

# Inspection of Peninim

37 Elmcroft Crescent, Barnet, London NW11 9TB

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Inspection dates:

2 to 4 November 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**Yes**

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

The school is a welcoming and caring place for pupils. There is a strong sense of community. They are happy here. Pupils, staff, parents and carers are proud of their school. Pupils listen respectfully and politely to each other and their teachers. In lessons, pupils behave well and work hard, so that they and other pupils can learn.

Pupils show interest in their work and participate willingly. This is because teachers know their pupils very well and usually plan suitable work. However, in some subjects, the curriculum has not been planned carefully enough. The breadth and ambition of the school's curriculum is not comparable to the national curriculum. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should across the curriculum.

Pupils are safe in the school. They trust their teachers to take care of them. Pupils told us that they do not worry about being bullied and, although rare, when it does happen, staff step in to sort it out. Pupils said they could identify an adult at the school they would talk to if they had any concerns.

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

While the school is improving, it still does not provide a good quality of education. The school's curriculum meets the requirements of the independent school standards. However, it is not of comparable breadth and ambition to the national curriculum. The content of some foundation subjects is not chosen or sequenced well. Therefore, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders said that they follow the national curriculum but pick and choose what parts of it to follow. Consequently, not all subject planning matches the breadth and ambition of the national curriculum. For example, swimming and lifesaving water skills are not taught as part of the school's physical education curriculum. Differences between subjects stem from the quality of the subject plans. Learning in some subjects such as art, and design and technology, are not based on the acquisition of subject knowledge and skills but on completing tasks. In some subjects, teaching does not present information clearly and enable pupils to understand key concepts.

In the early years, children are encouraged to become confident and successful learners. Overall, the school meets the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage. However, leaders have not considered how some areas of the early years curriculum are sequenced to prepare children for learning in Year 1 and beyond. Resources are not well chosen to promote children's outdoor learning. Recently, leaders have drawn up a plan of proposed improvements for the outdoor area but these have not been realised.

The governing body has organised external support for subject leaders. Leaders of subjects are in the process of reviewing the curriculum and individual subject plans. Since the last inspection, they have focused on selected subjects, reading, writing,

mathematics and geography, significantly improving these subjects. For example, in mathematics, the curriculum is based on the national curriculum and is ambitious. Teachers' expectations are high. However, the subject plans in other subjects are not as securely well designed. Across all subjects, teaching staff check for gaps in pupils' knowledge and plan learning to address any misconceptions.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders work with external agencies and adapt the curriculum to support pupils with SEND.

Leaders ensure that staff focus successfully on teaching pupils to read. They have made sure that all staff are trained to deliver the school's phonics programme. Phonics lessons help pupils to learn the sounds they need to read successfully and build confidence. Leaders make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they already know. Pupils who find reading difficult get the extra help they need to catch up. Phonics lessons begin right from the start of Reception. In the pre-Nursery, staff read specially selected books to the children. Leaders are ambitious for every pupil to develop a love of reading. They check regularly on how well pupils are progressing in their reading. Pupils can choose from a wide range of interesting books in the early years and in Years 1 to 3. Although older pupils' enjoyment of reading is developing steadily, it is limited by the narrow choice of texts available to read in school.

Pupils' behaviour helps to ensure that learning in lessons is rarely disrupted. Pupils are taught the importance of British values, democracy and justice. They learn about the lives and cultures of others. They know that there are many people who have faiths different to their own and the importance of showing respect for others' beliefs.

All of the independent school standards are met. The proprietor and governors have followed external guidance to secure some improvements to the school. They are ambitious and are working in a supportive way with leaders. In the survey, staff at all levels were positive about working in this school. Leaders look after their well-being and workload. Since the previous inspection in 2018, governors have secured a suitable new site for the school and made sure that the school's accessibility plan complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. They have implemented the statutory guidance on relationships education and have consulted with parents.

However, governors and the proprietor have not ensured that the school fulfils all its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. Since the previous inspection, governors and the proprietor have introduced boys into the pre-Nursery and an option for parents of pre-Nursery children to choose between mixed- or single-sex classes. Concerns were identified during this inspection that the school may be segregating children unlawfully. During this inspection, governors and the proprietor submitted an application to the Department for Education (DfE) for a mixed pre-Nursery. Inspectors considered the nature and scale of the unlawful discrimination when considering leadership and management at the school and in the early years. As all children in pre-Nursery classes have access to the same learning and have

many opportunities to mix freely across the pre-Nursery provision, and confidently do so, the nature and scale of the discrimination appears minimal. The separation appears not to have a negative impact on these very young children.

Governors and the proprietor have not assured themselves that the curriculum meets the breadth and ambitious aims of the national curriculum which leaders say the school follows. They have not ensured that effective systems are fully in place to enable them to challenge and support leaders. Consequently, they have not held leaders sufficiently to account over curriculum design. Leadership and management requires improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All appropriate recruitment checks for staff are in place. Leaders and governors know their local community context well. They work with external agencies to make sure that vulnerable pupils get the help they need. Adults at the school are clear about their responsibility and make sure pupils are safe. The curriculum includes lessons about online safety and about safe, healthy living.

The school has a suitable safeguarding policy. This policy is available to parents on request. The main notice board displays a copy of the policy and other important safeguarding information.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Leaders have not thought enough about the breadth and ambition of the school's curriculum. Curriculum subject leaders are at differing stages of curriculum planning and implementation. Consequently, there is variability in the extent to which the curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced across subjects. Leaders should ensure that curriculum planning in all subjects considers what content is taught, how, and in what sequence so that it matches leaders' stated aims for the school's curriculum, including in early years.
- Outdoor resources are not well chosen to promote children's outdoor learning in early years. Resources available are limited and children do not learn as well outside as they do in class. Leaders should ensure suitable resources are chosen to promote and meet the youngest children's outdoor learning needs and that plans to develop the outdoor area are acted upon.
- Governors and the proprietor have not ensured that effective systems are in place to enable them to challenge and support leaders. Consequently, they do not have enough knowledge and understanding about the curriculum that the school provides and how it impacts on pupils. Governors and the proprietor should

ensure there are effective systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137502
<b>DfE registration number</b>	302/6001
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnet
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204268
<b>Type of school</b>	Other Independent School
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed in pre-Nursery (aged 2 to 3) Girls from Nursery to Year 6 (age 3 to 11)
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Proprietor</b>	Peninim Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Rabbi Isaac Brief
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chaya Schlesinger
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£4,200 to £4,740
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8004 2224
<b>Website</b>	None
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@peninim.co.uk">office@peninim.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous standard inspection</b>	6 to 8 November 2018

## Information about this school

- Peninim is an independent primary day school in the London Borough of Barnet. It educates boys and girls in the pre-Nursery, and girls only from Nursery to Year 6. At the time of the inspection, there were no children attending the Nursery class and no pupils attending in Years 4 or 5.
- The pupils are of Jewish Orthodox faith. A Kodesh curriculum is taught to pupils in the morning and a separate secular curriculum is taught to pupils in the afternoon.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in November 2018, when its overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement and all the independent school standards were deemed to be met. Following this inspection, the school had a material change inspection in December 2019 where many independent school standards were judged to be unmet. The school's most recent inspection was a progress monitoring inspection in December 2020 where the school did not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during the inspection. The school's subsequent action plan was deemed acceptable in May 2021.
- Since the previous standard inspection, the school has moved to the present, single site and appointed a new headteacher.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds. Leaders had not requested a material change from the DfE before admitting boys into the pre-Nursery. Consequently, the school is in breach of its registration agreement.
- The school operates a practice of separation by sex for some children in the pre-Nursery phase. Leaders give parents the option of choosing for their child to join a mixed class, a boys-only or a girls-only class. Children follow the same curriculum in each of the three classes and there are many opportunities for them to mix with each other beyond their classrooms. The school's rationale of offering parental choice does not prevent the separation from being unlawful. This practice may constitute indirect discrimination contrary to the Equality Act 2010.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school is operating beyond its registration agreement with the DfE. The school's current registered capacity is 50 pupils. At the time of the inspection, 108 pupils were on roll.

## 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.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

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 standard inspection incorporated a progress monitoring and a material change inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher. Meetings were held with the proprietor and a governor. A phone conversation was held with an educational consultant who has been providing support for the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and personal, social and health education. 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 also spoke to leaders about some other subjects within the school's curriculum and looked at pupils' work.
- In considering the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, inspectors scrutinised the single central record and the school's register of admissions and leavers. Inspectors looked at records relating to the safeguarding of children. They held discussions with a range of pupils, staff and leaders. Inspectors also considered records of the training staff receive relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and documents. Inspectors checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, including those responsible for behaviour and attendance at the school.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the day to gain their views of the school. They reviewed responses to the online survey, Parent View, and additional free-text comments. Inspectors also took account of the staff online survey. They considered the view of pupils through discussions during this inspection.

### **The school's progress in meeting previously failed standards**

During the inspection, we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that it was judged to have failed at its previous progress monitoring inspection on 3 December 2020.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school now meets the previously failed standards.**

### **Main inspection findings**

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

*Paragraph 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders did not inform the local authority about pupils who were added or taken off roll. Leaders did not have a detailed understanding of the local authority's role in supporting safeguarding. This



hindered leaders' ability to seek advice and support vulnerable families with specialist provision, should it be required.

- The action plan indicates that the school's admission register has been adapted and contains all the required information about pupils who are leaving or joining the school. The plan also suggests that the local authority is now being informed about leavers and starters at the school. On-site inspection activities confirm that leaders took swift action and that a suitable admissions register is in place which contains all the required information. Records scrutinised confirm that the school informs the local authority about pupils leaving and starting at the school.
- The school's action plan states that training has been provided to leaders and governors to ensure they understand expectations regarding liaising with the local authority. The safeguarding policy details the roles and responsibilities of the local authority in relation to safeguarding and provides clear guidance to staff in terms of actions they must take if they have any concerns. On-site inspection activities confirm that training has been provided and that leaders and governors understand expectations regarding liaising with the local authority.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school's e-safety curriculum was judged to be ineffective. The action plan and other documentation provided by the school confirm that an e-safety strategy has been put in place. This includes a detailed policy and an overview of the training staff have received in relation to e-safety. It details roles and responsibilities regarding e-safety and sets out clear expectations for pupils and staff. It also states that assemblies will focus on e-safety at least twice a year. On-site inspection activities confirm that training and assemblies have taken place and that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when using technology.
- The standards in this paragraph are now met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)*

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the school met all the independent school standards. Leaders had a weak understanding of the statutory procedures to follow when admitting a new pupil. In addition, leaders did not inform the local authority when they had taken a pupil off the school's roll. There was not an effective online safety curriculum in place to help protect pupils. This inspection found that leaders have made many improvements to the school's statutory procedures in keeping children safe and are actively promoting the well-being of pupils.
- This inspection found that leaders have addressed all the actions outlined in the school's plan. Leaders have addressed all the aspects of the school's work which were ineffective. This inspection found that appropriate training has been provided for staff, who now swiftly inform the local authority when admitting new pupils and taking pupils off the school's attendance register. Teachers have taken part in e-safety training and pupils are taught how to stay safe online. Leaders have acted on the training and advice from an external consultant. Leaders' actions have resulted in ensuring that the independent school standards are met consistently.

- The standards in this paragraph are now met.
- The school now meets all of the previously unmet standards.

### **The school now meets the following standards**

#### **Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
  - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

#### **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; and
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

### **The school's proposed change to its premises / the maximum number of pupils**

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration to increase the school's capacity to 110 pupils. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school meets the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school meets the independent school standards relevant to the material change. The material change has already been implemented.**
- At the time of the previous material change inspection on 2 December 2019, the school had already relocated to the current premises at 37 Elmcroft Crescent, London NW11 9TB. The material change inspection noted that the premises (37 Elmcroft Crescent) had been fully re-furnished and was likely to be able to accommodate, at that time, a maximum of 70 children.

- The previous material change inspection noted that there were two large classroom spaces and suitable outdoor space for play and physical development. It noted that there was not a suitable medical room facility.
- The last progress monitoring inspection on 3 December 2020 reported that all pupils are now taught at the Elmcroft Crescent site and that the site was recently refurbished to cater for pupils from Years 1 to 6 who were previously at the other site. It noted that the site has a newly refurbished medical room that is suitable to cater for pupils' needs.
- This inspection found that further refurbishment has taken place. The new premises continue to be well maintained. They are well lit, spacious and clean and have a suitable medical room. The additional facilities, which are separate to the pre-Nursery accommodation for 70 children, currently accommodate 38 pupils from the Reception Year to Year 6. They are likely to be able to accommodate a maximum of 40 pupils. Currently, in total 108 pupils are on site across the pre-Nursery and main school.

### **Inspection team**

Jean Thwaites, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Bedeau

Her Majesty's Inspector

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