

Inspection of Vishnitz Girls School

49 Amhurst Park N16 5DL

Inspection dates: 9 to 11 July 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

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 polite and welcoming here. Leaders place a high priority on teaching pupils to behave respectfully and kindly. Pupils are keen to volunteer to be role models to others and wear stickers proudly to show that they are recognised for using kind and considerate language in conversations. Pupils said that they feel cared for in school because everyone looks out for each other. Pupils speak to the adults if they have any worries. Pupils are safe in school.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' academic outcomes and preparedness for their next stages when they leave the school. Pupils achieve highly. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to enrich their learning through educational visits, such as outings to London landmarks and places of historical interest. Pupils gain experiences beyond the taught curriculum. Participation in enterprising projects gives them insight into the world of work. Pupils look forward to taking on responsibilities to organise and perform in an annual show. Pupils in Year 11 take part in a residential journey and help with cooking, housekeeping and the planning of activities.

Children in the early years learn to read well. Opportunities for children in the Reception class to learn across the full range of the early years curriculum are limited.

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

The school has a well-organised curriculum in place across a broad range of subjects from Year 1 upwards. Leaders have identified the content knowledge and skills they intend pupils to learn and have carefully ordered the sequence in which this is taught. Through the taught curriculum, pupils reinforce their understanding and build on their prior learning over time.

The school's curriculum largely reflects the content and ambition of the national curriculum. Typically, teachers' subject knowledge is strong and helps pupils to produce high-quality work. Occasionally, pupils' errors and misunderstanding persist when staff knowledge is less secure. Leaders are prioritising subject-specific training for staff in the forthcoming academic year.

Since the previous standard inspection, the school has developed the quality of teaching of early reading and phonics. The school's investment in resources and training ensures that staff deliver the school's chosen programme effectively. Children in the early years learn to use phonics confidently in their reading and spelling. Leaders have promoted a strong culture of reading, for example pupils look forward to finding out what book they will be reading each week. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to help them to support their child's learning at home.

Since the previous standard inspection, leaders have taken effective action to improve the early years provision. Staff promote children's learning in a range of imaginative ways. For example, in the Nursery, children explored floating and sinking, putting different objects into water. This linked to children's learning about boats and transport. Children get involved in a range of meaningful play activities and opportunities that promote their use of number, and listening and literacy skills. Children learn about healthy eating through singing and role play. Their physical development is well promoted in the outdoor area. However, currently the Reception class does not have regular access to the early years indoor and outdoor spaces and their learning is, therefore, limited. The school's further planned developments in the early years are due to be implemented in the forthcoming academic year. Leaders' plans include a complete rearrangement of the Reception class to provide all children with full access to the early years environment.

Generally, the school has well-established procedures for checking pupils' learning. Staff identify pupils who need extra support, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders organise training to make sure staff know and use strategies to support individual pupils to access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders communicate closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure the right support is in place to meet pupils' needs.

Staff are appreciative of the training and guidance the school provides, relevant to their roles and the care for their own and their pupils' mental health and well-being. Staff value leaders' support in keeping workloads manageable.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and work together cheerfully within lessons. Their eagerness means that occasionally pupils need to be reminded to focus and listen carefully. Pupils respond swiftly to staff expectations so that typically pupils' conduct is calm and orderly.

Pupils generally attend school regularly. Leaders have robust systems to check attendance rates. They measure and follow-up absences promptly and support pupils and their families to improve attendance rates where there are concerns.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to promote pupils' personal development across Jewish Studies, programmes for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and extra-curricular activities. Pupils are taught about different faiths and cultures, and about the importance of being respectful to the beliefs of others. Pupils receive age-appropriate guidance on how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including recognising potential risks in relationships and when online. However, the school's PSHE programme does not pay particular regard to all the protected characteristics that pupils must be made aware of at a timely point. The school's relationships and sex education (RSE) programme does not cover all the required content as set out in statutory guidance. Starting from Nursery, children learn about different jobs. From Year 7 onwards, pupils have access to independent advice as part of the school's careers programme.

Leaders, including the proprietor body, are knowledgeable about the independent school standards. They ensure that required policies are in place. These generally meet requirements and are implemented effectively. Unmet independent school standards relate to the personal development of pupils, in particular with regard to the school's PSHE and RSE programmes, and leadership and management.

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

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- Occasionally, where staff subject knowledge is not as strong as in other subjects, pupils' errors and misunderstanding persist. Leaders should implement their planned training for staff so that all pupils benefit from strong staff subject-specific expertise.
- Children in Reception do not have routine access to the resources available in the early years provision. Their learning across the key areas of the early years curriculum is limited. Leaders should ensure that their plans for the re-organisation of the early years are put into place as a matter of urgency to enable children in the early years to achieve well in all areas of learning.
- The school does not cover the required content for relationships education as set out in statutory guidance. The school does not pay due regard to the full range of protected characteristics. The school should ensure that the school's RSE and PSHE programme covers all aspects of statutory guidance.
- Leaders have not ensured that all the independent school standards are met. Leaders have not fully addressed all the areas for improvement that were identified at the previous inspection. The proprietor should ensure that all the independent school standards are met.

How can I feed back my views?

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	138516
DfE registration number	204/6006
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10299217
Type of school	School registered with a religious ethos
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	474
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Vishnitz Girls School Limited
Chair	Israel Zeig
Headteacher	Leah Weiss
Annual fees (day pupils)	Variable and voluntary
Telephone number	020 8800 0490
Website	None
Email address	admin@vishnitzgirlsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2023

Information about this school

- Vishnitz Girls School is an Orthodox Jewish independent day school located on two sites in Stamford Hill, London.
- The main premises at 49 Amhurst Park accommodate primary-phase pupils in Years 3 to 6. The premises at 85 Lordship Road cater for children in the early years, primary-phase pupils in Years 1 and 2, and secondary-phase pupils in Years 7 to 11. Since the previous inspection, leaders have made some changes to where different year groups are based on the school sites.
- The school has a proprietor body which takes responsibility for the management and governance of the school. Since the previous inspection, a new different chair of the proprietor body has been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school's most recent standard inspection took place in March 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 has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of 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.
- The inspectors met with school leaders, including a director of the proprietor body. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons in, and spoke to leaders about, some other subjects.
- 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.

- Inspectors completed tours of both the school's sites accompanied by school leaders to check compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views in the responses to the online survey, in conversations with parents and in correspondence sent from parents to the inspectors. There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys.
- In meetings with pupils, inspectors did not discuss any matter relating to RSE, as agreed with school leaders. This limited the evidence that could be gathered relevant to standards in Parts 1 and 2 which were not met at the time of the previous inspection in June 2023. This restriction on discussion relating to RSE had an impact on the judgements for personal development, leadership and management and overall effectiveness.
- Inspectors also agreed with leaders the words that would be used when discussing different faiths and cultures with pupils. This had no impact on the inspection outcomes.

Inspection team

Amanda Fraser, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gary Rawlings

His Majesty's Inspector

Nigel Clemens

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; 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];
- 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,

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; and

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

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