

# Inspection of a good school: Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School

Parkside, Dollis Hill, London NW2 6RJ

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 October 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are well cared for in this school. They are safe, behave well and are supportive of each other. Leaders have created an ethos that reflects their aim to promote pupils' development as responsible and respectful citizens. The school's values strongly influence all aspects of school life. They are well understood by pupils. Bullying is not an issue. Any incidents are picked up and dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils are confident that any member of staff would help them resolve concerns swiftly.

Staff want pupils to do their best. However, leaders have not made clear what they want pupils to learn, including in reading. Consequently, pupils do not develop their knowledge and skills as well as they should. The new headteacher has a clear vision of the improvements needed at the school. He is making sure that everyone is working together to improve pupils' learning.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils spoke enthusiastically about reading. They make links between what they read in class novels and their learning in other subjects. However, pupils in the early years and Years 1 and 2 do not make a strong start when learning to read.

Parents and carers speak highly of the school. They expressed gratitude at the way leaders have supported families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The school has had several changes in leadership and staff since the previous inspection. As a result, plans to improve the curriculum, including in reading, have not always been seen through. Curriculum plans provide broad aims for what pupils need to know in each subject. However, planning does not set out clearly how pupils should develop their knowledge and achieve these aims.

The new headteacher and governors know what needs to be done to improve the quality of education. They want to ensure that expectations for pupils' learning are ambitious in all subjects. Leaders are also supporting staff to develop the expertise they need to plan and teach all subjects well. However, many subject leaders are new to their posts. Their work is in the early stages of development in most subjects.

Mathematics is planned to help pupils remember more subject-specific knowledge. Long-term plans set out the key knowledge that pupils should learn. Teachers plan work that builds on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils develop secure mathematical knowledge. In the early years too, children develop a strong understanding of number. They learn to recognise and write numbers accurately. However, in other subjects, such as geography and physical education (PE), the curriculum is not as well organised. This is because subject planning does not build as effectively on pupils' prior knowledge or help them link ideas together. For example, teaching about the source of rivers in Year 5 does not build on pupils' scientific knowledge of gravity and water flow.

Reading has not been given sufficiently high priority. Leaders have not made sure that all staff follow the phonics programme consistently. Some pupils find it hard to keep up with the programme and to develop their phonics knowledge. Extra help for these pupils does not always help them to catch up quickly. Sometimes, reading books are not matched to pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds.

In Years 3 to 6, leaders want pupils to read regularly and with good understanding. They have made effective changes to the curriculum to meet these ambitions. However, sometimes teaching does not focus fully on helping pupils to understand the texts that they read.

Leaders make sure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified accurately. They put in place additional support for these pupils. However, teachers are unclear about how they should make adaptations to help pupils with SEND learn well. Sometimes, this means that these pupils struggle to understand and remember the subject content that they learn.

Leaders provide a range of extra activities to support pupils' wider development. For example, pupils enjoy visits to museums and the planned sporting activities in the local park. Leaders ensure that pupils learn to respect people's differences. Through the curriculum, pupils are taught about their rights and responsibilities in society.

Most pupils follow their teachers' expectations for behaviour, both in lessons and around the site. Pupils are eager to behave in a way that reflects the school's ethos.

Governors know the school's strengths and the areas that need to improve. However, governors have not routinely checked if leaders' actions to improve all areas of the curriculum are making a positive difference to pupils' learning. Governors do not have the information they need to challenge leaders effectively.

Leaders and governors place a high priority on supporting staff. For example, staff said that recent revisions to some school policies have had a positive impact on their workload. Staff appreciate that new leadership is bringing a clear sense of direction.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know their safeguarding responsibilities. They have put in place systems which enable them to respond swiftly to any concerns about a pupil's welfare. Staff know when and how to report worries about a pupil. Parents typically agreed that their children are safe and happy at school.

Governors regularly review safeguarding arrangements and how these work in practice to keep pupils safe. This includes checking the procedures for employing and vetting staff.

Leaders support vulnerable pupils and their families effectively. They work well with other agencies to make sure these pupils receive the support they need. Leaders are tenacious in following up concerns and ensuring the safety of pupils.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils who find reading difficult do not get enough support to help them learn to read well. Leaders must ensure that these pupils get effective support, consistent teaching of phonics and are able to practise reading regularly. Reading books should better match pupils' reading ability so that struggling readers are able to practise and apply the sounds that they learn and build up their reading fluency.
- Leaders have ambitious plans to develop the curriculum. They have already made clear improvements to the planning and teaching of mathematics. However, these improvements have not been replicated in other subjects, including in reading. Some subjects are not planned to help all pupils, including those with SEND, know and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that all subject areas are planned logically and that pupils build on what they have previously learned.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and for pupils' achievements. However, their awareness of leaders' work, including plans to improve the curriculum, is limited. Governors need to ensure that they are fully informed about leaders' actions to secure improvements. They need to use this information to hold leaders to account for the quality of education.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

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

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131916
<b>Local authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200112
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Acting Chair of governing body</b>	Chaim Halvieim
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Coleman
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.torahtemimah.wordpress.com/">www.torahtemimah.wordpress.com/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School is a Jewish voluntary-aided school.
- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2021. An acting chair of the governing body has also been appointed.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders and staff responsible for areas of the school's curriculum.
- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: reading, geography and PE. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils and listening to pupils read.

- The inspector also spoke with leaders and teachers about curriculum plans for science, mathematics and personal, social, health and economic education.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's plans for improvement, as well as records related to safeguarding, including the single central record.
- The inspector took account of the 25 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including 24 free-text responses. The 23 responses to the staff survey were also considered.

### **Inspection team**

Phil Garnham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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