

# Inspection of Talmud Torah Machzikei Hadass School

1 Belz Terrace, Clapton Common, London E5 9SN

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Inspection dates:

9 to 11 July 2024 and 22 and 23 July  
2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent  
school standards?

**Yes**

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

Pupils have benefited from the recent improvements to the curriculum. They now study a broad range of subjects which cover the range of curriculum areas set out in the independent school standards (the standards). For instance, pupils enjoy learning about significant historical events and finding out about life in other countries. Children in the early years get off to a good start in reading and mathematics. Nevertheless, in some subjects, across Year 1 to Year 6, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils are happy to come to school. They get on well together. Moreover, pupils value the positive relationships that they have with staff. These adults care for pupils and keep them safe. Pupils have a trusted member of staff who they can go to about any worries that they might have.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are keen to please their teachers. They are enthusiastic learners who enjoy their lessons. Children in the early years quickly learn the class rules and routines. They work and play well together.

The school develops pupils' confidence and resilience. For instance, through the Kodesh (religious) curriculum, pupils are equipped to resolve any occasional falling-out. They learn to settle these issues swiftly and amicably. Pupils contribute well to their community. For example, they litter pick in the local park, entertain residents in a nearby care home and collect donations for different charities. However, pupils have limited opportunities to develop hobbies and learn about people who are different from themselves.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has taken appropriate action to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. It has prioritised the development of a broad curriculum that meets the requirements of the standards. Pupils across the school are beginning to benefit from these improvements.

The school has identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn in some key subjects. It has provided staff with the training and support that they need to deliver these new subject curriculums. However, in some other subjects, the school has not determined fully the key information that pupils need to know, nor has it considered how these subject curriculums will be delivered. Pupils do not learn as well as they should in these subjects.

By contrast, in the early years, the curriculum is carefully thought through across all of the areas of learning. Moreover, both Kodesh and Chol (secular) staff have the expertise in young children's development to support children's learning well. This enables these children to be well prepared for Year 1.

In those subjects where the school is clear about what pupils should learn, teachers check that pupils remember this learning. This is not the case across the curriculum. In other subjects, teachers are not sufficiently clear about the knowledge that pupils need for future learning. This makes it more difficult for teachers to identify and address pupils' gaps and misconceptions in these subjects. Some pupils struggle to make sense of new concepts as a result.

Since the previous inspection, the school has prioritised the teaching of phonics and early reading. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language when they join the school. Many of these pupils have limited prior knowledge of the English language. To address this, from the start of the Reception Year, children learn the sounds that letters make in both Hebrew and English. Staff deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. Moreover, they work well with families to enable them to support their children's reading at home. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to read confidently and fluently.

The school is mindful of the challenges for the youngest children learning English and Hebrew in parallel. It ensures that those pupils who are struggling with reading receive additional help to catch up quickly with their peers. Recently, the school has raised the profile of reading. For example, it has started to develop a library so that pupils can access a wider range of fiction and non-fiction English language texts.

The school prioritises the identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff have the training and support that they need to spot any additional needs that pupils may have. The school works in partnership with parents and carers and a range of professionals to assess the needs of pupils. These pupils are successfully supported to access the curriculum, in both Chol and Kodesh lessons, alongside their peers.

Almost all pupils are in school, on time, every day. The school follows up robustly on any absence. Pupils are polite and respectful to staff, visitors and each other. The school is calm and orderly throughout the day. Learning is rarely interrupted.

The school provides pupils with a broad range of experiences to enhance their learning of the curriculum, such as trips and visiting speakers. However, the school has not carefully considered how these opportunities prepare pupils for their next steps. On occasion, these experiences are one-off events that do not deepen pupils' understanding of aspects such as fundamental British values. For example, pupils have some knowledge of the faiths and beliefs of others, but overall, their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and religions is superficial.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when cycling on the road and playing near water. They are also encouraged to look after their mental health. Nevertheless, while adults keep pupils safe in school, some pupils do not have sufficient knowledge of the potential risks if they play online.

The proprietor, governors and the school have a strong, shared vision and the

capacity to improve the quality of education provided. They are outward-facing, engaging with a range of external partners to help them review and develop the work of the school. This reassures the proprietor and governors that they have accurately understood the school's strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the proprietor has ensured that the school meets the standards and statutory requirements, including schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Nevertheless, despite improvements, pupils do not benefit from a high-quality education or programme for their personal development. This is because, until recently, the school did not act swiftly enough to tackle the most pressing weaknesses in its provision.

The school has complied with the relevant restriction imposed by the Department for Education (DfE).

Staff appreciate the school's consideration for their workload and well-being. For example, staff value the training that they have received to fulfil their roles and to implement the changes that the school has made.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The school has not identified the key knowledge that should be taught in some subjects. In these subjects, this hinders teachers from making sure that pupils learn all that they should and from checking that their knowledge is secure. The school should ensure that the knowledge that pupils should learn and when this content should be taught is clearly defined. The school should also ensure that teachers are suitably equipped to check that pupils have remembered this important information over time.
- Some aspects of the school's programme for pupils' personal development are underdeveloped. This means that pupils are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they should be. The school should ensure that it offers a coherent programme for personal development that deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Previously, the school has not acted quickly enough to improve the quality of education that pupils receive. This has impacted on pupils' academic and personal development. The proprietor and governors should ensure that they provide effective challenge and support to enable the school to maintain the momentum of improvement.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100294
<b>DfE registration number</b>	204/6331
<b>Local authority</b>	Hackney
<b>Inspection number</b>	10322559
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent school
<b>School category</b>	Independent day school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	398
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Moreshet Hatorah Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Rabbi Jehudah Baumgarten
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rabbi C Silbiger
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	Voluntary contributions
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 800 6599
<b>Website</b>	None
<b>Email address</b>	compliance@belzlondon.com
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 to 10 November 2022

## Information about this school

- The school's previous standard inspection took place from 8 to 10 November 2022.
- This is a Charedi Jewish faith school.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language. Some pupils have SEND. A few have education, health and care plans.
- There is a board of governors. There are three governors, including the chair who is also the chair of the proprietor body.
- The school is registered to admit up to 650 pupils.
- The school occupies premises at 1 Belz Terrace, Clapton Common, London, E5 9SN. At the previous inspection, the school had additional premises at 87 Lampard Grove, London, N1 6XA. The school no longer uses these additional premises.
- The school is registered for pupils aged three to 16 years. At the time of the inspection, there were no nursery-age or secondary-age pupils.
- The Secretary of State for Education imposed a restriction on the school on 17 January 2022. The restriction is still in force. The restriction means that the proprietor must not admit any new pupils to the school from 17 February 2022.

## 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.

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This standard inspection was brought forward at the request of the DfE.
- A further visit was made to the school on 22 and 23 July 2024 to gather additional evidence. The evidence from all five days of the inspection was used to inform the final judgements.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: phonics and early reading; science; history; and personal, social and health education (PSHE). They

discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited some lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke with staff and pupils.

- Inspectors reviewed the curriculum for some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the Chol and Kodesh headteachers, senior leaders and other staff at the school.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with representatives of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss SEND, the curriculum, assessment, pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' wider development.
- 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 puts pupils' interests first.
- There were no responses to Ofsted Parent View nor Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. At the request of leaders, inspectors did not ask pupils about specific aspects of the PSHE curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the premises.

### **The school's proposed change to the age range of pupils**

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- The school applied to the DfE to change its age range from three to 16 years to three to 11 years. At the time of the inspection, there were no secondary-age pupils at the school. The current Year 6 pupils are due to leave the school at the end of the academic year.

### **Inspection team**

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jane Dennis	His Majesty's Inspector
Mavis Smith	His Majesty's Inspector



Sam Hainey

His Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Newby

Ofsted Inspector

Janet Hallett

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