

Inspection of Keser Torah Boys' School

18-22 Gladstone Terrace, Gateshead, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 4EA

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy their education at Keser Torah Boys' School. They are eager to learn and take part with real enthusiasm in lessons. One parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'My son loves his learning and comes home excited to tell of his days' accomplishments. He is really thriving and happy'. Pupils apply themselves equally well within the Kodesh and secular curriculums. Older boys are aspirational. They are keen to be academically successful at secondary school.

Pupils behave well in the classroom. Teachers and other adults ensure there are clear rules and boundaries. Pupils and teachers are polite and courteous to one another. Relationships are friendly and caring. At social times, pupils play together well, if occasionally a little boisterously. Pupils say that bullying rarely happens. They can report any concerns through the worry box. They trust adults to sort things out.

Many extra-curricular activities that were suspended during the pandemic are returning. Pupils have opportunities to play football and cricket, go swimming, play chess or take part in talent shows. There have also been opportunities to contribute to the local community. The pupils raised funds to support a local special school and regularly undertake litter-picking in the area.

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

In recent years, senior leaders have made significant improvements to the curriculum. They have been more ambitious. They have adopted or devised subject curricula that match the aims of the national curriculum. They know there is more to do. This is because some subjects, such as physical education (PE) and aesthetic and creative subjects, are not planned in the same detail as others. Nevertheless, work to strengthen these subjects is ongoing and progressing well. Leaders have ensured that teachers implement the planned curriculum in full. They have robust systems in place to check exactly what has been taught. They have made sure that the knowledge taught is carefully sequenced and that the curriculum is well resourced. This is helping pupils to build their understanding well. Pupils remember much of what has been taught. This is helping them to understand more complex ideas and concepts. As a result, they are well prepared academically for secondary education. Leaders quickly identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They plan effectively to meet their needs. Additional adults provide effective support to pupils and to teachers.

Teachers undertake frequent assessments. There are weekly assessments of pupils' progress in reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. While this information is used well by teachers to inform what they teach, the high number of assessments is adding unnecessarily to teachers' workload.

Leaders give reading a high priority. Pupils are taught phonics from the start. They are heard to read three or four times a week by adults trained to spot any gaps in their phonic knowledge. This approach helps pupils to gain confidence and fluency.

The school uses a combination of reading resources drawn from different phonics programmes. This means that pupils sometimes are given books that include sounds they have not been taught. Leaders are aware of this and are looking to invest in a validated systematic synthetic phonics programme. By the end of key stage 1, pupils have a good grasp of reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. The well-targeted extra help provided means pupils who fall behind catch up quickly.

Provision for pupils' personal development is more variable. There is much in place to build pupils' character. The Kodesh curriculum makes a strong contribution to fostering pupils' spiritual and moral understanding. There are well-planned events, such as a visit to the Civic Centre, that teach pupils about democracy. Pupils have a good understanding of the law. However, they are not taught enough about people in society who are different from themselves. Pupils are not taught about sexual orientation or gender identity within relationships education. In addition, their knowledge of other cultures and faiths is very limited. This reduces their ability to be respectful and tolerant of others in society.

Teachers ensure the school's behaviour policy is applied fully. Teachers are assertive in managing behaviour when it is needed. This ensures discipline is maintained in the classroom. There is no disruption to learning. At social times, pupils of different ages play together happily. However, some pupils drop litter in the corridors and the playground, which is not respectful of adults who maintain the school site.

The proprietor and senior leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are met. They have diligently improved the premises. They ensure the school is a safe and healthy environment. The proprietor provides effective governance. He visits the school frequently, and actively holds leaders to account. He is ambitious and determined to raise academic expectations within the community. Leaders have high expectations of the staff. Teachers accept this willingly. They feel supported and guided effectively. They appreciate the training opportunities arranged for them and the teaching resources provided for them. Collectively, the staff act as a tight team. Morale across the school is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school safeguarding leader is experienced and sits on the Gateshead safeguarding children board. He knows the community well. He has ensured that the school makes all the required checks on adults who work in or visit the school. Members of staff are well trained and understand the duty upon them to act if they have a concern about a pupil's safety. Record-keeping is thorough. Leaders have good systems to record any incidents of bullying, use of derogatory language or peer-on-peer abuse. Great care is taken to ensure the school is secure. There are effective health and safety arrangements in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders and the proprietor are not doing enough within the curriculum to support pupils' personal development. They have chosen not to teach pupils about all the protected characteristics because they do not consider it to be age-appropriate to do so. In addition, pupils are not taught enough about other cultures and faiths. They do not have opportunities to meet people outside of their faith or visit enough places of significance to other cultures. Consequently, pupils know little about other groups in society. This is leading to some misconceptions. Leaders should consider broadening what they teach about groups with protected characteristics and about other cultures and faiths to better prepare pupils for their teenage years.
- Leaders have done much to make the curriculum more ambitious. In some subjects, curriculum planning is detailed and well sequenced. This is helping pupils to build a detailed understanding. In other subjects, the curriculum is less detailed and not sequenced as well. Leaders should take steps to address these inconsistencies and raise expectations further.
- The amount of assessment currently being undertaken adds to teachers' workload unnecessarily. Leaders should adjust the balance between formative and summative assessment to reduce the burden on teachers.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

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

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	108416
DfE registration number	390/6004
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10192262
Type of school	Independent Primary School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Nathan Hirsch
Chair	Nathan Hirsch
Headteacher	Rabbi Eli Schleider
Annual fees (day pupils)	Parental contributions
Telephone number	0191 477 2154
Website	No website
Email address	info@gjps.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 to 3 March 2016

Information about this school

- The last standard inspection of the school took place in March 2016.
- At the time of the previous standard inspection, the school was called the Gateshead Jewish Primary School. At that time, it accepted up to 560 girls and boys aged between five and 11 years. The girls are now educated on a separate site in the Keser Girls School. The Keser Girls School opened in June 2019.
- The school received a material change inspection in January 2019, when some of the independent school standards were not met. A progress monitoring inspection followed in November 2019. Some independent school standards remained unmet.
- The school follows the principles of the Orthodox Jewish faith. The school teaches both secular and Jewish studies curriculums.
- The school does not use alternative education providers.

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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met the proprietor, headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, PE and history. For each deep dive inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised curriculum plans in other subjects, including literacy and art.
- Inspectors toured the school site to check whether the premises met the requirements of the independent school standards.
- Inspectors checked the quality of the school's systems for vetting adults who work in or visit the school. Inspectors also met with the school safeguarding leader and spoke to staff to explore their understanding of their role in safeguarding pupils.

- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and conduct at social times.
- Inspectors looked at the 65 handwritten questionnaires completed by parents and the 10 online parental responses to Ofsted online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to Ofsted staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Garry Stout

Ofsted Inspector

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