

# Inspection of Wiznitz Cheder School

126b Stamford Hill, Hackney, London, N16 6QT

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Inspection dates: 12–14 October 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Early years provision

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

**No**

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

Pupils receive a poor standard of secular education. They retain very little knowledge in curriculum subjects and hence do not develop deeper understanding over time. Pupils' achievement at the end of the early years, Year 2 and Year 6 is poor. This stems in large part from poor planning in the secular subjects, combined with serious weaknesses in teaching. Pupils do not learn to read well enough. This makes it difficult for them to learn successfully in other subjects.

Despite this, pupils are happy, behave sensibly and are kind to one another. They feel safe in school and trust the adults who look after them. Pupils understand that they need to make the right choices and that there are consequences for making the wrong ones. They report that there is no bullying in the school, but if there was staff would always sort out any problems.

Pupils do not learn enough about tolerance and respect for people who may be different to themselves. They have a lot of knowledge about their own religion but extremely limited knowledge about other faiths and cultures. This means that pupils are not well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders and governors do not provide an acceptable standard of education. Insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of secular subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge has not improved, and they have not been trained to become more effective practitioners. Although pupils behave well and want to learn, this puts them at a disadvantage. As a result, their learning suffers, and achievement is poor.

In most subjects, leaders have been slow in developing curriculum plans that show what pupils should learn and in what order. Mathematics is further ahead in this regard. However, leaders have not developed proper schemes of work for some secular subjects, for example science and geography. This means that pupils' learning in these subjects is disjointed. Pupils' studies jump from one area to the next, before they are ready to learn new information. This causes confusion for pupils and prevents them from learning and remembering as much as they should. Pupils do not gain the knowledge that will support them in becoming, for example, future scientists, geographers or artists.

Pupils' understanding of what they are taught is weak. Partly, this is because the school's systems for checking what pupils know and can do are also weak. Teachers make assumptions about what pupils already know and can remember. This often leads to unclear explanations of subject information, ideas and skills which are often confusing to pupils.

A new programme has been introduced for teaching phonics in Reception and key stage 1. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the development of pupils' early reading skills. Currently, however, pupils' reading and speaking skills remain

weak across the school. Staff do not teach the importance of word knowledge, for example by using important words in different contexts. Too much communication is in Yiddish. Adults do not model use of the English language frequently enough.

Children in the early years quickly settle into the school and learn the routines set by staff. Children have poor language and communication skills. They benefit from the support they receive from staff to develop their personal, social and emotional skills. For example, children learn to share things, take turns and respect each other. Teaching of early reading, writing and mathematics in the Reception class helps children to gain some basic knowledge. Even so, children are not well prepared for Year 1, particularly in reading.

The school does not effectively meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The leader for SEND knows the pupils' needs and has suitable records and support plans in place. However, in classrooms, teachers do not adapt their teaching by using the required support strategies.

Leaders have developed a relationships education programme. Parents have been consulted. The policy does not comply with all relevant guidance for teaching relationships education, particularly the indication that by the end of primary school, pupils should know that others' families sometimes look different from their family. Older pupils can explain more generally the importance of relationships built on mutual trust and care. The kodesh curriculum successfully develops pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Staff constantly encourage pupils to think more deeply about their everyday experience. Pupils learn about British values such as democracy by taking part in voting opportunities planned by leaders. However, leaders do not actively promote all the British values. For example, pupils are not taught enough about other religions and cultures and this limits pupils' understanding of what being a citizen in modern Britain means in practice.

Governors ensure that funding is available to meet all the requirements for health and safety. Although well intentioned, governors' view of the quality of education the school provides is inflated. This suggests clear weaknesses in governors' monitoring of the school's work. It also indicates lack of understanding of the independent school standards about the quality of education. Leaders and governors have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Processes for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are effective. Leaders have also ensured that staff have received the necessary training about important safeguarding information. For example, staff are trained in child protection, so they can identify and report early signs that pupils are at risk of harm. As a result, staff know the signs to look out for in checking that pupils are safe. Staff know what to do should they be worried.

The school works well with other agencies with the same faith background to ensure that children and their families receive professional support for their needs.

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

- The secular curriculum is weak and poorly organised. Consequently, pupils experience a curriculum which is disjointed and where knowledge and skills are not built up over time. Leaders should act quickly to establish a coherent, sequentially planned curriculum. They need to make sure that the curriculum is organised so that pupils can learn more and remember more as they move through the school.
- Staff do too little to develop pupils' skills in reading with accuracy, appropriate speed and meaningful expression. This limits pupils' ability to learn in subjects across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that reading has a high priority and that pupils become competent readers as early as possible. Leaders should also make sure that teachers check carefully on how well pupils are learning to read. Staff should give pupils the extra help they need to become skilful, confident readers.
- The needs of pupils with SEND are accurately identified. However, staff pay scant regard to such plans at classroom level. As a result, pupils with SEND do not receive the support to which they are entitled. All staff must implement the planned strategies for supporting pupils with SEND.
- Leaders have not monitored the quality of education well enough. Teachers of secular subjects lack the essential subject knowledge to impart key concepts well. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not make the progress they should. Leaders should monitor teaching and learning more closely. They need to equip all staff with the skills and knowledge to deliver the curriculum effectively, so that pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders should ensure that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain by teaching them systematically about the main religions, cultures and characteristics of people who live in Britain.
- Children in the early years are not well prepared for their transition into Year 1. Leaders should ensure that a systematic plan is in place to further develop children's language and communication skills as well as mathematical fluency in the Reception Year.
- Governors do not have enough knowledge and understanding about the quality of education provided to pupils. Therefore, they are not able to hold school leaders to account effectively. Governors should have training on how to ask relevant questions and offer sharp challenge to school leaders.

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## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137809
<b>DfE registration number</b>	204/6004
<b>Local authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	10204285
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 13
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	94
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	None
<b>Proprietor</b>	Viznitz Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Michael Rosenberg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pesach Taub
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	No fees are charged
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 8099513
<b>Website</b>	None
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@viznitzcheder.co.uk">admin@viznitzcheder.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–14 June 2018

## Information about this school

- Wiznitz Cheder is a strictly Orthodox Jewish day school for boys aged three to 13. In practice, pupils attend up to age 11. The school therefore operates as a primary school.
- The school's most recent full standard inspection was in June 2018, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate, and a number of independent school standards were judged to be unmet. There have been four progress monitoring inspections since, the most recent one in May 2021. All judged some of the independent school standards to be not met.
- The school submitted action plans to Ofsted after two of the progress monitoring inspections. Both action plans were deemed to be not acceptable.
- There are 24 children in the early years provision, which comprises a Nursery and Reception section.
- A small minority of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; this includes some with an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

## 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.

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- We considered early reading, mathematics and science as part of this inspection. We talked to pupils about their learning in these subjects and looked at their work. We met with all four teachers who teach the secular curriculum.
- We also met with a group of pupils to discuss their views about the school, behaviour and safety.
- Several meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, both of whom are also the school's safeguarding leads. We also held discussions with two governors, including the chair of the proprietor body.
- We scrutinised a range of policies and documents. We checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- To inspect safeguarding, we reviewed a range of the school's documentation and safeguarding records and held discussions with leaders and staff.

## **Inspection team**

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lisa Strong

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(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
  - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
    - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.
    - 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
      - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
      - 2(2)(f) where the school has pupils below compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their educational needs in relation to personal, social, emotional and physical development and communication and language skills.
- 2(A) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
  - 2A(1)(a) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with primary education at the school is provided with relationships education,
  - 2A(1)(d) have regard to the DfE’s statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, in their arrangements for relationships and relationships and sex education
  - 2A(1)(e) have an up-to-date discrete written RSHE policy
  - 2A(1)(g) and which is available free of charge to parents and others and published on the school’s website
  - 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)(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.

#### **Part 1. Early Years statutory framework**

1.6

Educational programmes must involve activities and experiences for children, as set out under each of the areas of learning, including communication and language.

1.7

The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals.

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