance of each other. The premises at 8 Chardmore Road primarily accommodate children aged three to

four. The premises at 122 Cazenove Road cater primarily for children aged four to five.

- The school is registered for pupils between the ages of two and 12. Currently, the school is educating pupils of primary-school age only, aged three to 11.
- The school is registered to admit 567 pupils. There are currently 985 pupils on roll. The school is in breach of its registration agreement.
- The school is subject to a restriction from the Department for Education (DfE). Leaders do not teach the sex education part of relationships and sex education (RSE) as a result of their formal consultation with parents.
- The school does not make use of any alternative or off-site provision.
- Pupils are taught religious studies (kodesh) in the morning and for some of the afternoon. These lessons are taught in Yiddish. Secular subjects are taught in English and mostly delivered in the afternoons, with some secular teaching in English in the mornings and on Sundays.
- The school was judged to be inadequate and safeguarding ineffective at its previous standard inspection in January 2019. The most recent progress monitoring inspection in February 2021 judged that safeguarding was effective but that not all the independent school standards were met.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- This inspection was a full standard inspection conducted without notice at the request of the school's registration authority, the DfE.
- Inspectors reviewed early reading, mathematics, PSHE and geography in greater depth as a key part of this inspection. Inspectors met with the leaders and teachers of these subjects to discuss the content and implementation of their curriculum plans. Inspectors also visited many lessons in these subjects, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to discuss their views about the school, behaviour and safety. Before meeting with pupils, inspectors agreed with leaders what would be discussed.

- Inspectors met with governors, the headteacher, the head of the secular curriculum and the school's consultant. Discussions were also held with the school's head of early years, the special educational needs coordinator and the designated lead for safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of policies and documents and toured all the school's sites to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's documentation and safeguarding records, and held discussions with leaders and staff.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Noeman Anwar

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ruth Dollner

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
- 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;

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(a) actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs;
 - 5(b) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
 - 5(b)(v) further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;

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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