

Inspection of Shiras Devorah High School

1011 Finchley Road, Barnet, London NW11 7HB

Inspection dates:

21 to 23 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

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 are respectful and polite towards each other and their teachers. Pupils rarely behave unkindly towards each other. Bullying does not happen often because staff are quick to notice and resolve any issues if pupils are not getting on.

Pupils feel safe and are kept safe. They turn to trusted staff should they need help to resolve any problems that may arise. However, leaders have not ensured that the school premises are kept clean and tidy. Prior to the inspection, they had not identified and dealt with health and safety risks, such as from combustible materials that create fire hazards.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as running cookery stalls at healthy-eating exhibitions. Pupils in Year 9 were excited about planning a walking tour in the Lake District. Through their Jewish studies and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), pupils take part in activities to promote their social skills and boost their self-esteem.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the subjects and activities that they enjoy in school. However, leaders do not have high enough expectations for all that pupils can achieve. Pupils' learning in scientific subjects is restricted, which limits their future options and wider personal development. Pupils have very limited opportunities to become familiar with, and gain an appreciation of, faiths and cultures beyond their own community.

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

Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Leaders are revising the content of each subject, intending that it should at least match the breadth and depth of the national curriculum. Where this work is furthest ahead, for example in mathematics and English, leaders have checked that pupils are learning essential facts and developing skills. Pupils have regular opportunities to revise prior learning and to build up to more complex ideas. Teachers use assessments to identify when pupils need more support.

Subject leaders are typically new to their roles. The thinking to identify the knowledge and skills that subject leaders intend pupils to learn and build on is incomplete. Pupils' work does not reflect an ambitious curriculum that leads to high levels of achievement.

Pupils do not learn some aspects of the science curriculum relating to human reproduction. This reduces pupils' opportunity to gain a qualification in science and/or biology.

There is variation in the strength of teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum. In some subjects, leaders have not ensured that staff receive the

training they need to build secure subject knowledge to support the teaching of subjects.

Teachers encourage pupils to read a range of classic texts. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have regular trips to the public library and enjoy choosing and reading a variety of books. There is a limited selection of books in the school's library.

Teachers receive guidance from leaders to help them to identify swiftly any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) who need additional support. Leaders, teachers and parents and carers work together to provide pupils with specialist support.

Pupils are attentive and diligent in class because they want to learn. This helps teachers to deliver the curriculum without interruption.

Leaders have carefully mapped relevant personal development themes across different subjects. For example, in geography, pupils are taught about economic understanding and choices about money. Teachers cover democracy and environmental issues in citizenship. Leaders encourage pupils to make healthy lifestyle choices. Staff have received extra training to help them to be alert to any concerns about pupils' emotional well-being as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils in all year groups are introduced to a range of careers related to the subjects they study. Leaders have developed a careers programme for current pupils in Year 10 when they enter Year 11 in September. This includes independent careers guidance for each pupil, to build on the one-to-one guidance they have received in Year 10.

Pupils gain a limited awareness that there are faiths other than their own as part of their Jewish studies. However, leaders do not enable pupils to acquire an appreciation of different beliefs, customs, cultures and values. Pupils are not actively encouraged to respect other people, including those with characteristics that are protected by the law.

Leaders, including the proprietor and members of the governing body, have put up-to-date and appropriate school policies in place. However, leaders do not pay close enough attention to ensuring that procedures in school follow the policies. For example, inspectors noted potential hazards in and around the school buildings that had not been identified through the school's usual risk assessments. These were put right before the end of the inspection. Nevertheless, while staff regularly carry out health and safety checks of the school site, leaders' expectations are not high enough. This means that potential risks to pupils' safety are not recognised, resolved or mitigated.

Leaders have strong communication links with parents. Leaders have consulted parents about the school's relationships and sex education (RSE) policy. Following the consultation, parents have opted to withdraw their children from the sex education aspects of the RSE curriculum. However, the school's RSE programme

does not include teaching about all the different types of relationships that people may have in wider society, from which there is no right to withdraw pupils. The requirement to have regard to the relevant statutory guidance for RSE is therefore not met.

Leaders have not ensured that the school's PSHE programme encourages pupils' respect for other people, including in covering all the protected characteristics. This does not prepare pupils effectively for life in British society.

The proprietor has identified and acted on some of their priorities for improvement, such as the need to increase the number of subject leaders as the school grows. However, leaders lack the capacity needed to drive forward improvements in the curriculum and ensure that all the independent school standards are consistently met.

Members of the governing body consult with staff and respond to concerns raised, so that staff feel supported and have a manageable workload.

The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, including the proprietor, are knowledgeable about required safeguarding practice and safer recruitment. They are suitably trained and ensure that all staff are up to date with statutory safeguarding requirements. Staff recognise their responsibilities to be alert to when a pupil may need additional support. The leader with responsibility for safeguarding has organised systems to maintain oversight of any concerns. Leaders know the right processes to follow, and external organisations to go to, if a referral and/or specialist support is needed.

Hard copies of the school's policies, including the safeguarding policy, are available to parents on request. The school does not have a website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some subjects, subject leadership and curriculum design are in the early stages of development. Leaders are in the process of identifying the key facts and skills that they expect pupils to learn and develop over time. Subject leadership should continue to be developed so that the ongoing revision of the content of each subject is completed. Subject leaders should identify the key facts, knowledge and skills that they intend pupils to learn in every subject, providing guidance and subject knowledge development to teachers where needed.

- Leaders do not have high enough expectations for pupils' academic achievement. In some subjects, the content does not match the ambition of the national curriculum as leaders intend. The curriculum in science is narrowed, which limits pupils' options for gaining qualifications. Leaders should ensure that the newly revised curriculum enables pupils to achieve highly, gaining knowledge and skills in a broad range of subjects.
- Leaders do not ensure that day-to-day procedures in school reflect the school's policies relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Regular risk assessments and health and safety checks do not identify potential hazards to pupils' safety. Leaders' expectations for risk mitigation and the general maintenance of the school site are too low. Leaders should ensure that they and the staff put the health and safety policy into practice. Their routines to check the safety of the school should be effective and purposeful, with swift identification and resolution of potential risks to pupils' safety, so the school is maintained in an orderly condition.
- The PSHE programme delivered does not encourage respect for all the protected characteristics to the extent that it is considered age appropriate to do so. Leaders do not enable pupils to develop an appreciation of, and respect for, other faiths and cultures. Leaders should make provision to promote respect for all the protected characteristics in line with guidance for secondary schools. They should enable pupils to be considerate, respectful and tolerant of views and beliefs that are different from their own. They should ensure that pupils are fully prepared for life in British society.
- Leaders do not ensure that pupils are taught about different types of relationships at a timely point, as required by the RSE statutory guidance. Some of the independent school standards regarding RSE are therefore not met. Leaders should ensure that their plans for, and implementation of, RSE have regard to the relevant RSE statutory guidance, including what is required to be known by pupils by the end of secondary school, and that this content is fully integrated into their programmes of study.

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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	145946
DfE registration number	302/6016
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10210726
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	61
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Anthony Adler
Chair	Anthony Adler
Headteacher	Sara Craimer
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,000
Telephone number	020 8381 4513
Website	www.sdevorah.org
Email address	admin@sdevorah.org
Date of previous inspection	21 October 2020

Information about this school

- Shiras Devorah High School is an independent day school for girls of Jewish faith.
- Since the previous inspection, one of the two previous co-headteachers has taken on the role of headteacher. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed.
- The small number of pupils with SEND receive support or have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school does not currently have a live website.
- The previous inspection was a material change inspection, which took place in October 2020. The previous standard inspection was in February 2019.

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.

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

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, the Menacheles (principal of the Jewish curriculum), the proprietor and two members of the governing body. Inspectors also met with groups of staff and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, geography, PSHE and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and with pupils, and looked at pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other subjects, including art, citizenship, computing, history, physical education and science.
- Inspectors took into account responses to online surveys completed by staff and parents and correspondence received from parents.
- The inspection of safeguarding included meetings with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and discussions with the proprietor and members of the governing body, and discussions with staff and pupils. Inspectors also looked at documentation relating to safeguarding, including the record of pre-employment checks on staff, the school's systems for recording concerns and curriculum documents.

- In order to check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors toured the site accompanied by the school's leaders.
- In advance of meetings with pupils, inspectors agreed with leaders the themes of questions to be asked. Inspectors were not able to speak with pupils about the protected characteristics of sex and gender reassignment, and about opportunities for pupils to meet people from cultures and faiths other than their own. This limited the evidence that could be gathered relevant to previously unmet standards in part 1 and part 3 of the independent school standards. This had an impact on the judgements for leadership and management, personal development and overall effectiveness.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no students on roll in the sixth form.

Inspection team

Amanda Carter-Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sean Flood	Ofsted Inspector
Janice Howkins	Ofsted 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;
 - 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which–
 - 2(2)(d)(ii) encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act;
 - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2);
 - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraph (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools;

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor–
 - 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) ensures that principles are actively promoted which–
 - 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;
 - 5(b)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–

- 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
- 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

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;
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils

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