

# Mechinoh School

13 Upper Park Road, Salford, Lancashire M7 4HY

**Inspection date**

2 March 2023

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

*Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(d), 2(2)(d)(i), 2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(i)*

- These independent school standards (the standards) were identified as unmet at the previous standard inspection in May 2022. Inspectors found that the curriculum lacked structure, was of a poor standard and did not enable pupils to gain a secure body of knowledge in subjects. Pupils experienced a series of disconnected lessons. As a result, pupils did not achieve as well as they should.
- During the May 2022 standard inspection, inspectors also found that the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) and careers information, advice and guidance were poor. The PSHE curriculum did not consider the protected characteristics, such as sexual orientation, well enough. Consequently, pupils were not prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in December 2022, it was judged that leaders' plans to improve the quality of education were not sufficient to address this standard. This was because the planned actions did not set out suitable success criteria, or timescales, to give reassurance that the proposed actions would have the intended impact. Additionally, leaders' plans did not identify how they propose to improve pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics or how they intend to provide pupils with suitable careers advice and guidance.
- Since the previous standard inspection in May 2022, leaders have created a high-level overview of their curriculum intent for a few subjects including English and geography. That said, some subjects, for example those providing a technological or creative education, do not have any plans or schemes of work. Other plans and schemes of work do not lay out what pupils will learn and when they will learn it in sufficient detail. Consequently, across the different subject curriculums, pupils still experience a series of lessons that do not build their knowledge in a logical way. Added to this, these plans and schemes of work do not provide the detail required to ensure that pupils' ages, aptitudes and special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are taken into account. As a result, pupils still do not achieve as well as they should.

- In mathematics, leaders' curriculum planning is more detailed. This provides teachers with a weekly overview of the planned knowledge that pupils will learn. Plans are successfully broken down into year groups. Some of the mathematics plans have further useful detail and resources that help teachers to deliver the curriculum in an effective way. However, this level of useful detail is not well embedded across the mathematics curriculum. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to finalise these plans.
- Leaders have made no changes to the PSHE curriculum since the standard inspection in May 2022. As a result, pupils do not learn about the protected characteristics of sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This limits pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders provide pupils with experiences that introduce them to a range of careers. Local businessmen and professionals visit pupils to share information about the world of work. However, there is no systematic, impartial careers information, advice and guidance in place.
- The proprietor has recently appointed new leaders. These leaders have started to address the significant shortcomings in curriculum planning and delivery, including the approach to supporting those pupils who struggle with their reading. However, leaders' work to improve the curriculum, and help those pupils who have reading difficulties to catch up, is in the early stages. Leaders recognise that there is more work to do to improve the quality of education that pupils receive.

*Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d), 2A(1)(e), 2A(1)(f), 2A(1)(g), 2A(2)*

- These standards were identified as unmet at the May 2022 inspection. This inspection found that the curriculum for relationships and sex education (RSE) was poorly designed. Consequently, pupils did not build their knowledge in an age-appropriate way. In addition, leaders had not fully consulted with parents and carers about the RSE policy.
- The action plan submitted in December 2022 did not make clear how leaders intended to develop pupils' understanding of RSE or how they intended to consult with parents about the RSE policy. The action plan was deemed not fit for purpose. This is because there were no relevant timescales or success criteria relating to leaders' planned actions to meet these standards.
- Leaders have made no changes to the RSE curriculum or policy since the May 2022 inspection found these to be unsuitable. Leaders do not intend to provide pupils with RSE. Leaders assert that staff would provide pupils with bespoke support about any matters relating to RSE as required. However, pupils do not receive any formal, systematic teaching of RSE. The policy clearly states the reasons why leaders believe pupils should not receive RSE. Consequently, the policy does not comply with statutory guidance.
- While the policy does not comply with the statutory requirements, leaders would make a copy available to parents on request. The policy outlines parents' rights to withdraw their child from RSE. Leaders have brought the policy to the attention of parents. They have explained that they are available should any parents have questions or comments regarding the proposed policy.

*Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g)*

- The standard inspection identified that leaders had not provided teachers with the

training and support to design or deliver subject curriculums effectively. Teachers were ill-equipped to identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders and teachers did not check how well pupils remembered what they had been taught in the different subjects across the curriculum.

- Leaders' action plan, submitted in December 2022, neglected to propose actions to meet the requirements in this paragraph. Consequently, it was judged unlikely that leaders would have a positive impact on ensuring that this paragraph would be met.
- Since the May 2022 standard inspection, the proprietor has appointed new staff to focus on the secular (Chol) curriculum. Leaders have invested in new resources such as textbooks for science and English. However, at the time of the inspection, these were not being used by pupils.
- Leaders have also created some resources for the wider curriculum subjects. These are currently being used as a substitute for a curriculum in some subjects. While this gives some improved structure to the teaching that pupils receive, it does not focus sufficiently well on the knowledge that leaders want pupils to learn and when pupils will learn it.
- Leaders have recognised that some pupils have a poor command of written and spoken English. They have also begun to identify some pupils who struggle to read with accuracy and fluency. This has been achieved due to teachers using test scores and tracking to identify pupils who have fallen behind. Teachers have improved the feedback that they give to pupils in mathematics and English. However, the assessment strategies used by leaders and staff do not identify missed or forgotten knowledge. This limits teachers' ability to plan effective next steps to help pupils make continued progress.
- Leaders have started to identify pupils who have fallen behind. They involve tutors to support these pupils. However, staff have not received sufficient training and guidance on how to support pupils at an early stage of reading.

#### *Paragraph 4*

- This standard was found to be unmet at the May 2022 inspection. The proprietor had not ensured that the school had a framework for pupil performance in place.
- The December 2022 action plan contained no reference to the requirements in this paragraph.
- During this inspection it was clear that leaders had made progress in relation to assessing pupils' performance. Leaders have established a suitable assessment policy. They have also introduced reports that summarise pupils' academic and social performance. Parents receive a copy of this report.
- The standards in this part remain unmet.

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

#### *Paragraph 5, 5(b)(vi)*

- At the standard inspection, it was found that the proprietor did not encourage pupils' respect for people with the protected characteristics of gender reassignment or sexual orientation. This meant that pupils were not well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The subsequent action plan proposed some changes to the PSHE scheme of work to include 'tolerance and respect for all' and to accept the rights of others to lead 'lifestyles'

that differ from those of the school community. The action plan did not clearly identify specific actions to develop pupils' respect for the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

- Leaders state that they actively promote tolerance and respect for all people. This is enshrined in their religious (Kodesh) curriculum and Chol studies. Leaders assert that they would provide support to pupils and families regarding the protected characteristics if requested. However, leaders have no intention to provide pupils with any education regarding the protected characteristics of sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- The standards in this part remain unmet.

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

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

- The May 2022 standard inspection identified that the arrangements for safeguarding were not effective. Some staff had not received up-to-date safeguarding training. As a result, these staff lacked the required knowledge to identify, help and manage safeguarding concerns.
- Leaders' action plan was deemed not fit for purpose. This is because, for this paragraph, leaders neglected to propose actions to meet the requirements. Therefore, there were no proposed actions, timescales or success criteria.
- Since the standard inspection, leaders have ensured that all staff have received suitable safeguarding training. As a result, staff's knowledge of the risks that pupils may face has improved. The safeguarding policy pays due regard to the latest guidance from the Secretary of State. Pupils feel safe in school. They told the inspector that they were confident that staff would support them with any worries or concerns that they may have.

#### *Paragraph 11*

- At the standard inspection, leaders had not drawn up and implemented a suitable health and safety policy.
- The action plan proposed the appointment of a manager responsible for building maintenance. However, the action plan did not include sufficient information on how leaders would rectify the failings found at the standard inspection.
- This inspection found that leaders have established a suitable health and safety policy. Leaders have ensured that this policy is implemented well to mitigate the risks that pupils may face. For example, a daily check of the site helps to ensure that it is safe and secure.

#### *Paragraph 12*

- At the previous standard inspection, leaders had not ensured that the school complied with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Leaders' checks had not identified all of the potential fire hazards in relation to the site. This meant that pupils' and staff's safety were at risk.
- The action plan proposed a review of fire safety policies and the implementation of recommendations from the fire safety risk assessment. However, the action plan did not include sufficient information on how leaders would rectify the failings with regard to this

standard.

- Leaders acted swiftly following the May 2022 standard inspection and commissioned a fire safety review of the site. This was conducted by a competent person. Following this, leaders installed new emergency lighting and firefighting equipment. Fire exits were replaced and are now suitable, in good working order and free from clutter. Regular checks of the firefighting equipment by a professional ensure that it is safe for use should it be required.

#### *Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)*

- At the standard inspection, leaders had not considered the risks associated with different activities in the curriculum, or in relation to the school site. Leaders had not drawn up and implemented a suitable risk assessment policy.
- The action plan proposed a review of all safety policies and the appointment of a member of staff responsible for building maintenance. The action plan was deemed not acceptable as leaders had not identified actions, appropriate timescales or suitable success criteria.
- Leaders have now established a suitable risk assessment policy. They have implemented this policy appropriately. For example, leaders created and used a suitable risk assessment to help mitigate the risks that pupils may have faced on a recent residential visit.
- The standards in this part are now met.

### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

#### *Paragraph 25*

- At the standard inspection, inspectors found that the premises and accommodation were unsafe. This impacted negatively on pupils' welfare, health and safety. Leaders' routine checks had not identified all of the hazards in relation to the site.
- Leaders neglected to propose actions that would ensure that the specific requirements of this paragraph would be met in the action plan. Consequently, there were no associated timescales or success criteria.
- At this inspection, it was clear that leaders have improved the safety of the site. While some decorative aspects are not well maintained, rooms are safe. Leaders have begun to refurbish areas of the school. Additionally, areas of disrepair, such as where there has been a recent leak, are being repaired. While this work takes place, leaders have ensured that pupils cannot gain access to these areas. Leaders have removed an outbuilding that posed a risk to pupils' health and safety. This area is now clean and tidy. Leaders ensure that pupils do not play on the uneven part of the playground which has been damaged by tree roots. Leaders have also upgraded hand driers in the toilet areas to improve hygiene standards.
- The standard in this part is now met.

### Part 6. Provision of information

#### *Paragraph 32(3)(c)*

- At the standard inspection, it was found that leaders had not made available a copy of the school's curriculum policy to parents and inspectors.

- The action plan, submitted for review in December 2022, proposed that leaders would inform parents on a regular basis that all relevant documentation is available from the school on request as most parents do not have access to the internet at home. However, the action plan did not set suitable actions or timescales to ensure that this requirement would be met.
- At this inspection, the curriculum policy was made available to the inspector. This is suitable. Leaders would provide printed copies of any documentation to parents on request.
- The standard in this part is now met.

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

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

- The standard inspection found that this standard was not met. Leaders did not have the knowledge and skills appropriate to their roles so all the standards were not met consistently. The proprietor had not ensured that leaders had fulfilled their responsibilities effectively. The proprietor had not promoted the well-being of pupils. As a result, many standards were not met.
- The action plan did not propose actions that would ensure that the specific requirements for this standard would be met. The actions did state that leaders intended to hold more regular meetings with staff to ensure that they promote pupils' well-being. However, the proposed actions did not address the specific failings in leadership and management identified at the standard inspection.
- This inspection has identified that some of the standards checked during this inspection are now met. These relate to pupils' welfare, health and safety. However, other standards, in relation to the quality of education that pupils receive and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, remain unmet. These standards have been unmet since March 2017. Consequently, leaders have not demonstrated the ability to ensure that the standards are met consistently for some time.
- Leaders accept that their actions to improve the quality of education that pupils receive are at an early stage of development. While recently appointed leaders have started to improve the curriculum, significant concerns about the quality of education that pupils receive remain.
- The standards in this part remain unmet.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	105999
DfE registration number	355/6020
Inspection number	10278501

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Mechinoh School
Chair	Not applicable
Headteacher	Rabbi N Baddiel
Annual fees (day pupils)	None
Telephone number	0161 795 9275
Website	None
Email address	mechinoh@gmail.com
Date of previous standard inspection	24 to 26 May 2022

## Information about this school

- The latest standard inspection took place on 24 to 26 May 2022.
- The school operates from premises at 13 Upper Park Road, Salford, Lancashire, M7 4HY.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- Mechinoh School is an Orthodox Jewish faith school.
- At the time of the standard inspection, there had been no proprietor in place for the preceding 12 months. The headteacher took over as proprietor during the standard inspection in May 2022. The name of the proprietor as recorded on the Department for Education's (DfE) Get Information about Schools website is Mechinoh School. During the



inspection, it was clear to the inspector that the headteacher was committed to working with the DfE in order to be approved as the proprietor. The headteacher shared copies of his communication with the DfE about the requested change of proprietor. These emails showed that the headteacher and senior leaders had responded quickly and accurately to requests from the DfE. However, the proposed change to the proprietorship arrangements has not been agreed by the DfE.

- There have been significant changes to staffing at the school since the previous standard inspection. This includes teachers appointed to lead the Chol curriculums.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in May 2022. It was conducted without notice.
- Ofsted evaluated leaders' action plan, following the standard inspection, on 21 December 2022. The DfE rejected the action plan following the standard inspection.
- The inspector met with senior leaders and staff. He reviewed schemes of work, pupils' work and the curriculum policy. The inspector visited some lessons.
- The inspector spoke alone with a group of pupils about their experience of school and about safeguarding matters. At the request of leaders, the inspector did not discuss RSE or the protected characteristics with pupils.
- The headteacher was not present during the inspection. The inspector had a telephone conversation with the headteacher. The inspector met with two senior teachers who are responsible for the school in the headteacher's absence throughout the inspection.
- The inspector examined policy documents, including the safeguarding policy. He conducted a tour of the premises.

## Inspection team

Adam Sproston, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

## Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

### The school does not meet the following independent school standards

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

#### 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)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
  - 2(2)(d) personal, social, health and economic education which-
    - 2(2)(d)(i) reflects the school's aim and ethos; and
    - 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.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
  - 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 paragraphs (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.
- 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
  - 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;
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
  - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
  - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

## **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(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.

## **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(A)(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor–
  - 2(A)(1)(g) publishes a copy of the statement on a website and provides a copy of the statement free of charge to anyone who asks for one.
  - 2(A)(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil's parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

### **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.
- 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.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 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 6. Provision of information**

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 32(1)(c) particulars for the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school’s internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents on request.
- 32(3) The information specified in this sub-paragraph is–
  - 32(3)(c) particulars of the policy referred to in paragraph 2.

## **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)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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