

Inspection of Menorah Grammar School

Abbots Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 0QS

Inspection dates:

8 to 10 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form 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' learning in the secular subjects is shallow. Leaders do not allocate enough time for pupils to study GCSE and A level subjects. In key stage 4 and the sixth form, the focus is on passing examinations. As a result, pupils do not develop a deep or broad understanding of subjects.

Pupils look forward to attending school and thoroughly enjoy studying the Kodesh curriculum. Pupils from the mainstream part of the school get along well with those from the additional resource base (DNC), showing care and consideration for their peers. Most pupils are polite, well behaved and ready to learn. This is down to the work of leaders, who have implemented strategies that are having the desired impact.

Bullying is extremely rare. Leaders act quickly to prevent any misbehaviour, including bullying or other unkindness, from escalating. Pupils feel valued and part of the school community. They feel safe because of the care that staff provide.

The school has experienced turbulence in leadership that slowed down progress after the last inspection. Current leaders have the knowledge, skills and right plans in place to turn the school around.

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

The school has been through a turbulent period, with several senior leaders coming and going in recent years. The turnover of teachers has also been high. Lack of stability has resulted in limited improvements to the quality of education.

Current leaders have been in post for around 12 months. They have demonstrated a reasonable capacity to improve. For example, the systems for managing behaviour are understood by all staff and pupils. Pupils understand the purpose of the 'refocus room' and leaders know how to record and analyse information about pupils' behaviour. As a result, instances of poor behaviour have reduced significantly, allowing teachers to teach without frequent distractions.

However, leaders and the proprietor have not addressed the issue of a narrow curriculum, identified in the previous inspection. The English, mathematics and science schemes of work that are in place to support pupils' learning are too narrow and lack ambition. They do not enable pupils to develop a secure body of knowledge in these subjects. Leaders have not thought carefully about the order in which knowledge will be taught. The curriculum in secular subjects is not well organised. This means that pupils do not build important knowledge over time.

Pupils start GCSE early in Year 9 and A Level courses in Year 11. Leaders have not ensured that sufficient time is allocated for the teaching of these subjects. Teachers cover the curriculum quickly and focus on teaching examination content. This results

in 'teaching to the exam' and weaker learning. Leaders are beginning to review their approach, but they have a long way to go.

Pupils who struggle to read are not supported well enough to help them catch up quickly. There is no curriculum in place to help pupils secure their phonics knowledge. Pupils do develop some fluency and expression as they get older, but they do not achieve as well as they could in literacy.

The story is different for pupils in the DNC. All these pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum for these pupils meets their individual needs. Pupils' starting points are identified well and a tailored programme designed for them. For example, pupils study courses at different levels, and many do practical subjects such as cookery and construction. Pupils are taught in small groups or one to one, with a strong emphasis on developing their social and communication skills. DNC pupils achieve consistently well.

The curriculum for relationships and sex education (RSE) has been designed to help pupils to understand relationships, different family units and issues such as consent in an age-appropriate way. Parents have been consulted on the content of the RSE curriculum and their responses have been reflected in its delivery. For example, leaders support parents by sharing the RSE syllabus with them. However, leaders do not teach pupils about some of the protected characteristics. As a result, pupils are not made aware of the rights all people have. This does not prepare them well enough for life in modern Britain.

The Kodesh curriculum ensures that pupils respect others' views and opinions. They have regular opportunities to develop their self-esteem and confidence, for example through debating about ethical issues. However, pupils' personal development is not promoted well enough. Although pupils occasionally 'touch' on other religions in assemblies, their knowledge about faiths other than their own is weak.

Leaders have not done enough to ensure that careers advice and guidance is an entitlement for all pupils, embedded in the curriculum. Impartial advice is not in place, and the guidance leaders provide does not give pupils a clear enough understanding of their future options. Leaders have written a suitable action plan for the sixth form which recognises this and identifies appropriate strategies. Leaders consider the impact on staff workload when making decisions about the best ways to assess pupils' work.

The school site is well maintained. This ensures a safe and orderly environment for pupils. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and has an accessibility plan in place to remove barriers to education, as well as to ensure that the building is accessible to all.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have not maintained a sufficiently robust overview of the school's effectiveness. As a result, not all the independent school standards have been met and the school is in breach of its registration

agreement with the Department for Education. Governors have set a clear vision for the school. Senior leaders understand what needs to improve. However, governors do not hold leaders to account well enough for the quality of education. For example, weaknesses in the secular curriculum have not been challenged well enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at school. They have named adults to go to if they are worried and are confident that they will be well supported. Where pupils need help, it is provided, and staff keep suitable records to help monitor and further support pupils. Currently, not all records are in one place and quick to access. Leaders are working to address this. Despite this, pupils are safe because leaders have detailed knowledge about individual families and their needs. This helps in providing precise support when it is needed, often with the help of the local authority.

Staff receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. They are well informed about the systems in place locally and the requirements of statutory guidance. Although the school does not have a website, a suitable safeguarding policy is available to parents on request. Leaders carry out the necessary recruitment checks on new staff before they start employment at school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The secular curriculum is narrow and teaching is focused on pupils achieving qualifications as quickly as possible. This means that pupils do not develop a deep and broad understanding of secular subjects. Leaders should ensure that teaching focuses on ensuring that pupils know, remember and are able to do more over time, rather than simply passing examinations.
- Curriculum thinking is not detailed enough and does not meet the needs of many pupils. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are given the training they need to develop effective programmes. These programmes should identify the component knowledge pupils need to understand precisely and in the right order.
- Although leaders collect information about pupils' reading levels when they join the school, they do not currently use this information to support those who need to catch up quickly. Leaders should design a reading curriculum for these pupils with the aim of embedding phonological knowledge and skills, delivered by teachers trained in using this programme.
- Pupils are not taught about all the protected characteristics, including sexual orientation. As a result, pupils are not made aware of the rights all people have. This does not prepare them well enough for life in modern Britain. Leaders should include teaching of all the protected characteristics into the curriculum.

- Pupils have little exposure to the main religions represented in modern Britain. This means that pupils are not prepared for life in modern British society. Leaders should include knowledge about other faiths into the curriculum.
- Pupils do not receive enough impartial careers advice and guidance to support them in making more informed decisions about their future. Leaders should develop a systematic and coherent programme of careers education across the school that is fully embedded in the curriculum.
- Governors do not check well enough on the quality of education in the school or on how leaders are meeting the independent school standards. This means that some of the independent school standards have not been met and that leaders are not getting the support they need to improve the curriculum quickly enough. Governors should ensure that there are sharper systems in place to challenge and support leaders to bring about improvements to the school's provision.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	101387
DfE registration number	302/6089
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10242736
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 21
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	286
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	67
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	RABG Memorial Limited
Chair	Daniel Goldberg and Jonathon Perl (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Yoel Rabinowitz
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,600 to £48,000
Telephone number	020 8906 9756
Website	None
Email address	office@menorahgrammar.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 March 2021

Information about this school

- Menorah Grammar School is a secondary day school for boys of Orthodox Jewish faith.
- Pupils are considered to be in the sixth form from Year 11, when they begin A-level study. They leave the school at the end of Year 12. Most move from this school to study at a Yeshiva.
- The school also caters for 36 pupils with EHC plans. This provision (the DNC) is funded by a local authority. These pupils are educated separately from the main school but on the same site. For some lessons, they are integrated with mainstream pupils.
- The school makes no use of alternative provision.
- Two named individuals are the co-proprietors of the school. They are both directors of the company RABG Memorial Limited, which is registered with the charity commission.
- The school's most recent inspection was a progress monitoring inspection in March 2021, when the school met the standards that were checked. Prior to this, the school had a full standard inspection in March 2020 in which it was judged inadequate in all areas.

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 full standard inspection was brought forward and conducted without notice. This was at the request of the Department for Education.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and associate headteacher throughout the inspection. They also met with three governors, including a co-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with senior and subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils and teachers, and reviewed samples of pupils' work. They also visited the additional resource base (DNC) which caters for some pupils with SEND.

- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to discuss their personal development and behaviour, including sixth-form students. Inspectors observed pupils informally between lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leaders and reviewed a range of documentation, including checks on staff, risk assessments and attendance information. Inspectors carried out checks on the premises, health and safety, and compliance with the other independent school standards.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including policies and curriculum plans. In addition, they considered the responses from parents on Ofsted Parent View.
- Leaders requested that inspectors did not ask certain questions about relationships and sex education.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janice Howkins

Ofsted Inspector

Sam Hainey

His 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; and
 - 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[9];
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(i) effective preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons.

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)(vi) encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act.

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.

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