

Inspection of Yesodey Hatorah Senior Girls School

Egerton Road, Stamford Hill, London N16 6UB

Inspection dates: 19 to 20 October 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have improved the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff have higher expectations of pupils and support pupils to achieve them. However, pupils do not benefit from a good quality of education overall. This is because there are still weaknesses in how well the curriculum is taught and assessed in some subjects.

Pupils get lots of opportunities to learn about and practise British values such as democracy and the rule of law. In citizenship, they enjoy discussing live ethical and moral issues in society. However, leaders place some restrictions on what pupils can learn. For example, pupils do not learn about same-sex relationships and gender reassignment.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently strong in lessons. They respect each other and the adults who work with them.

Pupils know what bullying is and said that in this school it is very rare. They told us that the school is a friendly place to be and that adults in the school will listen to them if they have any worries or concerns. Pupils are especially appreciative of the quality of pastoral support they receive.

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

Leaders and governors have made some brave decisions to improve this school. As a result, the quality of education at Yesodey Hatorah has turned a corner and is now acceptable. However, there is much more to do before pupils benefit from a good quality of education.

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum in key stage 3 to make it more coherent and ambitious. The knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn are carefully planned, in the appropriate order. Pupils have more opportunities to build on earlier learning. Increasingly, pupils use their prior knowledge to build their understanding of concepts. However, the transition to key stage 4, which starts during Year 9, requires more detailed planning and is still a work in progress.

Knowledgeable subject leaders work closely with teachers to improve their understanding of how knowledge and skills in the curriculum are organised. Teachers are encouraged to break down complex ideas into manageable parts when planning their lessons. Teachers appreciate this support which helps them to become more effective practitioners. Teachers are developing the knowledge and skills to teach their subjects better but at variable rates. The impact of this professional development is stronger in some subjects, for example science and geography. It is weaker in other subjects, such as art and history.

Some teachers use assessment well to check on learning and address pupils' errors, for example in geography. However, there are times when teachers do not address pupils' misconceptions, partly because they have not checked if these exist. In

history, for instance, pupils were not clear about the differences between primary and secondary sources. This means that some pupils face difficulties when they apply their existing knowledge to more complex learning.

Pupils' reading skills are reasonably well developed. However, the texts they read in English and across different subjects are not wide-ranging and challenging enough. This limits the vocabulary they can draw on to talk about their learning in depth.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive suitable care and attention from staff. This is partly because leaders are more effective at identifying their needs. Pupils are well integrated into lessons so that they gain from the better quality of education that is becoming a feature of the school. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils with SEND are good, just like their peers.

Leaders plan increasingly well for pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy developing their wider skills and experiences, for example when working together to plan a whole school performance. Pupils have a clear understanding of mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, and how these feelings can be managed. The quality of relationships education has also improved and includes discussions about consent in the context of personal relationships. However, leaders have failed to extend the personal development curriculum to include the teaching of all the protected characteristics.

Staff are positive about the improvements that senior leaders have made. They are proud about working at the school and feel that their well-being is taken seriously by leaders. The local authority has been instrumental in supporting the school to bring about clear improvements in subject leadership and governance. Governors have a better understanding of the importance of curriculum subjects. However, the scrutiny and challenge they provide to further improve the quality and impact of the curriculum are not sharp enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all the necessary appointment checks are completed before new staff start work at the school. They are aware of potential safeguarding issues relevant to the local area. Staff receive regular safeguarding training from leaders and the local authority. They understand the procedures that they must follow if they have concerns about a pupil.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about the dangers of alcohol and drug misuse and how to look after their own mental health. Pupils are knowledgeable about online safety even though they do not use the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has made a sound start to address curriculum sequencing across the range of subjects. Leaders and teachers should continue to revise and strengthen each subject so that pupils build their knowledge, understanding and skills in a carefully sequenced way. Strong attention should be paid to developing the curriculum links between key stages 3 and 4 in each subject to ensure a smooth transition in Year 9. In addition, leaders should continue to ensure that all staff have the necessary training to support the successful progression of pupils through the curriculum.
- In the past, leaders have not ensured that some teachers use assessment well to address pupils' misconceptions fully. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders must ensure that all staff use assessment to inform teaching and identify and address fully pupils' misconceptions.
- Although most pupils can read with reasonable fluency, they are exposed to a limited range of English texts. This limits the opportunities for pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils need to develop and deepen their range of vocabulary within each subject so that they can explain their thinking confidently and accurately.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that pupils are taught properly about all the protected characteristics, without exception, as required by the Equality Act 2010. In practice, this means that pupils need to develop a clear understanding of sexual orientation and gender reassignment.
- Governors have improved the effectiveness with which they hold leaders to account, for example for provision for pupils with SEND. However, governors do not hold leaders to account well enough for the quality and impact of the curriculum across all subjects. Governors should ensure that they receive the training and support they need to enable them to provide a higher level of scrutiny and challenge.

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

Unique reference number	133599
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10200581
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	353
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rabbi B Dunner
Principal	Rabbi C Pinter
Website	yesodeyhatorah.org
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average, orthodox Jewish, maintained voluntary aided, girls' secondary school for pupils aged from 11 to 16 years old. The school's intake is exclusively from the Charedi community in Stamford Hill, Hackney.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The majority of teachers work part time.
- The principal is responsible for the school's ethos and values. The school also employs a headteacher who has overall responsibility for the quality of education.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place on 9 and 10 December 2019.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspectors deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

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

- During the inspection, the inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and other aspects of school life. They had meetings with subject leaders, senior leaders, teachers, and other members of the school staff.
- The inspection focused deeply on English, science, geography, history and art. The inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, met with teaching staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work. Computer science was also considered as part of this inspection.
- The inspectors held a meeting with the school improvement partner from the local authority. They also met with the principal and four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors reviewed school documentation. This included subject curriculum plans. They also checked on documentation relating to governance and considered information about pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors checked on the school's systems for recruiting and vetting staff and other documentation relating to safeguarding.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

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