

Inspection of a good school: Leeds Jewish Free School

Henry Cohen Campus, Wentworth Avenue, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS17 7TN

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 April 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The interim executive headteacher of this school is Charlie Kelsey. This school is part of the Leeds Jewish Free School single-academy trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel Cohen. The interim executive headteacher, Charlie Kelsey, is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school that values diversity, inclusivity and kindness. Pupils feel accepted for who they are and appreciate the supportive environment created by their peers and the staff. One pupil, typical of many, said, 'You can't pick your family, but you can pick your school and I would pick this school every day.' Staff and parents agree. They know they are part of a special community that works well together.

Pupils are keen to do well. Most pupils behave well in lessons and listen carefully to their teachers. Bullying incidents are rare. However, pupils have not benefited from a consistently strong curriculum over time. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should and are capable of more. New leaders are taking the right steps to address this, but much of their work is at an early stage of development.

The school council embodies the spirit of empowerment among pupils. They advocate the importance of social responsibility and valuing the rights of others. Pupils have a strong sense of equality. They are keen to take their place in a multi-cultural society and want to learn more about modern Britain. Their voices are heard by leaders and governors. Together, they work to address any concerns and bring about change.

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

The school's improvement journey has been slowed down by instability in staffing and by difficulties in recruiting staff in some subjects. This concerns some parents and pupils. Leadership has now been stabilised and many parents and pupils recognise the recent changes that new leaders are increasingly bringing about. Pupils value the relationships that they have with their teachers, including pastoral staff. Pupils know that they can seek support for any concerns and that they will be helped.

Pupils are eager to learn and are curious about the world. However, the planned curriculum does not enable all pupils to achieve well enough. In a number of subjects, inconsistencies in how the curriculum is thought about and delivered undermines the quality of education that pupils receive. The important knowledge that pupils need to learn in each subject has not been carefully considered and broken down into 'smaller steps' to be highlighted by teaching staff. Teaching does not always help pupils to remember important knowledge. As a result, pupils struggle to remember what they have been taught before.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive tailored support from knowledgeable staff who understand their needs. Pupils attending 'the Hub', a provision for pupils with SEND, benefit from the help they get from specialised staff who know them well. These pupils are actively engaged in all parts of school life and enjoy the trips and opportunities that they have. As a result of the personalised support they receive, pupils with SEND thrive and achieve well.

Recognising the significance of reading, the school swiftly identifies those pupils who need extra assistance. Targeted support helps these pupils to read with increasing proficiency.

Pupils benefit from the extra-curricular opportunities they have. Educational trips, such as to the Imperial War Museum, or to concerts, bring their learning in lessons to life. Pupils raise money for community projects and charities and have a strong sense of social justice and equality. Pupils recognise that their knowledge of other faiths is not strong enough. They are similarly concerned that there are different opportunities for boys and girls in sports. Pupils know the importance of addressing these issues. They are right to have raised these concerns with governors. Leaders, including governors, are determined to 'work this out'.

This united school community has strength of vision and clarity of purpose. Staff are proud to work here. They know they are looked after by trusted leaders who have their best interests at heart. As one member of staff said, 'It just works'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not developed or taught in ways that help pupils to learn and achieve well. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and do not achieve in line with their potential. The school should further develop the curriculum to help pupils to gain a thorough understanding of each subject.
- Teaching does not consistently enable pupils to remember the knowledge that they need. Gaps in pupils' knowledge can go unidentified. The school should work with staff to develop pedagogical approaches that help them ensure that pupils have learned important knowledge and skills.
- Pupils' knowledge of other world religions and some other aspects of the PSHE curriculum is limited. This is because the important knowledge that they need to understand the wider world around them has not been sufficiently highlighted over time. The school should ensure that the planned revisions to the PSHE and wider curriculums provide pupils with the knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Girls and boys do not have equal access to sports and physical education (PE) opportunities that meet their talents and interests. Some pupils are disappointed by the lack of equal opportunities to explore sports offered to their peers of the opposite sex. The school should take further action to enhance the PE curriculum to give greater equality of access to sports for pupils in PE.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2015.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	139773
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10323054
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel Cohen
Headteacher	Charlie Kelsey (Interim Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.ljfs.org
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is an orthodox Jewish free school for girls and boys. Teaching is divided between the secular curriculum and Jewish studies (the Kodesh).
- The school is an academy free school with a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was in March 2023. Due to the pandemic, section 48 inspections were suspended and the inspection window was extended by up to eight years. The next section 48 inspection is due by March 2031.
- Since the last inspection, some new leadership appointments have been made. The interim executive headteacher formally took up post in September 2023. Other senior leaders have been appointed.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school shares the site and some facilities with Brodetksy Primary School. The two schools currently share the same executive headteacher.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including school leaders and governors. Inspectors spoke with teaching and other staff, including some teachers who are at the early stages of their teaching career.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with school leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at examples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and visited some lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and through meetings held with pupils. Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View and through telephone discussions with some parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through meetings and informal discussions and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kate Lounds

Ofsted Inspector

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